

DGS remembers Bonfield

Students and staff share fond memories



Courtesy of DGS Athletic Dept.

helping a student learn from a transgression, a coach teaching fundamentals, or a colleague helping you through a tough day, Jim always had a smile on his face and a positive comment in his words," Dr. Eblen concluded

"He was the first staff member outside of my department to greet me in the hallway by name. It made me feel very welcome," Mrs. Victoria Kahle said.

Dean Dennis Kunnemann, a friend of Mr. Bonfield for 24 years, said, "Just thinking about being with Jim as a friend, a fellow dean, a fellow football coach and a fellow student, brings a smile to my face."

He said that he "could always depend on him to tackle any task with enthusiasm, thoroughness, compassion, and most of all, with the ability to add humor and laughter to the business and/or pleasure at hand."

"During the hardest times at practice or our outside lives, he tried to add humor. He made up rhymes that sometimes didn't make sense, but put a smile on our face," senior football player Justin Bjes said.

"Mr. Bonfield used to say,

'Breathe, your body loves it,' when we were about to give up; or 'rub a dub dub everyone in the tub,' just to lighten our spirits up," Bjes recalled of his football experience with Mr. Bonfield.

Senior Brian Sheehan said that as a coach he was very understanding. He wanted kids to succeed just as much as the kids wanted it themselves.

"Coach Bonfield never got mad at you if you messed up a play. [He] was an amazing coach. He didn't have to yell in order to get us inspired," Sheehan said.

"Just knowing what he went through, and what he did for us, made us want to give him every ounce of energy we had," Sheehan added.

Mr. Bonfield was also a fantastic dean.

"He had a way of finding out what it took to change a student's behavior. He wouldn't just dole out a consequence because that's what the handbook called for."

"Jim's first and foremost commitment was to the students," Assistant Principal Mr. Dan Cozzo said to the Chicago Tribune.

"He would always say,

'What is best for the student?' and our decisions were made on that," dean, Dr. Kara Egger said.

"Jim's death leaves a big void in our school community," Dr. Eblen wrote.

He is someone who can never be replaced.

"I'll miss his smile, humor, courage, guidance, but most of all," Mr. Kunnemann said, "I'll miss his positive outlook on life, no matter what bump in the road one might face."

"Toughness is not how strong you are, but how much you can endure," Mr. Bonfield used to say.

Anyone who knew him saw that "toughness" in him.

Despite his illness, he kept working, and no one ever heard him complain.

"I will always see the fight he had in him, and I hope I can be half the man he was," Bjes said.

"Jim loved life and always met it head on. This love for life personified as an aura around him which everyone wanted to be a part of," Mr. Kunnemann said.

"As I had told him several times, he was my hero," Mr. Kunnemann said fondly.

Mr. Bonfield is remembered as cheerful and inspirational.

Emilia Klimiuk '04
Design Editor

"We've lost a giant of a man," Mr. Robert Ulicny said about Mr. James Bonfield's death.

Mr. Bonfield was head dean and an assistant football coach. He was someone we all, students and teachers alike, looked up to.

"[He] embodied all the qualities of the greatest teachers, and he possessed the finest characteristics of the most compassionate human beings," superintendent David Eblen wrote in a letter to the staff.

"Whether as a dean