

Dennis J. Karl

Dennis Karl began with the Northwest School District as a student teacher in 1971. He was offered a position at Northwest High School's Art Department after graduation from Southeast Missouri State University in 1972 with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Education with a major in Fine Arts and a minor in Business Management. He loved teaching so much that he immediately started teaching evening continuing education classes for the district plus evening classes for Jefferson College. He also coached girls volleyball.

Dennis married Pam Johnson, a graduate of Northwest High School in 1974 and pursued his Master's Degree (1978). In 1975 he was convinced by Jim White and Bob Ward, both teachers from the Northwest District, to build his own home. It was then, he put to use his love of architectural design and embraced a new hobby of designing and building houses.

During the first 6 years of teaching in collaboration with Tom Stephens and Nick Elfrink, the art department developed and offered an additional 24 different courses. The art department self-funded many of the necessary supplies and equipment required beyond their budget by selling candy bars. These newly offered classes quickly filled and with the expanded curriculum the department was moved to the repurposed maintenance building behind the school and an additional two art teachers were hired. Soon after, Dennis was named department chair.

In 1980 Dennis transitioned to the House Springs Middle School just prior to the move to the new building on Hwy MM. Mr. Maharrey, (building principal) knew Dennis was furthering his education in administration working toward his Doctorate and was eager to mentor him. Dennis assisted with many disciplinary duties for Mr. Maharrey including personally supervising lunch detention and after school detention. Dennis also offered and in his spare time, started a 5' x 25'+ mural in 1983 on the school's cafeteria wall just outside his classroom. This mural depicted many local historic places plus the names of all employees working at the middle school up until its completion in 1987 and is still on display. The mural was featured and Dennis interviewed at the time by Herb Humphreys of Channel 4 nightly news.

Due to his knowledge in construction and the needs required in an educational building, Dennis was named the Assistant Superintendent of Facilities and oversee the construction of the new Northwest High School in Cedar Hill. He left his physical mark on the building by inserting a window into the main office complete with his personal drawing of a lion etched in the glass. After the school was occupied, he was told there had been no plans or budget for a concession stand with public restrooms or athletic storage building. He took on the task himself. With determination he drew the plans and made numerous phone calls to local businesses acquiring over \$150,000 in labor and materials to complete the facility. Also, during his time as Assistant Superintendent, he consolidated the maintenance department of the district, made major cost saving changes to the custodial department, transportation

department and cafeteria including saving 10% of his budgeted expenses from the previous year, served on many district committees and received an Apple Award.

After completion of the new high school, Dennis requested to return to the school environment and the only position available was Assistant Principal at the newly formed Northwest Valley 7th and 8th Grade Center in 1997. He was named building principal in 1999 and retired in 2002 due to medical reasons.

During most of his educational years, Dennis also found time to design, build or remodel homes in Jefferson County, St. Louis County and at Lake of the Ozarks. He also pursued his artwork which included pointillism using various mixed media. This artwork is often mistaken for watercolor...until viewed up close.

Dennis and Pam are proud of their four children; Sara Karl-Clouse, Jeremiah Karl, Tara Karl-Knittel, Jamie Karl and 11 grandchildren; Emma, Olivia, Dylan, Brayden, Caitlyn, Brody, Collin, Mykela, Aydree, Allison, Paizlyn; and one great granddaughter, Raven.

At this time, we are proud to introduce and induct Dennis Karl into the 2022 Hall of Fame as a Distinguished Educator.