

Harry David Weiss (Class of 1972)

Harry David Weiss, known to most as David or Dave, was a proud 1972 graduate of Northwest High School and is honored as a Northwest Distinguished Educator in recognition of his lifelong dedication to the school and the community he loved.

Born and raised in House Springs, Dave lived in the same home his entire life. He was the son of Harry and Marjorie Weiss and grew up alongside his sister, Barbara Gorsky (Weiss). His deep roots in the Northwest community shaped both his character and his unwavering commitment to serving others.

While a student at Northwest High School, Dave was actively involved in choir, Drama Club, Pep Club, and other extracurricular activities. During these formative years, he discovered his passion for hands-on work with metal and heavy machinery—an interest that would become both a profession and a lifelong hobby.

After graduation, Dave attended Jefferson College and Southwest Missouri State University (now Missouri State University), earning his bachelor's degree in education. He returned home to House Springs and later began his teaching career in 1993 in the Industrial Arts Department, first at the middle school and then at the high school. His dedication to teaching inspired him to earn a Master's Degree in Education and to serve on various district committees supporting students and staff.

Dave worked tirelessly for his students, often spending time beyond the school day preparing lessons and offering additional support. He was especially committed to students who struggled to see their own potential. Rather than viewing technical education as simply a way to earn an easy credit, Dave elevated his program into a meaningful pathway for lifelong skills and careers. He instilled pride in craftsmanship, responsibility, and perseverance. Many former students still recall projects from his metals classes and later recognize how often they use those very skills in their daily lives.

He had a special ability to connect with students who felt uncertain about graduation or unsure of their next steps. Dave consistently encouraged them to think about the future, offering practical advice and clear direction. He believed deeply that every student deserved purpose and opportunity.

Beyond the classroom, Dave generously gave of his time and talents. He frequently used his own heavy equipment—including his bobcat and dump truck—to assist the district’s athletic and maintenance departments. His service extended well beyond his professional responsibilities.

Dave was also deeply involved in the Boy Scouts of America, dedicating countless weekends to camping trips, merit badge instruction, and mentoring Scouts toward their Eagle projects. He served on the Eagle Scout Review Board and was often sought out for his steady guidance and encouragement. In recognition of his years of service, he was awarded the District Award of Merit.

A craftsman at heart, Dave had a passion for restoring tractors and vintage equipment. He approached every project with meticulous care and pride. Each year, he planted dozens of tree saplings on his property, finding peace in nurturing growth and working the land he loved.

Above all, Dave cherished his family. He and his wife, Lisa, raised two children, Jonathan and Emily. As “Papa” to his grandchildren, Ethan and Kaylea, he delighted in sharing tractor rides, building projects, and life lessons grounded in patience, curiosity, and hard work.

After a courageous battle with pancreatic cancer, Dave passed away on April 11, 2025, surrounded by his family. Though he is no longer with us physically, his legacy lives on in the countless students, Scouts, colleagues, and loved ones whose lives he shaped.

It is with great pride that we recognize Harry David Weiss as a 2026 Northwest Alumni Distinguished Educator of the Year.