

Mr. Stefan Gnys:

1967 found us starting a unique year in grade 7. He was our first male teacher and we were his first class out of teacher's college. He had long hair (for the times) and spoke to us like adults. His enthusiasm for teaching was apparent and immediate.

Mr. Gnys encouraged us to learn beyond the text book and use imagination. For our science project he tried to get us to go beyond. Most kids brought in leaf or butterfly collections. I brought an AM radio I designed and displayed. It baffled him and the principle. But I got an A+.

On occasion Mr. Gnys would bring his guitar to class, print out some Gordon Lightfoot lyrics, and we'd have a sing-a-long. He even had an LP he recorded.

He caused me to exercise imagination and alternate thinking plus put the idea of writing songs into my head and learning other instruments.

Two years before I was tested by the board of education and was added to Mensa Toronto as a child member. The implications of this eluded me until grade 7. I am positive he was aware of this and he seemed to push me beyond what was required. Often I would get bored and stare out the window waiting for my classmates to catch up. He noticed and would assign me extra work, interesting work, and I excelled. Most of the other kids benefitted by Mr. Gnys' teaching style and his intuitive ability to reach us. He was unique and stood out against his peers, past and future. Many of us wished we could have brought him to high school to teach.

During our history class once he told us his father was the first pilot in world war two to shoot down a German. This brought history fully imaged into our minds. What an experience and to describe it in such detail, as he did in all his classes, that we could envision the events.

Long after we left grade 7 he invited us to his wedding. He maintains contact with most of us from his first year teaching. A few years back we helped him celebrate his 60th birthday.

He asked us to call him Stefan now but we just respected him so much that he is still Mr. Gnys. I showed him my Mensa membership card and said it was one of my proudest accomplishments and I attributed a lot of my thinking skills to him.

Therefore I nominate Stefan Gnys for this award and I believe everyone he ever taught would agree.

Randy Moore

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Randy Moore". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned below the typed name.