

Teacher leaves behind legacy

CHRISTINE E. KIRA G. & OWEN J
CO-EDITOR-IN-CHIEFS

“A truly great mentor is hard to find, difficult to part with and impossible to forget.” This quote from George Randolph is the perfect fit for Ms. Jill Jungers. She is an educator, motivator, mentor, friend, and mother which the Columbia Heights community will deeply miss upon her retirement.

Jungers is not only a mother to four children and ten grandchildren, she is also a mother to each of her students. She supports, encourages and pushes her students and peers without hesitation. Her loving personality has created lasting connections with residents throughout the community. This makes her a marvelous teacher and role model to students, staff and friends.

“She genuinely cares about the well-being of each of her students. She expects the best of the best from her students and she helps them every step of the way there,” Sports Editor Sam Alexon (11) said.

Jungers has worked at Columbia Heights High School as a French, English and Journalism teacher for 40 years. She also took on the role of director for the CHHS theater department from 2005-2016 and has run the award-winning school newspaper for 17 years.

“She put more time and effort into the theater program than more people ever knew. She single handedly made it what it was, starting from scratch,” Co-Editor-in-Chief and drama participant Owen Johnson (12) said.

Her dedication to these school programs has led her to endless late nights at the school working with her students.

“During the weeks we layout the pages for the newspaper, I see Jungers more than I see my own family,” Co-Editor-in-Chief Kira Greenfield (12) said. “She really is like my second mom.”

“There were a lot of late nights working on the paper, but no matter how late it was, Jungers was still there working through it with us. To some people, she’s more than a teacher. She’s a mom and mentor. Because of her dedication, anyone who has met her is better for it,” 2017 alumnus Justin Larkin said.

Her hard work has not gone unnoticed. In 2015, Jungers was awarded the Superintendent’s Above and Beyond Award. The award is given to people in the Columbia Heights community who show Heights pride and have a passion for students and their education. She received the award because of her exceptional work, revamping the Heights Herald staff into an award-winning and nationally recognized newspaper, along with the transformation of the theater department. Jungers guided these programs while winning numerous awards in the process. She was also named Teacher of the Year by District 13 in 2009.



Photo courtesy of Laurel Osterkamp

Coworkers celebrate Jill Jungers at the “Life on Easy Street” ceremony for all 2017-2018 Columbia Heights retirees.

Jungers’ impact on her students is not the only mark she left at CHHS. She also left an impact on her fellow coworkers.

“Jill brings joy, integrity, loyalty and love to her classroom. Her students are her number one priority at all times, but the work that she does with them takes a close second. She demands high quality from herself and her students, and as a result, her students know what they’re learning while they are feeling deeply loved. Those are the hallmarks of a great teacher,” former CHHS English teacher and Jungers’ best friend Ms. Christina Anderson said.

Jungers will be retiring at the end of the 2017-2018 school year. The J2 staff isn’t quite sure how she will handle herself without the tireless dedication to her students.

“I often wonder what she’ll do with all the free time. I know she’ll spend time with her family, grandchildren and her horses. She’ll probably find volunteer opportunities too, she’s not going to be knitting- I can tell you that much,” Anderson said.

Jungers has changed the lives of thousands of CHHS residents. The impact she leaves on her students and peers is unparalleled. Her love and advice will forever remain in the hearts and minds of graduates, coworkers, friends and family. We are grateful for everything you have taught us and we wish you the best in all your future endeavors, Ms. Jungers.

Thank you to the English department for helping us surprise Ms. Jungers with this story.



Photo courtesy of Dane Hodges

Jill Jungers and The Heights Herald upperclassmen staff are all smiles at the 2018 “Hollywood” Prom.



Photo courtesy of CHHS Theater Department

Nicole Rubis, band teacher, and Jill Jungers direct a late night rehearsal.

