

A FAME tribute to Lauren Gallicchio

By Hinal Gandhi of Bryan Station High School

Until my junior year in high school, I had always found that the teachers I favored were those whose classes were seemingly easy. The first day of class in Lauren Gallicchio's arts and humanities class, students were bombarded with an intimidating syllabus and a detailed explanation of her high expectations for us, along with a clear warning that her course would be anything but easy. In that warning, she quickly proved to her students she was correct.

During the first week, I applied myself more in her class than the rest of my seven classes put together. Honestly, it was a class that I, along with my peers, dreaded attending. With a rigorous curriculum and an organized agenda, Ms. Gallicchio made sure her students worked steadily from bell to bell. What made her class different, though, was the distinct and diverse ways she taught us in each class period. Her lessons varied from PowerPoint presentations, group work, handouts, visual props and movies, to dance lessons, in-depth discussions and a well-anticipated field trip at the end of the year. No matter which approach she took to instruct us, she was always successful in instilling the material in her students' minds.

A strict and disciplinary environment at first, Ms. Gallicchio's classroom soon turned into a lively and entertaining place. Accompanying her rigid schedule, she also carried a witty sense of humor and guaranteed an enjoyable class period. In her presence, one could almost taste success. In my 13 years of school, no teacher has influenced me as much as her. Being a fairly young instructor, she related to me and other students quite easily. Guiding me through difficulties I had

in other classes, as well as offering advice for teenage life situations, she quickly became a friend. With a door that was always open, and still is, Ms. Gallicchio has shown students that her help is available even after class has been dismissed. Through helping me with my college decisions, empathizing with me in obstacles I've come across and encouraging me to strive to be the best in all I do, she has impacted me in more ways than I can keep track of.

Using encouragement, motivation and spirited conversation with her students as her principal tools for teaching, Ms. Gallicchio made sure to establish a comfortable atmosphere in her classroom. As for me, she was an inspiration because of her genuine passion for teaching. As difficult as her course was, she always stressed to me how much she expected from me, as well as how important education truly is. She showed serious concern in each student's progression, giving each individual motivation to keep working. By assigning essays and various projects, Ms. Gallicchio incorporated basics of English, science, math and other subjects into her arts and humanities curriculum. In doing this, she showed each student what their strengths were, while providing support for their weaknesses.

In my senior year of high school, I still visit Ms. Gallicchio's room frequently in search of her insightful advice, reassuring encouragement and bright words. By keeping her door open for me, she has unknowingly opened many opportunity-filled doors for me in the future. She has acted as a teacher, counselor, friend, associate and mentor. She has been nothing short of an inspiration, nothing less than a motivation and a role model, by simply reaching out to her students.