

A FAME tribute to Greg Adams

By Daniel Rouse of Paul Laurence Dunbar High School

Teaching is a profession that is often dismissed by the average student because of the amount of time and effort required, compared to the pay received. However, I would like to say that because of you, I am not the average student. My time spent with you during my two years of taking your speech classes was remarkable, and I learned more about reading and writing than any English class ever taught me. You taught just as much by communicating individually as you did from the front of the room teaching to the whole class. I have heard that communication is the No. 1 factor in any successful relationship; because of you I have many successful relationships. In a world that is moving to texting, e-mailing and instant messaging, I am happy that someone taught me how to use my writing and listening skills to my advantage. That someone is you, Mr. Adams. Thank you for teaching me to voice my opinions intelligently, using humor to express my point, and showing me that the greatest writers are the best listeners.

Intelligence holds great value in today's society. I would like to say that I have some of that myself. When I was a freshman, I was concerned about what others thought of me. That is when you set my world on fire. You helped me develop skills to communicate with others with confidence and style. The curriculum you taught us in our first year of speech class was outstanding. Not only did we have to memorize and recite other people's speeches, we also had to write our own and memorize them to tell the whole class. Memorizing was something that I had a great fear of before I entered your class. You helped overcome that fear and showed me how being creative is something essential in being successful. Others have told me that I am a

leader, but during your class freshman year, it became more apparent to me. Great leaders are not so different from followers, except for one key difference – they know how to express their personalities in a positive way. Mr. Adams, you helped me develop leadership skills through writing with intelligence and listening with a purpose! It was during my freshman year that I started running for class treasurer, and I would like to say that I helped maintain that office all four years with the confidence in public speaking with intelligence that I learned in your class!

Using a simple, but catchy, humorous slogan helped me keep my class officer status all four years of high school. Humor appealed to my classmates' senses. Mr. Adams, you helped me realize that humor is often a quicker and more direct way to people's emotions than being serious almost ever can be. Not to say that there are never times to be serious, but often using humor is a better way. After reading countless speeches in your class, it became obvious that many of the most successful speeches used humor to connect with their audience. I have tried to use this in most of my writing pieces. I have heard it said that laughing is a reflection of joy, and that is something that I have a lot of at this point in time. Thanks for helping me with the skills to reflect this joy in my writing. You helped me find a speech to write about that was on a serious subject but used sarcasm to get my point across. Many great writers of the past such as Mark Twain did such a thing, and I think it is possibly the most effective way of getting your point across.

Reading many pieces such as Mark Twain's "Huckleberry Finn" showed me how reading some of the great pieces helps a writer define their own style. Taking your class allowed me to observe what other students were doing and learn to be unique in my own way. Listening to you go

through speeches was enjoyable and helped me learn at the same time. You showed me that it is not always what you say, but how you say it. You used some crazy statistic to help prove your point with that subject. Four years later, I am happy to say that I listened. You showed me that the greatest leaders are the best listeners. I would have to say that you changed me for the positive, and it is almost indescribable how you did this. Laughing daily in your class by reading what everyone had to say was probably my favorite part. How the students helped each other in your class was awesome, too, moving from desk to desk and writing one thing to change and two things we liked about each piece. This helped my pieces, and I think I helped others with their pieces.

Mr. Adams, I had heard many great things about you before taking your class my first year in high school. Those things I heard were a complete understatement; you are one of the best teachers of your time! You have helped more students than you will ever know. But on a personal note, you helped me learn how to communicate my ideas effectively, use humor to show people what I am about, and that reading is just as important as writing. Throughout my years of high school, I have been required to read many things for school, but the things we read in your class did not feel forced because they were so enjoyable. Thank you for teaching me, not just in the classroom, but in the hallways, lunchroom and theater. Today you opened the door for me to walk into school and voiced everything I have just thanked you about. When you opened the door you said, "Come on, students. Time to learn." This simple interaction defines our relationship; you used humor and intelligence to make your point. Thank you for being you and teaching me that being yourself is exactly what everybody wants!