



GRINDSTONE AWARD



2013

Dave Tressel

Dave Tressel receives 2013 Grindstone Award

Whether it's mowing a senior's lawn or helping a Turkish visitor to learn English, Dave Tressel is dedicated to helping others.

A retired Berea School District teacher, Dave has been an outstanding leader in the Berea community, always willing to help and teach in and out of the classroom.

For that reason, Dave Tressel has been named the winner of the Berea Chamber of Commerce's Grindstone Award for 2013. He carries on a family legacy. His father, the late Lee Tressel, was given a special Grindstone Award in 1980. His mother, the late Eloise Tressel, received the Grindstone Award in 1983.

Born in Mentor, Dave moved to Berea as a youngster when his father became head football coach at Baldwin-Wallace College. He graduated from Berea High School in 1969 and from BW in 1973.

He attributes his volunteerism and his love of teaching to his parents. They instilled in him a desire to serve. "My parents were constantly helping others," he said. "They were the model of volunteerism."

His father taught at the high school level before joining BW and Dave says he was intrigued as a child by the teaching profession. "Dad gave me an old grading book and I used it to practice." His first pupil was younger brother Jim Tressel with whom he shared a bedroom. "I taught him reading," Dave recalls. "He was an excellent student."

Dave retired in 2008 as a science teacher at Roehm Middle School after 35 years in the Berea School System. In the past, he also taught other subjects as well, including social studies. He has fond memories of mentoring sixth-graders at Camp Mi-Bro-Be.

Middle school students are "enthusiastic," he says. "They'll respond, if you have something interesting to offer. Middle school kids have lots of energy. You have to try to channel it."

Dave is still committed to the schools. He was elected to the Berea Board of Education in 2009 and is a trustee of the school district's Education Foundation. He was the Berea High School swimming coach for three years and has taught summer learn-to-swim classes for the Berea Recreation Department for 45 years.

He is president of the BW Alumni Council, past president of Berea Kiwanis, a member of the Coe Lake Nature Trail Committee and a member of the board of the Berea Historical Society. Through Kiwanis, he volunteers with Realizing Your Potential, a mentoring group for African-American male students at Berea High. He also is involved with Builder's Club, a Kiwanis-sponsored group for middle school students.

Dave has four children, three of whom – Mark, Julie and Chris – also are teachers. Lee is a strength trainer with the New York Yankees' minor league affiliate in Scranton, Pa.

"The welfare of the community is of the utmost importance to Dave as he has proven through his generous volunteering and continued commitment to the city," one nomination letter stated. He rakes leaves and shovels walks for the elderly. He drives friends and neighbors to doctors' appointments, sometimes staying with friends in hospital emergency rooms until he knows their issues are cared for. He enabled one elderly resident to remain in her home after she became disabled. Currently, he is providing a room in his home for a Turkish visitor who wants to spend time in America honing his English skills. Dave browsed the Berea Library looking for books he might use to tutor his latest pupil.

Another nomination letter noted, "He is an excellent role model for the people of Berea...(with) his friendly, principled, compassionate approach to all with whom he interacts."

Above all he is humble. An active member of Grace Church, he says "God is the most important part of my life and then of course my family."

Presented April 23, 2013

Crowne Plaza Hotel, Middleburg Heights, Ohio