



GRINDSTONE AWARD



2017

John David Purdy

For Dave Purdy, Grindstone Award is 'all in the family'

Like his late father, Robert Purdy, Dave Purdy's life and career have been centered on children – his own and the students he counseled and coached in the Berea Schools.

And, like his father, Dave and his dedication to the community and students has been rewarded with the Berea Chamber of Commerce's 2017 Grindstone Award. Robert Purdy, a teacher and coach at Berea High School, received the award in 1978.

"I thought about him when Megan (Baechle, Executive Director of the Berea Chamber) called me about the Grindstone Award," Dave said. "I was talking to the Berea-Midpark High School girls' basketball team in the gym when Megan called."

"I just never thought of myself in that way," Dave said. "I thought about my Dad and all the people who came before us."

"This community has been so special," he said. "I have such wonderful memories of all the kids I went to school with and the kids and families I worked with."

Dave Purdy's interests and talents are far-ranging. He graduated from Berea High School in 1964 and went on to study at Muskingum University. He retired after 32 years as a guidance counselor with the Berea Schools. He was also a boys and girls basketball, track, cross country and tennis coach at Berea and Midpark High Schools, Ford and Roehm. Counting his time as an athlete in junior high and high school, that makes seven consecutive decades that he has played for or coached for the Berea Schools. His retirement did not mark the end of his involvement with students, however.

Dave has been very active with All-Pro Dads, a volunteer group of fathers at Grindstone Elementary School started by Shawn and Janette Washburn. All-Pro Dads aims to help fathers connect with their children through school and community projects.

"One of the most touching experiences is to see all those dads streaming into the

school for breakfast with the kids," Dave said. He said the monthly breakfasts attract up to 300 fathers and their children.

The Lou Groza Football League is another major interest. Dave worked with Ryan Devins, the founder of the league. Dave wrote the "character component" of the curriculum. Dave talks to the coaches about instilling the values of respect, behavior, listening skills, being a good teammate and getting to practice on time, among other topics. "It's important for kids to figure out what kind of person they want to be and lead them in the right direction," Dave said.

At the high school, Dave has been involved with Realizing Your Potential – a support group for boys, mainly minorities, who may be at risk for dropping out or not living up to their potential. The group is headed by Susan Malone, who Dave calls "terrific." He has worked with Malone, other mentors and with the students.

Most recently, he was asked by Mayor Cyril Kleem to be a chaplain for the Berea Division of Police's new Community Engagement Unit. Dave works with Rev. Patrick Hunt of Heritage Congregational Church, on ways to help officers deal with stress and crisis situations. "We hope to make a difference in some way," Dave said.

Dave and his wife, Ann, who is a nurse, also have been foster parents to 18 babies over the years. The Purdys cared for the infants for two to six months until they were adopted. "It was hard letting them go," Dave said. Their own children were young at the time, so the Purdy kids – Ben, Hannah and Carolyn – grew up with babies in the house.

As an outgrowth of leading numerous parenting classes, Dave wrote two books. "Dads are Special Too," written in 1985 focuses on the importance of a father's role in a child's life. "Little People, Big Choices" (1991) is aimed at helping parents make the most of parent-child relationships.

Dave has been a member of Berea Kiwanis since 2008, helping with Flags Over Berea and the Berea Relays. He was a member of the Board of Trustees for the Cleveland Pregnancy Center and member of the Lutheran West Operating Board. Dave and Ann Purdy are active members of Grace Church.

Moviegoers may remember Dave's brief stint as an actor in "Draft Day," a film about the Cleveland Browns that was shot in Berea in 2014. Dave portrayed an executive with the Seattle Seahawks. Knowing that the Seahawks' colors were green and blue, Dave showed up on set with a blue shirt and lime-green tie. His 15 minutes of fame were guaranteed. "You can bury me with a basketball, a pair of biking shorts and that incredible green tie!" he joked.

Dave credits his father, Robert Purdy, with his involvement in the community. "He was all about giving back," Dave said. "We have a lot of difference makers in this town. It's such a good feeling to be considered one of them."

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