

Nevada Public Education



Frank Mathews

Bill Hanlon

The state lost a good one last week.



Frank Mathews passed away this past week. He will be missed. Frank is an unsung hero in southern Nevada. Not only was he unsung, too many people in the upper echelons of the state and district didn't know how he impacted so many teachers in the Clark, Esmeralda, Lincoln, Mineral and Nye county school districts.

Frank, along with his colleagues at the Southern Nevada Regional Professional Development Program (SN RPDP), Jerrad Barcczyszyn and Glenn Krieger, began offering teachers computer classes long before it was fashionable. Their groundwork and their continued work has resulted in many teachers being trained in computer science so they could implement those types of classes at their home schools ensuring students greater opportunities.

I started working with Frank back at Eldorado High School some 40 years ago. He was a math teacher who began offering computer classes as far back as then. When I was hired as Director of the SN RPDP, I was able to convince Frank to share his knowledge, drive, and excitement with teachers so his enthusiasm would reach across all of southern Nevada's five local school districts.

With coding becoming a prioritized national movement, Frank, with his colleagues were recognized for their work and being ahead of the game and provided a statewide grant so their work could reach the teachers all across the state of Nevada. I was appreciative that Mark Newborn, vice president of the Nevada State Board of Education, recognized Frank's contributions to this state.

Frank never looked for the limelight, he was just a real good guy. He was a good man, hardworking and dedicated, and like many of us in education, got frustrated with state and district red tape. Having said that, he was one you could bring an idea, he would study it, bring back suggestions and recommendations to make it better. He never shied away from work or a challenge. You'd give him an assignment, not only did he complete it, he completed it quickly and improvised along the way to ensure it fit the needs of classroom teachers so they were better able to instruct their own students. He wasn't a person that needed direction, he was always working down the right path.

Frank also had a great sense of humor. He was entertaining to be with, fun to talk to and loved to play practical jokes on people. And, while those practical jokes were funny, he would never let anyone know he was behind it. He kind of relished watching the scenario play out and listening to people trying to figure out who was behind it. Going back to Eldorado days, Frank understood the idea of sharks in the water, smelling blood, would continue to be bumped around. We shared a motto; “don’t bleed”. If someone played a practical joke on either of us, we wouldn’t give the culprit the satisfaction that we even knew something was going on. Watching them waiting on us for a reaction was also funny for us.

We are going to miss Frank for his friendship, humor, work and contribution to teachers and students in the state.

Bill Hanlon, is a noted speaker, an author, educator, consultant and coach for schools, former Director of the Southern Nevada Regional Professional Development Program, and is a national presenter for organizations such as AASA, ASCD, ALAS, NMSA, NASSP, NSBA, and NCTM. He was the coordinator of Clark County School District's Math/Science Institute and was also responsible for K-12 math audits. He served on the Nevada State Board of Education, Regional Director of the National Association of State Boards of Education (NASBE) and as a member of the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) States Partnership Board. He also hosted a television series, "*Algebra, you can do it!*" on PBS Las Vegas.

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