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Terry Kelly : Alma Mater Award

St. Norbert College

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2016 Alma Mater Award



Terry Kelly '68

“Docere Verbo et Exemplo” – to teach by word and example – is the St. Norbert College motto.

It is more than just an exhortation to the college’s faculty and staff; it is also something we strive to instill in our students as guidance for living their lives.

Terry Kelly lives his life in just that way.

As an English teacher for nearly half a century, Terry has quite literally taught by word; but in every aspect of his life, he has also taught by example – and in the process, has influenced innumerable other lives.

In his teaching, Terry has displayed a passion for the profession and a deep commitment to his students. One of those – now an attorney – cited his former teacher’s pithy remarks about genuineness as a source of guidance in his professional writing today. Another marveled at the amount of time Terry invested in commenting on his essays, and credits Terry as the inspiration for his own career as an English teacher.

So great is Terry’s desire to make a difference in the classroom that he has volunteered to work with the most challenged students at Marquette High School, to help them succeed in a college-prep curriculum.

Terry’s contributions to athletics have been similarly exceptional. Coach of one of the most highly regarded track programs in the state, he is a lifelong student of coaching methods. Now

retired from coaching football, he was elected to the Wisconsin Football Coaches Association Hall of Fame in 2008. Far beyond the techniques of a given sport, Terry also teaches his athletes important life lessons about discipline, commitment and character.

Perhaps even more important are the lessons Terry helps his students learn off the field and outside the classroom. At his school, he has since 1981 been director of the Senior Shared Life Project, through which some 250 students each year are immersed in service for two weeks – in nursing homes, shelters, schools and social agencies throughout Milwaukee. It is a program that transforms the lives of the participants – and, by virtue of the astonishing 400,000 hours they have devoted to the cause over 25 years – the lives of those they serve, as well.

The list of additional contributions made by Terry to his school, his community, his church, his friends and neighbors, and people in need is exhaustive. He is quick to point out it has not been a solo effort: Terry credits Peg, his wife of 47 years, as a steady source of support and guidance.

Terry Kelly has been, in every respect, a teacher by word and example, and for that reason, we are pleased to present him with the Alma Mater Award.

St. Norbert College

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