



Teacher of the Year

Russell Hanson

When asked who I believed deserved to be named Teacher of the Year from Lewis and Clark High School, my mind immediately went to this teacher. He was first my coach, teaching me the rules of softball, knocking on my helmet after a good hit, and encouraging me from the dugout. And then, he was my friend and mentor, talking to me about my college plans, telling me about his path to becoming an English teacher, and letting me in on jokes during my 1st-period TA. There is no other single educator who has supported me through high school like this teacher.

He has coached JV softball at Lewis and Clark for a very long time, and I was a part of his team for three years. Softball has been my escape from schoolwork and outside worries. On the field, I don't have to worry about tests or pages of a textbook I need to read. But before I played for him, my enjoyment of softball was less love and more a passing inclination. Now it's what I look forward to after school every fall and spring, and though my teammates have changed over the years, he never did. He believed in my abilities even when I doubted them and worked with me to grow my skills at the plate batting and behind it as a catcher. He encouraged and trusted me to run warm-ups and rally the team if there was a conflict between some of the girls.

Though quiet, this teacher is incredibly kind and funny once you get to know him. He cares deeply for his players and students. He knows the schedules of his student's sports and asks them how the games went. And when the umpire makes a bad call at softball games, he fights them on it, standing up for his team even if some of his players don't quite understand what happened.

This teacher gave me a glimpse into what my future could be like, a high school English teacher who coaches softball and shows Shakespeare-based movies in class instead of stuffy stage versions. It is my honor and privilege to nominate Mr. Russ Hanson for Teacher of the Year.

