

A humble, quiet giver who preferred to remain behind the scenes in most respects, Robert James Joubert had a powerful voice when it came to advocating for his students and special education.

Mr. Joubert began his legacy in the school system's Exceptional Children program when he was hired in 1970 and taught until it closed in 1993, at which point he moved with other Edneyville faculty to the new North Henderson High School. After only a few months at North Henderson High, Mr. Joubert was hired by retired Superintendent David L. Jones, Flat Rock Middle's then-principal, to serve as Assistant Principal. Mr. Joubert spent the remainder of his career at Flat Rock Middle, where he maintained his rigorous work ethic and involvement in his school; often the first to arrive and the last to leave, Mr. Joubert became "the man behind the scenes" who managed buses, facilities, athletics, textbooks – and served as leader to future Henderson County Public Schools educators.

Mr. Joubert's love for his students was evident to his nominators, and they write that the special education teacher would have been the first to "go to bat" for his students with special needs – whether that meant advocating on their behalf to parents, other teachers, or administrators. In fact, Mr. Joubert is often described as one to "pull for the underdog" who went out of his way to support and guide students facing challenges – both in and outside of the classroom – and who gave selflessly to anyone in need.

W. Scott Rhodes, Chief Human Resources Officer for Henderson County Public Schools recalls that during the holidays, Mr. Joubert provided presents to his poorest students – who reminisce, to this day, about opening his gifts on Christmas mornings past. Former student and employee David Elmore writes that Mr. Joubert loaned him money to have his car repaired when his daughter was born prematurely, so he could travel to Asheville each day and visit his newborn in the NICU. "He was a man of integrity who worked long and hard to provide the very best he could for students and staff," writes Mr. Jones.

As assistant principal at Flat Rock Middle, Mr. Joubert served as a mentor for several young teachers who continued their education careers in Henderson County Public Schools, including Kim Morgan (Principal, Dana Elementary), Maggie Gilliam (Instructional Coach, HCPS), Scott Cowan (Instructional Coach, HCPS), and Mr. Rhodes. Former colleague and friend, Dot Case, writes that Mr. Joubert was particularly influential in nurturing the love of special education among young teachers in that particular field of education. "Joubert taught these young teachers that teaching is a special calling and that special education students are a gift!" said Mrs. Case.

A testament to his legacy and leadership, Mr. Joubert's memorial service in 2015 drew together former students, teachers, and school administrators to share stories of his mentorship, teaching, and humility in giving. Mrs. Case writes, "He was the defender of what was right and good in education and life."