



Ms. Nancy Edwards

Dedication and commitment pay off, and Nancy Edwards is a fine example of that, as a school employee from 1963 until 2002, working in Henderson County schools for 31 of those years. Attending Clemson University in the second year that the school admitted female students, Edwards learned for the first time what being in the minority felt like. She then went on in 1963 to teach at Brevard High School, which, in the same year, became the first Western North Carolina school to become fully integrated.

Heading the English department at both Edneyville High School and North Henderson for several years, Edwards has been an integral part of the Henderson County community. Edwards sponsored the newspapers at Hendersonville and North Henderson, and the yearbook at Edneyville, making a major impact on the school communities and her students. She helped select the colors and mascot of North Henderson when it became the fourth high school in the county, planned and executed the first graduation at the school, and chaired the first committee that obtained Southern Association of Colleges and Schools accreditation for the school.

"I have had the privilege of knowing Ms. Edwards for over 30 years, both as a student and a future colleague," Scott Rhodes, former student, colleague, and current Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources for Henderson County, said. "She has had a profound impact on my life as a person and as an

educator. You've heard the saying 'People don't care about how much you know until they know how much you care.' Ms. Edwards was a perfect example of this quote. She was very demanding, but that didn't matter because she quickly built relationships with her students. She asked about our extracurricular activities, asked about our families, and connected with us before she ever tried to teach us how to diagram those lovely sentences. We knew that Ms. Edwards cared about us and wanted us to reach our full potential."

"In 1998, I had the opportunity to teach and coach at North Henderson High School, and it was there that I had the chance to work with Ms. Edwards as a colleague. Our relationship changed from teacher and student to mentor and colleague. She taught me that you could be demanding and caring simultaneously. If done right, it would allow you to build a classroom culture where students want to give you their best, and relationships will last a lifetime. Ms. Edwards was a big part of my high school experience, and because of her and others like her, I decided to become a teacher, and I will always be grateful for their influence and guidance."

Recommended by Dot Case, Henderson County School Board member and former colleague at both Edneyville and North Henderson High Schools, Case was always impressed by the high expectations that Edwards always had for her students, and made a difference in the lives of all her pupils.

Outside of teaching, Edwards was also an original member of the Henderson County Education History Initiative, appointed by the Henderson County Commissioners, serving as both Chairman and Secretary. As told to us by Patsy Jones, Edwards' leadership qualifies her for this honor along with her teaching service in Henderson County public education for 31 years.

Edwards has made a lasting impact on our community both inside and outside of Henderson County Public Schools. Carolyn Justus, the chair of the Henderson County Heritage Museum Board, said, "Edwards was instrumental in establishing the Tar Heel Historians at the museum, helped recruit members, advertised and bought refreshments. She did it all!" Mostly, Justus was overwhelmed by Edwards' dedication.

