



Remembering Dr. Lawrence T. Kanner – A Principal-Teacher

In the fall of 1975, Charles H. Roth would become a Senior High School, and “Doc” ultimately became the **#1 Roth Royal** as our school principal. For twelve years, he symbolized excellence in education. He embraced the importance of every element of learning from the mandatory and elective courses to the extracurricular student activities. Both the students and teachers realized Doc was creating an educational experience second to none! Doc valued his faculty. He worked in partnership with every teacher, counselor, and staff member. He immersed himself in the daily activities of the school. Walking the hallways, having conversations with the students, eating lunch in the cafeteria, or showing up in a classroom unannounced, Doc oversaw all aspects of our education.

He published a paper in 1977 titled: **The Changing Role of Administration**. Within this paper, the very essence of his approach may be found, and why he will be remembered as a “Principal-Teacher.” Our teachers recall him as a “Leader-Teacher” in reference to his style of administration.

He understood what a pivotal time in a young person’s life our high school could and should be. He knew teachers needed to be engaged in decision-making as equally as the administration. Doc blended established R-H teachers with new R-H teachers thus creating a team that combined new ideas and approaches with time-tested methodologies of instruction. Our successes, both in high school and later in life, can be attributed to his approach, guidance, and team building of his teachers and staff. Doc gave every learning discipline the same importance – from Art to Industrial Trades, every subject matter was equally important. He gave our core requirements of English, Math, Social Studies, Science, and Phys-Ed equal weight in importance as he did with sports, music, theater, and many others. Having clubs for special interests was also embraced and encouraged. Our overall development was his focus, always.

During these years, R-H Roth Senior High School was an extended family to everyone. It has often been said: *“It takes a village to raise a child”*

and what a wonderful village we all had! Being fortunate to have the most exceptional teachers of the day, Dr. Kanner saw to it that every student was afforded every opportunity to participate in any area of interest. He supported every teacher in his or her instructional approaches. No barriers existed in *“his”* Roth Senior High School, and everyone was equally important. Every teacher was equally valued and respected by Doc. As students, we had the very best a high school education could provide – it was simply there for our taking.



Sadly, Dr. Kanner passed away in April of 2023. Former students and faculty took to social media to remember Doc and wished to somehow pay tribute to all he did for his *“kids”* and his faculty and staff.

The R-H Roth Class of 1982 decided to plant a tree in his memory. We requested a spot within the bus loop, and it was approved. Our dedication was held on the fourth Saturday of June – how appropriate as each graduating class commencement for the R-H-Roth Senior High School also was on the fourth Saturday of June. More, however, needed to be done. After all, Doc was the “*Leader-Teacher*” and we wanted to somehow honor his leadership. We needed to convey how his approach was embraced by his teachers and staff. We wanted to say “*Thank you*” to Doc and all the teachers. The perfect manner came into focus.



A stone, in our school colors of the day, with a very special saying summing up our collective feelings presented on behalf of every Roth Royal from every year. Our class quickly moved to obtain this tribute so it may be ready for this special day. We also needed a simple, but heartfelt token of appreciation for our former teachers – a simple bookmark with the same saying inscribed on Dr. Kanner’s stone marker.

“*The true guardians of the community are the teachers.*” This one simple sentence expresses the importance Doc and the teachers played in our development within “*our village*” of the day.



On Saturday, June 24, 2023, several former teachers, students across multiple class years, and guests attended to share their memories. The very special spirit of this place Doc had created resonated with each speaker. The R-H Roth Class of 1982 also wished to comfort Mrs. Kanner so a classmate created a hand-made quilt for her. Ellen, their daughter, was in attendance this day and delivered it to her mom. So many heartfelt memories were shared for one hour. Teachers, students, a letter from one of our counselors, Ellen, and a guest speaker recalled their memories and times at this very special place and of this very special man.

Later this day, Ellen described the tree dedication to her mom. Mrs. Kanner had the opportunity to see and touch the quilt and saw many pictures taken, and Ellen relayed to her all the fond memories shared. In pictures, she saw how beautiful the tree was that she helped to select, and she heard about the formation of a special place, Educators Grove, where Doc’s stone marker will be placed permanently. It is a newly purposed place to honor educators within the Town of Henrietta and Doc will be among the first to receive this honor. Happily, Mrs. Kanner heard all the love and respect expressed, and we had this chance to honor her husband so she would know the positive impact he made on “*our village.*”

Sadly, Mrs. Kanner passed away on Monday, June 26. We all grieved once again, but we took comfort in knowing Doc and Ruth are back together again. We will watch his tree grow in their absence. We thank all our past teachers, counselor, fellow classmates, and community members for honoring Doc with us. We will tend to the tree and watch it grow just as Doc watched us grow.

There will never be another Roth Senior High School as it was from 1975 to 1987.

Thank you from the Rush Henrietta Roth Senior High School Class of 1982 and ALL Roth Royals