



**"The art of teaching is the art of assisting discovery."** ~Mark van Doren, Writer/poet

## Wildwood Middle School Teacher Retires After 25 Years

# Farewell Mr. Stevenson

by **Ione W. Laffey**

Middle School Special Education  
Wildwood School District

written by Meg Corcoran

Teacher Jon Stevenson began his road to discovery in Los Angeles, CA, where he lived until he reached the 7<sup>th</sup> grade. He and his family then moved to the island of Guam in the Pacific. It was there that he continued his education, ultimately earned his high school degree. For the next two years, he attended Northwestern University. He completed his college education at Dordt College in Iowa, where he gave weather reports on the local radio station (farmers were very interested in their corn).

Ever the world traveler, Jon spent summers with his granddad in Vineland, NJ, where he eventually would meet his wife, Marian. His love for Wildwood (and Marian) began, as the two of them made the trip to Wildwood's Boardwalk Chapel. They would also both love to ride the Wild Mouse on the boardwalk.

Following their wedding in 1969, Jon and Marian lived in Puerto Rico on the island of Vieques for three years, where Jon did Christian broadcasting. The first of their five children was born there.

The Stevenson's were happily lured back to the seaside town of Wildwood when a position at the Boardwalk Chapel became available, a position he would proudly hold for many years.

Jon soon became a substitute teacher at Wildwood High School where he earned the distinct honor of working in "the Pit" as the in-school suspension teacher. Having survived that task, he spent one year as a truant officer before finding his place at Wildwood Middle School as a social studies teacher.

The newly-retired Jon shared with fellow teacher/comrade Ione Laffey a love of teaching and a sense of humor (having learned a wise life lesson that one must never take one's self too seriously). She and Jon worked together for 16 years (sharing a classroom for six). Ione recently recalled how he managed to hold the students' attention with his vast knowledge of history, his ability to fix any computer problem, and his affection for corny jokes. She remembers the best joke she ever played on him was on his "60" birthday. She had him called away to handle a computer problem. When he returned to the classroom, his students were holding up 20 head-on-a-stick pictures of him while they all sang Happy Birthday!

Inspiring through knowledge and humor (and the occasional corny joke), Jon remained dedicated to the craft of teaching. He holds the distinction of having had only one sick day (and that's only because the school nurse made him go home) during his tenure. He was committed to the long list of students who marched through his classroom on the way to fulfilling their own dreams, grateful to have had such a supportive guide.

Jon officially retired on December 31, 2011 after 25 years of serving the district, leaving behind a void that will be hard to fill.



One of our themed dress up days, Mrs. Laffey, Ms. Pierce, Mr. Stevenson



Another themed dress up day, Mrs. Laffey was Flava Flav and Mr. Stevenson was Wyatt Earp



One of the best jokes Mrs. Laffey played on Mr. Stevenson was when she pasted his picture in as one of the Presidents and he did not notice it until the end of the day.



Mr. Stevenson made a square box of his head for a mask during 'spirit week'



Mr. Stevenson's head-on-a-stick picture that was hung at the copy room door!



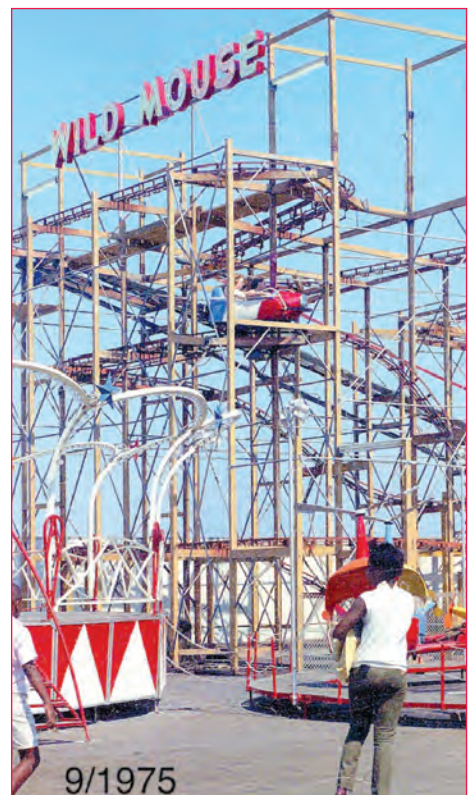
With the help of Mrs. Laffey, Mr. Stevenson's students surprised him for his 60th birthday, with his head-on-a-stick.



Jon & Marian Stevenson in 1969



Jon & Marian Stevenson, 2011



Jon & Marian's favorite boardwalk ride, The Wild Mouse. Photo by Tom Kinneman, Courtesy of the Wildwood Historical Museum