

KDS Alumni Honor Former Principal

When Joe Teal graduated from Jacksonville State University in 1968, he knew he wanted to teach. His first job was at KDS DAR School, where he stayed for 25 years. During those years, Mr. Teal held positions as teacher, coach, and principal.

According to Shannon Benton, KDS Class of 1980, Mr. Teal was known and loved as a mentor and friend to so many students whose lives he touched every day. Benton recently organized a group of former students who attended the school between 1968 and 1993 to surprise Teal, whom many still call "Coach," at the morning worship service at West Highland Baptist Church in Athens, Alabama, where Teal is now pastor.



Shannon Benton (left) wanted to honor his former principal and organized the surprise visit.

"KDS is a source of pride to the Grant community, and Mr. Teal is a huge part of it," Benton said. "We just wanted him to know how much he meant to so many."

An emotional Teal said from the pulpit that day, "Being inducted into the Marshall County Sports Hall of Fame last August was kind of a big deal for an old coach, but this is the greatest honor I have ever received."

At KDS, Teal taught math and coached basketball and baseball. His teams competed in county and state championships which earned him his place in the Marshall County Sports Hall of Fame 36 years later.

Teal became principal of KDS in 1976 at age 28 and held the position for 17 years. He said people would often ask if he missed coaching and he really did, but he missed teaching math more. Still, he loved being principal. "In fact," Teal said, "I have loved every job I have ever had. I have had a blessed life."



Joe and his wife Bonnie have been married for 52 years.

Portions of this article were taken from the article "Pastor Joe Teal: A Man After God's Own Heart" from the Faith and Family section of the News Courier, Athens, Alabama. The article was written by Carole Malone.