



Mary Jane Witt – Junction City, KS

“There are certain people that you encounter in your lifetime that you will never forget. They have touched you in a way that keeps their memory alive and the words they’ve spoken dear to your heart. I have worked very hard over these past 36 years to be that special person to my students.” These are the words of Mrs. Witt’s philosophy.

She began her teaching journey by earning a BA degree in Elementary Education from Marymount College of Kansas at Salina in 1986. From 1997 to 1999, she worked on earning her Master of Science in Library Media from Fort Hays State University. From 2003 to 2022, she has completed several professional growth activities.

Her teaching experience covers a span of 36 years, beginning in Oakley, KS in 1986 as a 2nd grade teacher. She became a 4th grade teacher in 1988 in Junction City, KS. In 1992 she began working for Geary County Schools, USD #475 on Fort Riley, KS in 3rd and 4th grade. In 1992 she moved into Junction City to teach 4th grade, then worked for Kansas State University as a Clinical Instructor for 3 years. In 2005 she taught 4th grade at Sheridan Elementary. Next, she worked at Lincoln Elementary School as the Library Media Specialist for 13 years. Beginning in 2020, she became the Junction City Middle School Media Specialist.

During her career she has earned many honors. She was the USD 475 Teacher of the Month, was in Who’s Who Among America’s Teachers, was named a Kansas NEA teacher Excellence Award Nominee, was a KTKA Teacher Who Makes a Difference Nominee, was the USD 475 Kansas Teacher of the Year Nominee, and received the USD 475 Shining Star Award.

Along with her teaching duties she has been a Volleyball Coach, an Assistant Girls Basketball coach; and a Lead and Assistant Track Coach. She has also been very active in her church in volunteering as a Sunday School Teacher and Minister of the Eucharist. Outside of her classroom, she has served as a District Mentor, Technology Task Force Member, Professional Development Council Representative, Site Council Member, Reading and Math Task Force member, Quality Performance Accreditation member, Kansas National Education Association member, and Kansas Reading Association Member.

“If you love what you do, you’ll never have to work a day in your life” is a quote that has defined my career as a teacher,” says Mary Jane. She goes on to say “I really have loved each teaching assignment and each of these experiences has helped me gain valuable knowledge and immeasurable joy throughout my career.”

Dr. Beth Hudson, former Superintendent of Geary County Schools, says of Mrs. Witt, “I loved working with Mary Jane who brightens the lives of students and colleagues. She is a natural teacher who never misses an opportunity to grow professionally, and then uses the

opportunities to grow her classroom. She is widely respected for her understanding of teaching and learning.” Because of her exemplary modeling of education, we welcome her to the Kansas Teachers’ Hall of Fame Class of 2022.