

Monday through Friday for over 20 years, I ate breakfast with Sarah McFarland in the MHS Dining Room. If Sarah showed up late, she would always find that we had left her favorite seat for her at the head of the table, a deference that secretly delighted her—not that she would ever have admitted to such vanity. Proper as she could be, she really liked to stir up trouble, and those of us that dined together loved her blend of opinion, acuity, and faux-combative humor.

Ms. McFarland was always just "Mac" to me, and I loved pushing her buttons and watching her push my buttons in return: I can still clearly remember an epic argument I had with her about whether time was real. We had many such amicable disagreements, mostly at the breakfast table, and some of what she said to me can't be printed, but she was an intellectual fencing partner for a number of us, including Gary Miller and a revolving cast of new and veteran teachers who always started the day together with a meal before striding down the hall to teach one thing or another. And this incredibly unique woman loved to teach.

Sarah prided herself on her work with the girls here, and her teaching reflected clearly the most important things about her life. Sarah knew the world better than most of us, and her truly global adventures during breaks and vacations manifested themselves in her courses about the world or in classes with global relevance. Many a student could still tell you a story shared with them by Ms. McFarland, even though the years have gone by since her retirement. Teaching about religion delighted her, and she painted astonishing pictures with her words as she spoke in class. A brainy student herself, she delighted in her psychology courses, and she worked hard to prepare for classes even in her later years as a master teacher. Ms. McFarland was truly beloved by her students, and she had a coterie of admiring followers every year, a small group dedicated to true scholarship and good humor.

I will remember her forever for lots of reasons, but especially for the chair races that she and I used to have. This was truly a noble MHS tradition, and anyone who's seen a couple of these has some memories worth holding onto. What started as a strange, impromptu (and eventually annual) race on office chairs down the upstairs hallway—which more and more students and teachers rushed from class to watch, over time—finished as a dramatic spectacle in front of the whole school at a Community Meeting the year she retired. We probably did this a dozen times, over the years, and I never once won. I was always happy to play the villain to her hero for the students who watched, and I can still see her triumphant smirk in my mind's eye. I loved her for it.

When Mac was a child, she never missed a day of school all the way through high school. To me, that says that she was ready to meet the world around her all the time, and so she did. We worked together for many, many years, and the school is a lonelier place for me without her. I'll remember her forever, and I'm glad to have taught with her at this wonderful school. — **MR**