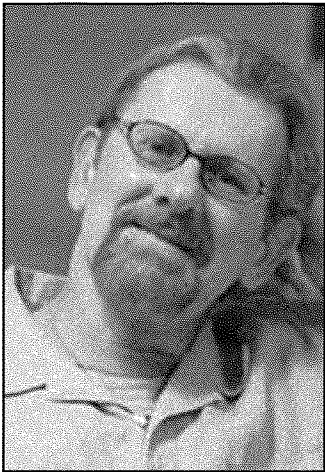
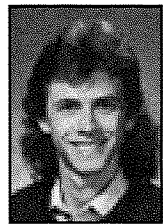


# DHS Alumni Mourn The Loss of



Dr. Wayne Crawford, DHS English teacher and *Maroon & White* adviser (1972-1988).



Keith Souza ('88) was a member of Mr. Crawford's newspaper staff.

**Note: This tribute honoring the late Dr. Wayne Crawford was written by his former student, Keith Souza ('88). Crawford taught English at DHS from 1972-1988 and advised the student newspaper, *Maroon & White*.**

## **Peace by Wayne Crawford**

*Peace throughout the world.*

*Let's give peace a chance.*

*Peace and calm for all.*

*In my head and heart.*

*Want not.*

*Expect nothing.*

*Accept the unexplained.*

*Persevere.*

*Believe in strife.*

*Strive to believe. Peace and calm for  
you and me.*

*I will wear loose cotton robes, carry  
a flower, teach others to be at  
peace with themselves and all  
others in the world.*

*Why would I ever want to wear  
denim jeans that have been  
pre-STRESSED?*

Sometimes a teacher crosses over that line from lecturer to mentor, from test giver to friend, from paper grader to inspiration. Wayne Crawford didn't step over that line, he leapt, in a single bound, over it. Not just for me, but for almost every student that was lucky enough to have him as a teacher or work with him on the *Maroon & White*. When I began to put together research for this article on Mr. Crawford, I quickly discovered two things. First, that Mr. Crawford left his mark on anyone that he came in contact with. I found quote after quote, and thank you after thank you from past students that credit much of their success to the great beginnings that Mr. Crawford laid down for them. Second, Mr. Crawford is one of those rare spirits that cannot be defined using the ordinary descriptions. When asked who he would like to meet, he named people like John Lennon, Socrates, Alexander the Great, Salvador Dali, Jesus, gray-skinned undertakers with red carnations in their black-glitter lapels, and Jumping Jack Flash. I only wish I could have read a list of his influences, then again, it may be one in the same. He always held Superman as a hero of his and wrote about him frequently.

Mr. Crawford graduated from Oakwood Township High School in 1964. He attended Columbia College and while in school, he worked for the *Chicago Daily News* as a pop music critic. He worked as a personal assistant to Harry Bouras,

an internationally noted artist, critic, and teacher. Upon graduation in 1972, he came to work at Danville High School as an English teacher. Right away he served on the *Maroon & White* cub staff for two years. He became the head adviser for the *M&W* in 1974 and served in that capacity until he left DHS in 1988. He received his Ph.D. in English Studies from Illinois State University and was subsequently hired as the Director of English Education at Western Illinois University. He later served as Director of Graduate Studies until he retired and moved to Las Cruces, New Mexico.

As a teacher, he is best known for teaching journalism. Students fondly remember his classes. Sherry Sanford said, "I remember journalism class with Mr. Crawford back in the 80s ... he taught me that it was KOOL to express myself my own way ... I never forgot his lessons and until recently never knew how much I applied them to my life since high school."

During his time as the *M&W* adviser, the paper won 10 first place awards, including the prestigious George H. Gallup Award. More than the awards for excellence that the school newspaper garnered, Mr. Crawford made his mark on the DHS student body. I reached out to several of his former students and the message was always the same; he was a great influence and wonderful teacher.

I think the thing that stands out the most about Dr. Wayne Crawford was that he treated his students as equals. If we stepped out of line, a quick fatherly look put us back on track. We had to rise to his level. He gave us what every teenager craves: to be treated as an equal. We had a responsibility to act beyond our years and we did. Maybe he knew that he was coming into our lives when we were most open to influence and he took that responsibility seriously. The status quo was not accepted in his class. Question authority and don't accept the establishment's rules. Make your own voice because if you don't, someone will give you one. While we didn't all drop out and move to Haight-Ashbury, we took the message with us in life.

When Dr. Crawford moved to Las Cruces, he began a new chapter in his life. He left behind traditional academia and moved on to poetry. In 2001, he started an online journal of poetry and short fiction called *Lunarosity*. It derives its name from the desire to provide work that represents a generosity and luminosity of spirit. He published a book of his poetry called *Sugar Trail*. He also worked as co-editor of a regional poetry anthology called *Sin Fronteras/ Writers Without Borders*. He was also a member of the Executive Board of the Dona Ana Arts Council. He founded several open mics and organized many readings including Love of Lit Poetry Day. He was a tireless advocate for the literary community, always encouraging younger poets to write, read, and perform their poetry. He worked to complete a true-crime novel before his death. The last 10 years of Dr. Crawford's life, while filled with a passion for

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# Longtime M & W Adviser

poetry, were also filled at times with physical difficulties. He was first diagnosed with painful fibromyalgia. In 2010, he was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer, which ultimately took his life on March 12, 2011; he was 64 years old. In a January interview, he said he worked for a balance “between pain control and cognitive ability”. When reflecting he noted, “I’ve lived pretty much an intellectual life and that’s how I’m going out.”

Dr. Crawford was born in Danville, and is survived by his partner Randy Granger; two children, Kimberly McCormick of Bloomington, IL, and John Crawford of El Paso; and three grandchildren, Damon, Autumn, and Alyssa McCormick. Crawford’s former wife, Barbara Crawford of Normal, IL, died nine days after Crawford’s death. Wayne and Randy collaborated on numerous endeavors. They hosted the Las Cruces Poetry Workshop at their home for several years. Many of Wayne’s poetry performances were accompanied by Randy’s music. Crawford recently collaborated on the title track of Granger’s latest CD, *Pura Vida* (Pure Life). He finished an anthology of his own poetry, *Dancing Skin*.

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Mr. Crawford was an unbelievably inspiring teacher and mentor at DHS. I just loved him! He encouraged us kids to celebrate our differences, to explore our imaginations, and to live up to our potential. I try everyday to live by his lessons. As our adviser on the *Maroon & White*, he suggested I take up photography which led me to the U of I and ultimately where I am today. I can’t thank him enough for believing in me and encouraging ALL of us whose lives he touched to think just a little outside the box and be the best, most creative person you can be. I will never forget his charismatic and honest way of teaching. In a small town such as Danville, we are all better people for having had him in our lives. - **Nicole Montgomery - Class of 1987**

I served three years as photo editor on the *Maroon & White* in the early 80s and it was such a great experience. Wayne was a great leader, in his own quiet, respectful way. He never got nervous or

upset as deadlines approached as we all worked crazy hours to meet deadlines. I really liked Wayne on a personal level because he didn’t treat me as a student, but almost as a friend. We had discussions that ranged from music to war and while we often disagreed during our discussions he showed me how it was important to question authority (government) and to form my own opinions based on careful thought. One of my best memories was a trip that Wayne took the *M&W* staff on to Chicago my senior year. We toured the museums and saw all of the sites, including a night at Second City, watching a great night of improv. - **Tom Wodetzki - Class of 1984**

Wayne Crawford did not light the fire. However, in his energized yet gentle way, he fanned my smoldering interest in journalism into a three-alarm blaze. Mr. Crawford did not rule his journalism or writing classes with the stereotypical iron-clad fist of the iconic newspaper editor or grizzled football coach. He commanded respect through thoughtful discussion about social issues or the importance of words. He made us want to think. - **Jeff Owen, Class of 1976**

He was certainly one of the best teachers I ever had. I was on the *Maroon & White* and covered the entertainment (mostly concerts and albums). Most people don’t know he worked for the *Chicago Sun Times* and interviewed all the big name acts of the 70s. I remember him talking about the Stones and that Woodstock was one of his first concerts he covered. - **Tom Wagner, Class of 1983**

Over 30 years have passed since Mr. Crawford’s English classes at DHS and I still recall his teaching and concern for his students both in his classroom, as well as throughout their school lives. At a time when I was struggling in school, it was Mr. Crawford’s encouragement that helped convince me to not drop out. I later graduated and went on to college. - **Anonymous**

I graduated from Danville High School in 1978 and Mr. Crawford was one of my favorite teachers. I still remember to this day ... taking a genuine interest in his students. He made English and journalism class enjoyable, and that was tough! - **Dave Hastings, Class of 1978**



*Maroon & White* Editors, 1974-1975, posed in Uncle Joe Cannon’s office at the Vermilion County Museum. From left: D. Pollitt, J. T. Nicholson, S. Hutton, D. Scharlach, Mr. Crawford, K. Crockett, M. Stein, S. McDonald, L. Montgerard, K. Erickson, and J. Kesler.