

A Word From the Publisher

A Tribute to Rose Way

There's so much about a small town that so many people don't understand. Last Wednesday, this small town was paralyzed by news of the passing of Rose Way. I, for one, was devastated to hear the news. I can't help but to, once again, share my deepest feelings for this precious lady.

Ms. Way was one of a kind! I feel like I have known her all my life and now I realize

I only knew her for a short time. But to me, those times were some of the best of my life. When I was in school, Callahan Junior High was 7th – 9th grades. Not only did we elementary girls realize we had to now change classes but we also had to dress out for PE... together! It was a scary time for us little girls. That's when Ms.

Wright, at that time, came in the picture as our PE teacher. Right off the bat she calmed those nerves (not really) by telling us to go in the locker room, change into your PE uniform in 3 minutes and be on the track... period. I'm pretty sure during those 3 minutes there was a lot of crying but it was dried up before we made it to the track. She made sure we understood completely that she didn't play! That was a hard year but we learned fast!

Later we learned that she did smile every once in a while but not too many times at PE! The following year, I made the cheerleading squad. Now, it was much different than it is now. There were only 10 girls on the team, we did go to camp and our mother's or someone made our uniforms. We went to all the football and basketball games and rode the same bus as the team. The girls rode up front and the boys rode in the back. Oh...trust me they didn't have any trouble with the boys and girls. If they did, it was short lived. You see, between Ms. Wright Way, Coach Stearn (my dad) and Coach Kirk, when they heard an issue, it was over immediately.

We learned (or I sure did) when we were on the field or court cheering, we'd better be cheering. There was no standing around

looking for your boyfriend or parents, you'd better be cheering! All you had to do was look in the stands and there was Ms. Wright Way giving us 'the look' of death! It's funny now, but it wasn't then. She was a hard teacher but an awesome leader, listener and friend. She taught us to be respectful young ladies that represented not only our school but our families. She taught us to care about

each other and to smile...like her. Her smile could light up any room. Trust me we prayed for the smile, not 'the look'!

Fast forward many years, and my daughter had Ms. Way for PE. She comes home and tells me, "She didn't have to dress out in PE because Ms. Way said I didn't have to!" I quickly said, "Oh NO,

that's not going to work!" The next time I saw Ms. Way, I asked her "How does that work now for my daughter but it didn't when I was there?" She said, "I guess I mellowed, Dawn!"

Our friendship continued to grow as we both aged. A few years ago, she began to stop by the office and sit and visit with us. It became a routine and we began to grow closer. I realized something was wrong, health wise, but just welcomed her each time. What a blessing it was for her to be inducted into the West Nassau High School Hall of Fame this year. Seeing her smile brought back my smile and so many memories made in such a short time. She was so happy that night as she was surrounded by her family and many, many friends and former students.

I am one of many, who was blessed to be just a small part of Rose Way's life. Each time we saw each other it was first the smile, then a hug, then "I love you my friend." Words can't express the void I feel in my heart. I'm so thankful for the many lessons I learned by being her student, cheerleader and friend. She taught me to be thoughtful and respectful in all that I do and to keep that smile...just like her.

