



## Ruben Emil Wenzel

May 6, 1926 - November 16, 2020

Ruben was born May 6, 1926 and attended rural school in Parkston, South Dakota. He was county-wide valedictorian in 1944. He graduated from Dakota Wesleyan U and the U of Denver. He served in the US Army 1950-52. After teaching in Watertown, SD he taught English from 1955-85 at Sheridan, NE Jr. High, and Edison H.S. in Minneapolis. He was Minnesota Teacher of the Year nominee in 1977 and a Minnesota Teacher of Excellence. "Mr. Wenzel" set high standards, and his students rose to meet them. He was highly respected by parents and students alike. He taught grammar, literature, and enduring lessons for purposeful living. For decades he enjoyed letters and visits from former students. A world traveler, he maintained a rich devotional and worship life as member of Mt. Olivet Lutheran Church.

Ruben was the subject of a feature article in Minneapolis Star and Tribune, June 2, 1985. Services will be held in the summer of 2021.

# Tribute Wall

ID

“ We're getting this a little late in Florida.

*Mr. Wenzel, and I would never stoop to calling him by his first name, was the best teacher I had in 19 years of schooling: Bar none. I am sure you have heard this hundreds of times lately.*

*I still have the original note book I produced in his class back in 1959. If the house were burning down yep, that's what I would go back for.*

*He was the surely one in a million.*

*I honor his memory and give my sympathy and regards to the family.*

*Ingo Dere*

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**Ingo Dere** - December 09, 2020 at 07:36 AM

AB

“ *Mr Wenzel taught me to appreciate fine literature, proper grammar and speech and to develop good character! I still, to this day, keep a literature notebook and a favorite quotation journal because of Mr Wenzel! He was the most wonderful, impactful teacher from whom I had the privilege of learning! I still keep my “Wenzel Notebook” from his classes in 1979 and 80! We will share stories about his amazing positive impact on our lives until we meet him again! Thank you, Mr Wenzel-you will never be forgotten!*

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**Annr Beaufeaux** - November 25, 2020 at 10:31 AM

CY

*Mr Wenzel always terrified me but only because I was afraid he would call on me to speak in front of the class!*

*His class taught me how to listen and not just hear. He taught me how to stay focused by blocking out distractions. He taught me how to be a respectful student by doing both. To think before you speak. My favorite quote from his class remains today one of my favorites, and I raised my children to heed its counsel, "Every time you open your mouth, your mouth goes on parade."*

*Oh...and that the comma is not the only form of punctuation! 😊*

*Mr Wenzel was a good man and a great educator. Thank you, Sir.*

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**Catherine (Kyle) Yahrmatter** - November 26, 2020 at 07:31 PM



“*Mr. Wenzel is the greatest teacher I ever had. He taught me life lessons that have guided me to this day at my age of 70. He was a disciplinarian, but his discipline always guided us to creativity.*

*In jr. high, he caught me and another boy cheating on one of his many tests and made us stay after school for a month!! But instead of just sitting around at our desks, he made us read books and write book reports. His discipline was always creative.*

*If our nation's school boards adopted his teaching methods, we would, by far, be the most literate nation on earth.*

*God bless you, Mr. Wenzel. I will look you up in the next life and look forward to you teaching me the lessons the angels have shared with you.*

*Respectfully and Gratefully,*

*Nick Aguilar*

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**Nick Aguilar** - November 25, 2020 at 09:54 AM

JB

“ This notebook sits on my bookshelf; it's lived there for 42 years. The shelf changed as I moved from home to school to apartment to house to house, but its place of importance on that shelf remained constant.

I reference not only his notes, but the scores of life lessons he passed on. I quote Mr Wenzel to this day. My children know the one-liners he changed daily on the board (remember caulk boards?) to greet his class every morning. "Fame is a vapor, Popularity an accident, Riches take wings, only one thing remains, Character", or "Any dead fish can float downstream. It takes a live one to swim up it.", or this "Education is what remains after you're through forgetting", and one I've often repeated to my children the night before their tests, "One cannot clearly state what he does not know."

I have a large repertoire of Poe, Shaw, Holmes, Dickenson poems still at my fingertips. He asked us to memorize them, and they stuck. I can't remember my anniversary, but for some reason these poems cling to the cobwebs in my head. As well, so do the lessons of capitalization, punctuation, sentence structure and parts of speech.

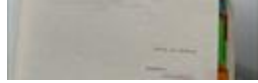
No one teacher affected my life, and contributed to so much of my success in such a profound way as did Mr Wenzel. I am passing on his lessons to my children, and if God blesses me with them, I will give to my grandchildren. Mr. Wenzel will live on.

God bless you, Mr Wenzel. May God grant peace and comfort to your family.

I just now opened the old "Wenzel Notebook" and sitting there on the random page I found this, another of his famous one-liners:

"You have touched me. I have grown."





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**John Benjamin** - November 24, 2020 at 09:51 AM



SA

*Well said John!*

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**susa allen** - November 24, 2020 at 10:01 AM



*Learned more from him than anyone else (scholastically anyway) -  
taught me that yawning in class is disrespectful.*

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**Nick Johnson** - November 24, 2020 at 10:53 AM

LC

“ Ah. Mr. Wenzel. I've been composing “memories” in my head since last Wednesday when my older sister let my siblings and I know that Mr. Wenzel had died. She said that someone had posted it on Facebook. I am not “on” Facebook and I rarely regret that. This was one of the times that I did feel some regret. Mainly, I wish that I had known about the party that was thrown for Mr. Wenzel 4 years ago. Although I had left a note for him sometime after I graduated, I would have loved to have told him, again, how much I loved his class, how much I learned, but more importantly how much I appreciated him as a human. While a lot of people found Mr. Wenzel scary, I personally felt his class was safe and secure and stable. I felt competent and not clumsy. It was something that I needed. I've had some tears these last few days thinking about how much I loved him and that he is gone...although he really isn't gone. He has always been with me. Every time I (still) pause when deciding between “effect” and “affect” and every time one of his vignettes floats through my brain. My siblings and I have quoted those vignettes regularly. We seem to be pulling them out more often in this challenging year that 2020 has been. I hope to hear about his Memorial Service in the Spring and would gladly fly back to Minneapolis from way out here in Seattle. In the meantime, I'm going to go find my Wenzel notebook and arm myself with some wisdom, inspiration, and good memories.

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**Lisa Beth Cominetti** - November 22, 2020 at 05:27 PM



*and he taught us how to SPELL vignette!!!*

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**Nick Johnson** - November 24, 2020 at 10:54 AM

RF

*I was a student in 1965, English  
In his class I was a terrible student , but I always respected him and I made a deal with him that he would not fail me If I turned in the assignment every day ....right or wrong*

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**rickey ferrara** - November 24, 2020 at 04:47 PM



*Lisa, his memorial is Saturday, August 28 at 2:00pm at Mount Olivet, 5025 Knox Ave. S. Mpls.*

**Lisa DeMars** - August 15, 2021 at 09:55 AM

AF

“ 1 file added to the album Memories Album



**Anders Frank** - November 21, 2020 at 09:22 PM

EH

*Like yesterday. Great man.*

**Earl Hatcher** - November 22, 2020 at 11:46 AM

CC

“ *Mr Wenzel was the best teacher I have ever had. He not only taught me English but also so many important life lessons. My "Wenzel" notebook sits in my closet to this day and I cherish it. I also have a handwritten letter to my parents from Mr Wenzel and it is also a prized possession. This fine man will be missed.*

**Carol Collias** - November 21, 2020 at 08:27 PM

DF

“ 1 file added to the album Memories Album



**Dennis Frank** - November 20, 2020 at 09:46 AM

DF

“ Our family has known Ruben for over fifty years as a teacher, friend, and baptismal sponsor for our two sons. Throughout his retirement he relished the contacts with former students.

*I keep my "Wenzel notebook" handy and consult it when needed. Perhaps you still remember some quotations that he assigned us to memorize. "Whoever has received, on him there is an inexorable behest to give." (Carlyle)*

*Dennis Frank, Kristen Simon-Frank, Anders Frank, Hans Frank*

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**Dennis Frank** - November 20, 2020 at 09:16 AM

SF

*Ruben, you were a teacher of English and an educator of life lessons. You truly cared for all of your students. I was amazed how you could still remember me and what class I was in and in what row and what seat I sat in your class. Thank you for your influence in all of your students' lives. I will always remember you the way that you've remembered me. Rest in peace good friend!*

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**Steven Frank** - November 20, 2020 at 01:51 PM

SD

*Our Dear Friend Ruben > so many wonderful memories over half a century made > some in restaurants with you and especially one occasion when we visited with you and Dr. Frank Braun at the Meadows > we played a game designed by Anne-Marie called "Horsefeathers!" It involved the use of a Dictionary, command of English language, and life experiences. You were delighted to be able to use a hardcover Dictionary - Webster's Tenth Edition. A life well shared and well lived! To your Memory, Dearest Ruben. Love Anne-Marie and Sheila de Jong (Jim in Memoriam).*

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**SHEILA DEJONG** - November 20, 2020 at 02:00 PM

DC

*Mr. Wenzel Spoke with great authority and valuable lessons for life. I recall him saying that we should " Associate ourselves with men of good quality if we esteem our reputation for it is better to be alone than in bad company. True wisdom that I cherish to this day. Many proverbs of the wise men were quotes he cherished enough to teach the inexperienced RIP Mr. Wenzel*

**Doug Caple** - November 22, 2020 at 08:27 AM

NB

*I enjoyed reading memories by others. Obviously Ruben Wenzel touched so many of us. I had the great pleasure of having him for a teacher. He was instrumental in directing me down the path of an English major. Very sorry to hear of his passing. He came to our wedding in 1972. Dan Reeves and I kept in touch with him over the years, and the last time we gathered, he took us both to JAX for lunch in 2012. After that it was contact by phone calls or letters. Such a very special man! RIP Dear Ruben. Please know your legacy as an educator was far far reaching...and remembered fondly!*

**NAOMI BLISS** - November 22, 2020 at 03:25 PM

JD

*I was delighted to be able to talk with Mr. Wenzel at the last big Edison all-school reunion (2012?) and tell him that he was the hardest and best teacher I ever had. I learned English inside and out from him and used those skills every day of my life since 9th grade. RIP Mr. Wenzel*

**Jill (Adolphson) Davenport** - November 23, 2020 at 03:48 PM

JW

*Thank you Mr. Wenzel for the upstanding man that you were. You were my English teacher at Sheridan Jr. High in 1965. To this day I watch my words as if you are listening. May the Good Lord bless you and keep you in His peace. James Wiersgalla*

**james wiersgalla** - November 23, 2020 at 05:32 PM