

2007 Woodie Flowers Nomination – Mrs. Drummer

Throughout my FIRST career, I have had the good fortune to be taught by several excellent mentors. Last year, I had the pleasure of writing a winning Woodie Flowers submission for a mentor who taught me a lot about building a robot, science, and engineering. This year I am our team captain and I have found a new mentor who has taught me more than I could express in 6,000 words about how to be a leader. Her name is Mrs. Grace Drummer.

Mrs. Drummer is not an engineer, a math major, a science teacher, or anything of the like. She is, however, the greatest asset our team could ever possibly ask for. It is often said that there is more to FIRST than a robot, anyone who does not understand that simply needs to meet Mrs. Drummer. Mrs. Drummer not only takes care of the clerical side of the team, she takes care of the team. She taught me what it truly means to be prepared. At the first team meeting of the year I came with a brief outline of things to talk about; she, the team mentor, came with four different packets including information for kids and parent information. At the beginning of our fall season, I decided it would be fun for our team to host a road rally for new team members. I did not realize how much work it takes to organize such an event. What impressed me the most was Mrs. Drummer's ability to let me come to that realization on my own. She let me try to organize everything, making herself available, but not forcing herself on me. When I finally realized the enormity of my task and came to her for help, she was there for me with creative ideas for stations, advice to make things run smoother, and even her home to build in.

Mrs. Drummer seems to be a woman of infinite patience. Every year she takes the freshman and sits them down with button machines and teaches them the fine art of button-making. When I poke my head in an hour later, I see two piles, about equal height, one of perfectly manufactured buttons and the other of terribly mangled mistakes. I also see Mrs. Drummer patiently explaining for what must by now be the 100th time how to properly make a button.

I have often wondered what kept Mrs. Drummer with our team, her youngest son having graduated over three years ago, and I believe I have figured it out. We often joke as a team that Mrs. Drummer is a mother to us all, but that may be truer than we realize. Like a mother, she picks up after us when we rush excitedly to our next great adventure; like a mother, she has infinite patience reminding us about the important things in life, such as "Thank You" for sponsors, parents, and hosts for team events; like a mother, she helps us when we bite off more than we can chew; like a mother, she chauffeurs younger students to meetings, Chairman's events, or even home from meetings. I suppose, in a way, we are her adopted family. I know this for certain, if I had to adopt anyone for a mother for our team, someone to take care of us, to teach us responsibilities, to cover our errors, to be there for us, I don't think I could possibly find anyone better than Mrs. Drummer. She might not be an engineer, but she is exactly what our team, what every team, needs.