

2011 Woodie Flowers Award Nomination for Mr. Hildebrandt

We students often overlook the importance of mentors; they guide and encourage us, lending their knowledge and helping us in any way they can. One mentor on our team epitomizes this. He is extremely dedicated to robotics and his passion is seen daily; he is willing to do anything for the team. Even with all his contributions, he rarely receives the appreciation he deserves. I speak for the entire team when I write this essay honoring and thanking Mr. Warren Hildebrandt for all his contributions to the AdamBots.

A defining characteristic of Mr. Hildebrandt is his experience. H (as we often call him) has been a *FIRST* mentor for 14 years. There is no doubt he has gained valuable experience during his time as a mentor. If a student has a question, he or she can bet that H has the answer. With his knowledge, he does many things to help students learn about engineering and to share his passion. He holds CAD workshops for both students and mentors, making presentations and demonstrations to help everyone on the team learn something new. He is willing to stay after school for as long as the students want. For example, this year four students attempted to build swerve pods for the first time. During the off-season, they worked after school from December until mid-January; H was there the entire time to ensure that they had access to the work room. He took time out of his busy schedule to allow the students to experiment building swerve pods and was there to answer any questions they had. H took his encouragement a step further by offering to hunt down needed parts. While the project has not yet been finished due to the start of the *FIRST* season, we have five students eager to continue learning and a mentor proud of their efforts.

If all of this is not enough proof of his dedication and enthusiasm for robotics, recent events can dispel any doubts. Last year, H decided to retire after 33 years of being a CAD teacher. Our district policy decrees that workers who are not teachers cannot be paid for running a club, causing H to grapple with what appeared to be a difficult decision: he could continue to mentor the team without being paid or resign as a mentor. The prospect of losing such a great mentor frightened the team, but our fears were futile. The possibility of leaving the team never once crossed H's mind. For him, no sum of money could cause him to resign. Today, he continues to run and mentor the team while barely receiving any money. His dedication and willingness to work without pay truly showed his love for team.

I wish this essay could be longer because there are a thousand more things H does for the team. Even so, I hope you can see how amazing is H. His knowledge, dedication, and passion are an inspiration to the team, making him a truly great mentor. Regardless of whether he wins the Woodie Flowers Award, I hope he can see how much the team appreciates him. Without Mr. Hildebrandt, the AdamBots would be nothing.