



Gil Henderson, right, speaks with North Farmington High senior Ryan Zeyburn in the lobby of the school.

NF's Henderson leaving mark as one who cared

By Casey Hans
staff writer

Gil Henderson remembers those little things — like the birthdays of all 350 North Farmington seniors.

The assistant principal at North is rather humble about his relationship with students, many of whom gather around him when classes change and say wonderful things about him.

When it comes to love and caring, he says, "you have to dish it out to get it."

Henderson will be serving up his special brand of human relations for just another few weeks. The 53-year-old educator, whose career has spanned more than 30 years, will retire in January after teaching adult education, general education and vocational education, and serving several times as assistant principal and principal in secondary schools. He has worked in Farmington since 1958 and in his current post for nearly four years.

"He's a great guy," said North senior Jason Alpert. The students and administrator "have a mutual respect for each other," he added.

people

"He's always been like a friend," said classmate Ryan Zeyburn, who has known Henderson since his days as principal at Warner Junior High, now a middle school. "When you're having a bad day, he helps. He's always happy. Everybody loves him."

ANOTHER SENIOR, Amy Fletcher, likes the personal interest Henderson takes in students. "I think he always knew what everybody was doing, and what they're into," she said. "He's always into what you're doing — everything."

Henderson's life is many-faceted. In Farmington he's known as an educator. But in Novi, where he lives with his wife, Myrna, who teaches in the Farmington schools, Henderson is a longtime political figure. He has served in both school and city government for the past 20 years. He does not currently serve on any board, but remains interested in issues involving his community.

"Two or three years ago, I just couldn't make myself go to any more meetings," he explained. "Once it didn't get to be fun, I quit."

What Henderson does not intend to quit upon retirement is having fun. An avid cyclist, he hopes to take several long trips — possibly one from Florida to Michigan — and has a dream of taking a cross-country trip with a truck driver so he can see the country through the trucker's eyes.

"I want to stop and smell the roses," he said. "I want to learn to do a few things. I want to learn to meditate, to take time alone. I want to learn to kayak... to dance."

Yet, he is concerned about leaving the hustle and bustle of the high school scene. "I've been on stage all my life — I don't know what I'll do without it," he admitted.

Henderson's humanistic view of life developed when he reached the age of 35 and discovered himself. "I finally realized I was human — I didn't know that," he said. "I denied I had feelings."

His journey into self and life in education and politics has colored the way he deals with students today, he added.

DNA tests are used in rape case

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Identifying criminal suspects, the DNA test was developed in England in 1980.

"We're looking at DNA, the molecule. We're actually analyzing for the variation that is found in DNA and its uniqueness to each individual," said Charles Barna, unit supervisor for the Michigan State Police serology lab, East Lansing. Barna is evaluating technology and developing a DNA testing site for the East Lansing crime lab.

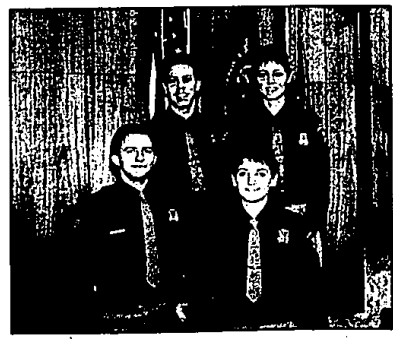
DNA technology allows an analyst to identify an individual based on blood, hair, semen or just about any body tissue or fluid with cells containing a nucleus, Barna said.

The DNA code determines everything about an individual including hair and eye color, height and weight, for example.

THE RESULT of a DNA test is called a DNA fingerprint because it uniquely identifies an individual. The results appear as a pattern of dark and light bands transferred to photographic film for interpretation by a scientist.

In the Oakland County serial rapist case, body tissues — such as semen — recovered at the assault scenes, were flown to Cellmark Diagnostics, Germantown, Md., one of three labs conducting DNA tests, for analysis. The evidence was flown rather than shipped "to maintain the chain of evidence and to protect the specimens," Dwyer said.

In fact, the drawback to this new testing procedure is the need for adequately sized samples in good condition. It doesn't take long to determine whether a sample is good for testing; the actual DNA test takes several weeks, Barna said.



Names were wrong

The names were transposed when this picture of Farmington Hills' newest police officers ran Thursday. In the front are Thomas Shivak and Shelly Solak. In the back are Alan Petterson and Sandy Schrage. The former police cadets graduated Nov. 18 from the Oakland Police Academy after 12 weeks of training. The new officers have started the second phase of their 18-month training program. They'll be teamed with a certified police trainer for the next four months so that their readiness to perform their duties can be evaluated independently.

Blood needed during holidays

Christmas trees, Christmas cards, stockings hung by the chimney with care. These are all wonderful holiday traditions. But some people have another, more significant holiday custom — donating blood.

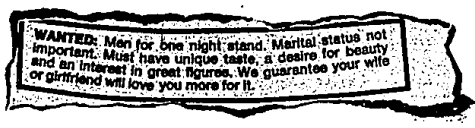
For 11 months out of the year, southeastern Michigan hospitals need about 1,000 pints of blood per day. But, during the holiday and post-holiday season, this need increases dramatically.

Unfortunately, there are not enough traditional holiday blood donors to offset the increased demand for blood.

Consequently, area hospitals often suffer blood shortages, and the American Red Cross must go out of the community to locate another blood supply.

It also means that people who have postponed elective surgery until after the holidays may have to postpone again due to a diminished blood supply.

Call the American Red Cross at 494-2800 to give blood.



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