



Advanced English eighth graders conduct the memorial service at Dunckel. From left are Joan Sung, Micky Olinik and Elyse Turner.

Dunckel kids remember a favorite administrator

By Casey Hane
staff writer

O.E. Dunckel students offered an end-of-the-year tribute June 4 to a favorite administrator who died unexpectedly of a heart attack last October.

Assistant principal at the Farmington Hills middle school until his death, Robert Anderson was honored at an all-school assembly organized by the school's eighth graders.

Described as "quiet" and "special" by students and colleagues, he was preparing for a December retirement when he died. He had worked at the district for 26 years.

Superintendent Michael Flanagan said Anderson was "kind, gentle, caring and dignified" and was "special to the district in his own quiet way."

"If (my kids) are able to grow up and have those attributes, the world

would be a better place," Flanagan said.

Anderson's family and friends met in the gymnasium for the early morning assembly to share music, writings by students and fond memories of Anderson.

Anderson suffered a heart attack at his Brighton home and died at McPherson Hospital in Howell. The former Farmington resident and Iron River native was 60.

DUNCKEL PRINCIPAL Buhl Burton said eighth graders in Sandy Chamberlain's advanced English class immediately began the grieving process by talking and writing about Anderson. "Then they collected money for a tribute. They collected \$1,500," Burton said.

The money was used to plant a memorial garden on the school grounds, which will include a rock with the inscription: "Mr. Anderson: a teacher, a leader, a friend."

"He will always live in our hearts," said Jean Sung, one of nine eighth graders speaking at the ceremony. "He was so friendly and helpful."

Students recalled times when Anderson would encourage sports teams, even though they had lost, and helped a student with a broken leg get to class. "Mr. Anderson reached out beyond his duties," said Micky Olinik.

Julie Wilson recalled the last time she spoke with Anderson. "He was whistling with his hands in his pockets," as she was leaving school one day. "Ironically... the last thing I said was goodbye."

Burton encouraged students and friends to remember positive things when thinking of Robert Anderson. "He's left us with so many positive things," Burton said. "When we need a plus, we'll think of Robert Anderson."

Officer feared for life during shooting

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Vassel was admitted to Botsford General Hospital for treatment before being released.

Dunlap had accompanied his cousin, Tara Turner, to the apartment to help her to remove some items from an apartment she had shared with Vassel for about two weeks. The two were leaving the complex when they saw Vassel at the gatehouse talking

with the night guard.

Timothy Gillespie, a guard with the Birmingham-based Continental Security, was working that evening, and said Dunlap and Vassel had a "mild conversation" before the incident occurred. Turner testified she saw Vassel go to his car trunk and remove the pump shotgun.

THE DEFENSE contends Vassel

was defending himself, and that Dunlap and Turner came to the complex with a confrontational attitude. Police reports indicate that Vassel's shotgun was not loaded at the time of the incident, but Officer Dunlap testified Friday that Vassel had "racked," or cocked, the gun during the incident, forcing him to fear for his life.

Scheffer granted a defense motion allowing Vassel to post 10 percent of the \$10,000 cash or surety bond; previously, he was being held

in the Oakland County Jail with no 10-percent bond provision.

The judge warned Vassel to stay away from Dunlap and Turner and "stay out of trouble."

It was revealed during testimony Friday that the defendant Vassel has no prior criminal record, and works two jobs: one as Blue Cross/Blue Shield in Southfield and another at a Mobil gas station in Farmington Hills.

Gateway Apartments are south-west of Middlebelt and 12 Mile.

clarification

A quote in Thursday's Observer attributed to Farmington school board candidate Richard DeVries was punctuated incorrectly. The quote should have read: "I've lived in the district for the

last 10 years and have probably voted in every election in the last four or five years. Prior to that, some of them I did, some of them I didn't. I'm 40 years old and short-term memory is the first go."

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