

# Country Day drops 'Dead Poets' teacher

By Greg Kowalski  
staff writer

Detroit Country Day teacher John Campbell, who was the inspiration for Robin Williams' character in the 1989 movie "Dead Poets Society," said there is no question he was given a "short-shrift" by the school, which refused to renew his contract. "I'm a little bewildered by the action the school took," Campbell said. "I'm not really sure why they did it." The school issued a three-para-

graph statement outlining the school's position.

It said, in part, "Faculty members are evaluated on a one-year basis and, if concerns arise, the individual teacher is placed on probation and notified personally and in writing of those concerns."

"John Campbell has been on probation for several years, has been aware of the school's concerns and has not satisfactorily demonstrated a willingness to adhere to all the academic and professional standards

of the school."

CAMPBELL ADMITTED to being a "malcontent." He said, "I've been on probation for several years. I questioned a lot of things." The school refused to elaborate on the prepared statement.

Campbell said a published report was correct that he incurred the school's ire for speaking about the economics of education. That class discussion, he said, turned to the topic of millages and if schools can

equiate expenditure with quality education.

Campbell, 55, has been a teacher for 28 years. He achieved national attention when "Dead Poets Society" was released. The film was about an unconventional teacher who challenged his students to think rather than memorize.

Robin Williams was one of Campbell's English and history students in the late 1960s and early 1970s.

"I ALSO COACHED him in wres-

ting," Campbell said. He added the last time he saw Williams was about five years ago when he went backstage for a Williams' performance.

Campbell missed school and a half week of classes in March because of illness. He said he was given permission to return to work by his doctor but the school advised him to use his sick days to take the rest of the year off.

In 1974 Campbell ran for state House in the 64th District, "and I lost in a heavily Republican district. But

I gained more votes than any other Democratic candidate," he said. He said he remains active "off and on" in politics.

"I don't know where I'm going," he said of his future. "I have sent a few resumes out and all kinds of people have been calling me." But he has no definite future plans.

As for his philosophy of teaching, "I really don't know that I have one," he said, then paused. "Other than that, I have fun. I think that's good enough."



## Making the cut

NBD Bank vice chairman Thomas H. Jeffs II (second from left) cuts the ribbon on the bank's new 20,000-square-foot facility at 12 Mile and Haggerty in Farmington Hills during a ceremony July 19. The \$200 attached to the ribbon is the first installment of a donation to the Farmington Area Advisory Council,

a local charity. Assisting Jeffs (from left) are Mary Bush, past president of the Chamber of Commerce; William Cozick, Farmington Hills city manager; and Russell J. LaBruzzi, NBD first vice president and director of the South Oakland Region.

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