



Educator Cliff Kaminsky left lasting impact with his life in Jersey

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
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JERSEYVILLE - Cliff Kaminsky is an educator who will never be forgotten in the Jersey Community High School circles.

Kaminsky died at age 60 on Saturday, Dec. 26. Crawford Funeral Home in Jerseyville handled the funeral arrangements for him. A Celebration of Life in Cliff's way was set for 3 p.m. January 2, 2015 at Westlake Country Club in Jerseyville.

Kamninsky served as band director at Jersey Community High School, beginning in 1989 and he eventually was the school's athletic director. He retired in 2013 as Dean of Students. He began his teaching career at Beardstown High School in 1977.

Cliff's death came just two days after the passing of [East Elementary student Jonny Wade](#), 8, in Jerseyville, with cancer.

Lori Franke-Hopkins, Jersey Community Unit 100 superintendent, said Cliff's passing was another sad thing for the district.

"Many hearts are hurting once again," she said at the passing of Cliff Kaminsky. "As Jersey 100 leader, I'm struggling with sending yet another message reflecting another great loss to our community.

"Cliff Kaminsky served as Jersey Community High School Band Director for over 20 years, Jersey Community Community Unit District No. 100 Athletic-Activities Director for five and JCHS Dean of Students for one year prior to his retirement, then he lost his battle with cancer."

Franke-Hopkins said one cannot fathom the impact Cliff had on students, staff, parents and the community.

"So many stories of humor and love have been generated on the Celebrating Cliff Kaminsky Facebook page, providing a glimpse into the life of Cliff and just how much influence he had on people," she said. "His family has given so much to the Jersey 100 community, and for that we are so grateful. Cliff possessed a demeanor that was truly unique. He was a very special person who will be missed greatly. Let us be joyful of the memories Cliff created and work to keep him alive in our hearts."

Rob Kaminsky, Cliff's son, said it is amazing how many people his father affected, even during his time in Beardstown 25 years ago and in Jerseyville.

"He had the ability to get the most out of everybody and have a great time doing it," his son said. "It's something that not everybody can do. When I think of him as a coach or father, I think of him not as the hard-nosed New England Patriots' Bill Belichick kind of guy, but the more supportive type. Someone recently wrote: He would say what you do doesn't have to be perfect but try to do one more thing better than you did the last time. That is all you can ask, he would say, is for constant improvement. I think that was him in a nutshell."

Rob Kaminsky said when his dad started with the Jersey band program it had less than 30 members and when he stopped it was up to about 180 students on average. He said

his father welcomed everyone to band, from football players, cheerleaders, basketball players and that everyone was welcome.

“Making everyone feel welcome was one of my dad’s best attributes as band director,” Rob said.

Franke-Hopkins encouraged the community to keep Cliff, Diana, Josh, Rob, and their entire family in their prayers at this very difficult time.

Rob Kaminsky said his father possibly didn’t know until the end the impact he had on so many people’s lives throughout Jersey County.

“The only positive thing about him getting cancer and being on Hospice is he got to see that working with the students like he did every year, he greatly impacted every single person he came in contact with,” Rob said. “That is incredible. I would like to think if I have a quarter of the impact he did, I will have a really meaningful life.”