

Local principal honored as "Distinguished Educator" by his alma mater

by Cory Davenport, Contributing Writer
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ALTON - Ss. Peter and Paul Principal Harry Cavanaugh was recently given the **Distinguished Educator Award** by **Eastern Illinois University (EIU)**.

Cavanaugh said he was awarded the honor among published authors, foundation starters and several teachers of the year. He said he was nominated by his son, who was a fellow

graduate of EIU. After his nomination, Cavanaugh received several letters of support from the community. A committee from EIU reviewed his nomination and those letters, and chose him for their award, which he received at the school's homecoming on Oct. 22.

"Every year at homecoming, the university gives awards in several categories; one of them being the Distinguished Educator Award," Cavanaugh said. "I was fortunate enough to be nominated for it and receive it."

The award came with a plaque, which Cavanaugh said is hanging on his wall at home currently.

"I graduated in 1969," he said. "I've been out of there a long time. I feel very honored to receive that award."

According to the EIU website, Cavanaugh was chosen among so many other exceptional individuals due to his dedication to education. In his awards bio, the university mapped out his prolific career in education starting with three decades in the **Bunker Hill School District**, where Cavanaugh worked as a business education teacher, a guidance counselor and eventually principal at **Bunker Hill High School**.

After leaving **Bunker Hill**, Cavanaugh became principal at **Gillespie High School**, where he received his high school diploma. In **Gillespie**, Cavanaugh created a **Wall of Honor** to recognize the high school's alumni who have made a difference in the world.

Cavanaugh became superintendent of the **Lebanon Community Unit School District #9** until his retirement in 2010. Following that retirement, Cavanaugh took the position as principal at Ss. Peter and Paul. He also teaches English there. That dedication to education is why EIU chose him for the award.

"With a career in education spanning six decades, Harry Cavanaugh has proven time and again his commitment to education and the students and communities he's served," the website stated.

The **Springfield Diocese** recently received word of Cavanaugh's accomplishment. He said he is currently awaiting its response.