

# Mike Slaughter's Last Walk: Students, Faculty, Family, Friends Show Their Love For Retiring Marquette Catholic Principal

by Dan Brannan, Content Director  
May 13 2021 4:31 PM



ALTON - Long-time principal of Marquette Catholic High School, Michael Slaughter had his last walk home from school on Thursday morning. He was surprised along the way by his students, faculty, family, and friends, who were there to wish him a *Happy Retirement* and thank him for everything he has done.

Mike Slaughter is retiring from Marquette Catholic after 40-plus years of service. Slaughter sang happy birthday to every student at the school and always showed he cared by not missing any events. One of his traditions was to walk home each and every day and on his last day, he was joined by nearly the entire student body.

Slaughter said goodbye to the students after their exams and he noticed many of them walking two blocks down the road and thought it was something out of the ordinary.

“I had no idea what was going on,” he said. “Rain, sleet, snow, or hail, I walked to and from school eight blocks. If it was raining, I used an umbrella, if snowing, I had boots on. I think the kids know how I have felt about them all this time. I have never made any bones about Marquette's family and they have been and always will be part of my family. One time, someone asked me if I had a kid out there at a sporting event, and I said, ‘they are all my kids.’ I went to their events and cheered them on. They are all my kids.”



## **WATCH THE VIDEO:**

Mary Hough, an organizer of the last walk event, said those at the school were just thinking about ways they could honor Mike Slaughter for his 42 years of service to Marquette, 16 as principal.

“So many people know he walked eight blocks home each day all those years and got to thinking how fun it would be for him if the students walked him home on his last day,” she said. “It was just a celebration today of Mike Slaughter and what he meant for Marquette. The best part was seeing his face. For Mike Slaughter, it is always about the kids. It was very heart-warming.”

Slaughter said he walked back in 1970 as a student at Marquette, then graduated in 1974. He came back as a teacher in 1979, and other than a couple of years outside Marquette at another Catholic school, he was there his entire career.

Recently, the City of Alton had Michael Slaughter Day, so the retiring principal has had his share of the spotlight in recent days.

"I don't think there will ever be another Principal like Mr. Slaughter at Marquette," said Brett Klaus, a music/theater teacher at the school. "This is a man who attends every game, activity, function, social event, theater production, etc. associated with the school. My mom, Ruth Klaus, taught at Marquette for 25 years and she assigned him to do the eulogy at her funeral."

“He walks to school every day, arriving early enough to stand on the front steps to greet each student as they enter the school for the day," she said. "Despite the inevitable next day, you could find him in front of the student section at pep rallies and games leading them in the roller coaster. He has even danced with the Poms at halftime as a tribute to his friend and co-worker Ruth Klaus.

"When a student has a birthday, he announced it over the loudspeaker during the morning announcements and he sings to them in the cafeteria at lunch. He does his best to ensure that each and every student knows they are loved and important. Because of this a month into the pandemic when in-person learning was halted, the Class of 2020 held a surprise car parade in front of his house, simply because they missed their principal.”

Slaughter said: “You don’t know how much this means to me. Thank you all very much. I always have a love for family, and love for God. I want to say to all the students that I always loved them regardless of whether I had to discipline them or fail them, whatever. It was never anything personal.

“I have had a career and life that most people would envy. I loved teaching. I loved coaching. I loved being an administrator. I have done about everything I possibly could at Marquette, but any success at Marquette has not been because of me but the people here. Attending the events is part of being a principal and loving the kids. I have had the time of my life.”

One of the last things Mike Slaughter did was tell the kids what he did every Friday: “For the rest of your lives go out and have fun, be safe and be smart.”

Aly Slaughter, Luke Slaughter, and James Slaughter his kids, and his wife, Cindy, were all overwhelmed by the massive turnout.

By the outpouring of students, faculty, family, friends, and former students, it was evident the impact Mike Slaughter has had in his 40-plus-year career there. Without a doubt, as his daughter, Aly says: “I know he will miss Marquette Catholic High School more than any words can describe. The halls of MCHS will not be the same without Mike Slaughter.”



[Chris Rhodes also contributed to this story.](#)