

Huntington High School's 150th Commencement

Shayne Larkin's Introduction of Superintendent John J. Finello

In Superintendent Mr. Finello's profile on the Huntington website, the first sentence reads that he is "Huntington through and through." As a student who's attended the Huntington Public Schools her entire academic career, I can attest to this statement. My earliest memories of Mr. Finello take place in Washington Primary, where I spent my first through third years of education, where he was my principal. He was precisely the man you'd want to have governing a large body of small children. Standing at the entrance of Washington each morning, he had a warm smile and a calm demeanor that could dissolve the anxiety of any 7, 8 or 9 year old.

Mr. Finello spent little time in the shadows, as his soothing aura and assuredness eased chaos in the lunchroom and on the playground, and rallied youngsters at various functions. Eventually I left Washington, but Mr. Finello remained a prominent administrative figure in my life. As a member of the marching band, I've spotted Mr. Finello at each parade the Blue Devils have marched in, proudly watching and applauding with the same bearing I fondly remember from my days at Washington.

Like me, Mr. Finello attended Huntington schools from kindergarten until he graduated. He obtained a Bachelor of Science degree in education at St. John's University in 1972. Mr. Finello simply could not stray far from the town he loves, and he began his teaching career at Huntington the same year.

Mr. Finello's deeply embedded Huntington roots gave him a powerful ability to connect with his students, and he gave them the treatment that he was given during his youth that ultimately resulted in his inability to leave. He went back to school and earned a Master of Arts in Education at Adelphi University in 1975. Finally, in 1985 he received a Professional Diploma in education administration at C.W. Post, which deservedly landed him the role as our superintendent. At one time or another he has served as the district's elementary science coordinator, assistant principal of Huntington Elementary School, principal of Washington School, assistant superintendent for curriculum and instruction and of course superintendent of schools since July 2001.

As if you thought he'd never leave this district, unfortunately, the time has come that we must bid him farewell. He is retiring after 39 years, and he will be very sorely missed. A man who is a part of Huntington as much as he cares for it, I give you Mr. John J. Finello.