

Thank you, Mr. Garrison, for everything

We are grateful for your leadership, your vigilance and your constant presence in our campus life

On April 11, when Mr. Garrison announced his plan to retire after this semester, it took the school by surprise. The Macjournalism post that broke the news to students received 861 likes and 101 comments (both all-time records for our account), and the story of his retirement quickly made its way into the top of the Shield Online trending list. The announcement reached students, parents and alums alike, all of whom were eager to express their surprise, sadness and admiration. Logically, we all knew that our beloved principal would retire one day, but many of us never considered that we would be there when it happened.

Though the news is still sad for current seniors, they will still be able to walk across the stage at graduation, receive their diplomas, and shake Mr. Garrison's hand on their way out. As for the freshmen, many of them did not have enough time to really get to know the McCallum principal before his departure. For everyone stuck in the middle, however, it is hard to imagine a McCallum without him. It is difficult to realize that when next year's students pull into the parking lot on Aug. 20 and make their way through the front doors, it will not be Mr. Garrison's smile greeting them or his voice asking about their summer adventures.

Even though he is moving into retirement, the impact Mr. Garrison has had on the McCallum community will not fade any time soon. Throughout his 16 years at McCallum, he has worked hard to ensure that we have been able to learn in a safe,



MAN OF THE PEOPLE: *Whether it was Pink Week, National Honor Society inductions, or the student-directed dance show, it wasn't hard to find the ubiquitous Mike Garrison this year or in any of his 16 years. He was a fixture at McCallum academic, athletic and fine arts events. Photos by Gregory James and Dave Winter.*

open community without restricting our freedoms and opinions, and he has done a very good job of making McCallum a second home for the students and the teachers he supports. His legacy continues with us, in the positive school experiences that he has helped provide for us and for our teachers.

The phrase "the principal's

office" oftentimes has negative connotations, but Mr. Garrison's doors have always been open not just for those who got in trouble, but for those seeking help, advice or even just casual conversation.

Even though he always makes time to help any student who asks for it, his job has certainly not been easy. The job description includes (but is

certainly not limited to) overseeing all day-to-day procedures, regulating the budget, hiring faculty, monitoring student accomplishments, helping direct safety procedures in the case of crisis and dealing with parent questions and concerns.

While these tasks are significant, Mr. Garrison made as much if not more of impact outside the school

day. He has attended thousands of school functions from McCallum football games, to concerts, to shows. Over the past 16 years, Garrison has shown up to support his students.

Even though his last official days at McCallum are drawing nearer, he confirmed that he will still be with the McCallum community: "From afar, I'll still be in."

While we do not know exactly what this will mean, we can certainly hope we have not seen the last of Mr. Garrison. Will he still be at the Battle of the Bell game against Travis to push the bell onto the field? Will he make another appearance at a Pink Week pep rally for pie time? Can he be a guest of honor at next year's graduation? The year after?

Even for those of us who are not seniors, the last week of school this year will be sentimental. It will be the last week of school at the same McCallum we have known for the past one, two, three or four years.

We challenge everyone next week to share their appreciation for Mr. Garrison. The next time you stop by the office or see him in the hallways during passing periods, tell him what he has done to make your time at McCallum better. Share one of your favorite stories, talk about his impact on the McCallum community or share why you will miss him. Even though we are sorry he is leaving, let's make his last few days at McCallum the best they can be.

He's done it for us for a long time. Now it's our turn.

the shieldstaff

A.N. McCallum High School 5600 Sunshine Drive Austin, TX 78756
(512) 414-7539 fax (512) 453-2599
contact.macshield@gmail.com

assistant editors

GREGORY JAMES MAX RHODES KELSEY TASCH STEVEN TIBBETTS

reporters

GRAYSON CRUISE, JAZZABELLE DAVISHINES, DIAMANTE DIAZ, ALEX DOWD, ELLEN FOX, TOWNES HOBRATSK, LASZLO KING-HOVIS, BELLA RUSSO, ABIGAIL SALAZAR, ELISHA SCOTT, STELLA SHENKMAN, SARAH SLATEN, MIA TERMINELLA, KRISTEN TIBBETTS, JANSSEN TRANSIER, OLIVIA WATTS

editors-in-chief ZOE HOCKER AND SOPHIE RYLAND

adviser

DAVE WINTER

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Letters that are critical of the newspaper staff's coverage of events or that present information that may stimulate heated debate will be published.

Letters that contain malicious attacks on individual reporters, the adviser or the principal will be rejected.

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