

Clark 'G' Ginapp and Jerry 'Willy' Williamson have collected more than just their unusual nicknames after teaching at Holyoke High School for a combined 55 years. These two teachers have enough stories, inside jokes and memories, they could undoubtedly fill a book.

Consider this: Ginapp shared he specifically remembers the first time he saw Williamson in 1985. Williamson, of course, helped fill in the blanks. Seeing the new teacher pull up in front of the school in a hot car—'it was a Camaro'—with a beautiful woman—'yes, my wife'—Ginapp couldn't help but laugh at the man who accompanied them.

Williamson also recalled those first days in Holyoke, and the events that led to his teaching here. It happened by accident, he noted. "Accidentally," corrected Ginapp. Williamson finished teaching at Creede after six years there. With arrangements to teach elsewhere already made, Williamson came across Holyoke the day after the art teacher had resigned.

He was offered the job, and remembers going to Amherst for his interview because principal Max Bernard was in the middle of harvest there. He accepted the position with the intention of leaving after a couple years.

Interestingly, Ginapp began teaching at HHS with a similar mindset. He had taught in Winnebago, Neb. for four years, and moved to Holyoke in 1978, for what he thought would be a short time. Obviously they both have stayed longer than they expected. Williamson remained for 24 years and Ginapp 31. Having children, they agreed, was what kept them here for so long. It's hard to move your kids once they have settled into the school and made friends here, they said.

Both Ginapp and Williamson taught their children when they were in high school. Ginapp looked back on his sons, Ace and Micah, and recalled how proud he was of their accomplishments at Holyoke, despite his being apprehensive about teaching his own children. Williamson also noted he was nervous about the idea of teaching his daughters, Nicole and Kristin. In hindsight, however, it wasn't a problem at all.

In his time at HHS, Ginapp taught English in the freshman through senior classes and speech and drama. Few can forget that he was also the director of the fall plays and the spring musicals for 30 years. Of the many productions he has staged, his favorite is Inherit the Wind.

One thing Williamson and Ginapp have been collaborating on since the first year the two were here is the posters that advertise HHS drama. A little known fact is that each poster Williamson designed had an inside joke or hidden meaning. One, for example, had a picture of Ginapp, and there have been several secret references to Holyoke.

Most have known Williamson as the art teacher, but he has tried his hand at other subjects as well. In Holyoke he taught art in grades 7-12, math, geography and careers. One of his most memorable moments, he said, actually took place in a math class he was teaching.

He had planned an activity to help students practice some real world applications of what they had been learning. Students were instructed to plan a trip to Chicago. They were told the amount of money they had to spend and were required to plan for food, hotel and gas to get to Chicago and back.

One pair of students was particularly excited about the project and worked very hard on it in class. The next day, when Williamson expected them to continue work on their project, the two boys were nowhere to be found. After searching the school, the police were called. The two were eventually found in North Platte, Neb., heading to Chicago.

Laughing at the story, Ginapp stated some of his most lasting memories at the school are the pranks he and Williamson pulled together and against each other.

From placing another teacher's cars on blocks so his wheels spun in vain when he tried to drive, to lifting another's car and turning it to face sideways in her garage, these two teachers were behind many jokes. The two always found great pleasure in rearranging Pam Vieselmeyer's office when she wasn't around.

One prank they are especially proud of has remained a secret for many years. Work was being done on the practice field to fix the sprinklers. There had been a large hole dug for the repairs, and each night Williamson went over and filled the hole. In the morning, the two watched in satisfaction as a confused crew returned to the site.

Besides teaching, both Ginapp and Williamson were also involved in Dragon athletics. Ginapp was an assistant track coach for some time, and Williamson was head coach for 10 years.

For the HHS football team, each did what he did best. Williamson drew the x's and o's, outlining each play, and Ginapp wrote about what happened as they scouted area teams. After each game they would leave with one legal pad each, filled with what they had seen. Scouting allowed Williamson a chance to get to know the area, as Ginapp showed him around at the various games they attended.

Dragon football fans for the last 24 years have been greeted at the gate by Ginapp and Williamson, where they have been selling tickets and handing out programs together.

Ginapp is particularly fond of one football memory. Watching the 1995 state championship was extremely fun and satisfying, he said.

Looking back on all the good memories of their time as teachers, Williamson said there have been a lot of good things and very few bad things. "If I had to do this all over again, I'd still be a teacher."

After seeing 13 principals and five superintendents come and go in their time here, it's Ginapp and Williamson's turn to make their exits.

Both plan to stay in Holyoke, at least for the time being. Williamson wants to spend time in his garage—'one of his three,' Ginapp chimed in—piddling around, doing stuff he's always wanted to do, but never had the time. He and Ginapp will both certainly have more time to do what they please without having to plan their schedules around school. It will be exciting to take a trip that doesn't have to coincide with summer vacation, said Williamson.

At the end of their time as teachers, these friends have one more thing in common: they had a lot of "stuff" to move out of their classrooms. Any student who has taken a class with either man can attest to this fact. "My wife thinks I collect everything," said Williamson, and it would

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appear that Ginapp does as well.

While Williamson's room is filled with many of his own artistic creations, Ginapp stated that probably 99.9 percent of the items in his room have been given to him.

Among the collections of Simpsons and Marilyn Monroe memorabilia are a few rather outlandish things, including a dirt collection, some wisdom teeth, several rubber rats, a whip and the list could go on and on.

While they are done at HHS and have packed up most of their collections, Ginapp and Williamson will always have a crazy collection of memories as teachers together.