

Gahanna Jefferson Education Foundation
2013 CORNERSTONE AWARD HONOREES

Randy Allen

Randy Allen is the man behind the miles of Ethernet cabling and innumerable network components connecting Gahanna-Jefferson classrooms to the Internet, initially through CompuServe, and now a self-contained technology hub.

While assumed and commonplace today, Allen's work with this then-emerging resource throughout the mid- to -late-1980s was innovative. It sowed the seeds leading to Gahanna-Jefferson's consistent recognition as a leader in the use of educational and operational technology.

Randy began his tenure with Gahanna-Jefferson in 1984 as a computer science instructor. He had previously taught chemistry and computer science at the middle- and high-school level for six years for Circleville City Schools.

In 1988, he was named the *National Computer Teacher of the Year* by the IBM Corporation. Moreover, it provided the District with a computer lab and additional software valued at, when adjusted for inflation, nearly \$123, 000. It also led to Randy becoming a featured presenter at six *National Education Computer Conferences* and a contributing writer for *Technology and Learning* magazine, an industry trade publication.

In 1989, Randy began simultaneously serving as a classroom instructor and part-time as the District's first Director of Technology. It became his full-time focus the following year. Thanks to Randy's written grant request, Gahanna-Jefferson was selected as one of 14 pilot sites for the Ohio *SchoolNet* initiative. In 2002, he was appointed as a voting member of the *Ohio SchoolNet* Commission by then-Ohio Speaker of the House of Representatives JoAnn Davidson.

"Undoubtedly, Randy's experience and insights were truly invaluable in shaping the framework that school districts were to follow relating to professional development and successful technology implementation," said Jack Kruse, a Gahanna-Jefferson computer instructor.

The year 2002 saw the creation of *The Gahanna TechCenter*, housed inside Gahanna Lincoln High School. In addition to providing a self-contained interface with the District's Internet Service Provider, it is a technology-rich lab for students and a central hub for data management and to distribute network software. Representatives from Dell Computers™ were so impressed with the unique concept, it led to a partnership to replenish the *TechCenter* with new equipment, often well before the official public release by the company.

Randy retired from Gahanna-Jefferson in 2008; however, he certainly is not at rest. As an adjunct professor with Ashland University's College of Education, his focus is technology training for educators. He has thrice been recognized with Ashland's "Professional Fellow" designation.

Asked of his most vivid memory as a Gahanna-Jefferson educator, he insisted he had too many for a single designation, but did recount an example illustrating the level of staff dedication: "I came in close to midnight one Sunday evening to photocopy a quiz for the next day. I was third in line [at] the Xerox machine!" He quickly followed with another memory of receiving a card from Gahanna-Jefferson graduate Jay Anderson with the message "...Mr. Allen, thank you for teaching me how to 'Think.'"