

Sad news.

Last week, Robert "Bob" Gourlay passed away at the age of 80. Bob was a longtime teacher and counselor in the Clarence School District having served the district for 42 years. He was the first President (1983-1985) of the Suburban Counselors Consortium, the predecessor and basis for our current organization. His son Matt is a counselor at Kenmore-West HS and a member of our group.

We all owe a huge debt of gratitude to Bob because he was the first counselor to recognize and fight for the right of secondary counselors to meet monthly on a regular basis, during the school day, to discuss professional concerns and best practices. He put himself on the line to do this and encouraged other counselors to join and participate. It was a satisfying victory when he received the endorsement of the Erie County Principal's Association and we began to hold meetings in various high schools across the region.

As the concept of counselors meeting together caught on, other counties and middle school counselors modeled their groups after the Consortium envisioned by this pioneer.

Bob's original ideas have grown into a large, professional organization that includes counselors from public and private schools and city, suburban and rural districts. The format, however, is still the same; excellent programs for counselors and the sharing of best practices. His vision, dedication, persistence and humor will be sorely missed and we stand today on the foundation he created.

Sandy Behrend