

*Torrington Public Schools, CT
Retiree Class of 2005*

Carol Beam – 17 years



Carol Beam began her career in education in 1961 as a teacher of third grade in the Bristol Connecticut Public Schools. Carol remained with Bristol Schools until 1988, when she accepted a position as a teacher of the gifted and talented at Torrington School. In 1994 Carol moved to Torrington Middle School, where she has served as the TAG teacher ever since.

Carol received her undergraduate degree in Business at the University of Connecticut in 1958. She continued her formal education at Central Connecticut State University, where she earned a Master of Science degree in Elementary Education in 1968. Carol received her 6th Year Certification in Supervision and Administration from Central Connecticut State University in 1986. Still desiring to pursue other studies, Carol continued on to earn an additional Master of Science degree in Education from Southern Connecticut State University.

Among multiple honors and recognitions Carol has received over the years, her most recent have been: 2001 – Named as one of forty teachers selected nationwide for the JASON Project Alaskan Institute; 2004 – Awarded Mystic Aquarium and Institute for Exploration Marine Educator of the Year.

Carol Beam is truly one of our talented teachers. Her dedication to teaching and to the many students she has inspired over the years is recognized by all. Her contributions to the Gifted and Talented programs in Torrington will benefit students for years to come.

Jean Collins – 22 years

Jean Collins joined Torrington Public Schools in 1984 as a teacher of elementary music. Prior to her work in Torrington, Jean had taught music for Trumbull Public Schools for eight years. In 1989 Jean moved up to Torrington High School as music teacher for the next three years. Then, in 1992 Jean decided to return to the elementary level, where she has continued to work at East School as well as Torrington School.

Jean received her Bachelor of Science degree in Music Education from Western Connecticut State University in 1975. Jean then continued on in her education at the graduate level at the University of Hartford, where she completed thirty hours of study in Music Education.



Grace Michnevitz describes Jean as a very caring professional who would help anyone at any time. Grace goes on to describe Jean as a “Master Music Teacher” whose retirement is a loss to Torrington Schools.

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Henry Cosgriff – 17 years

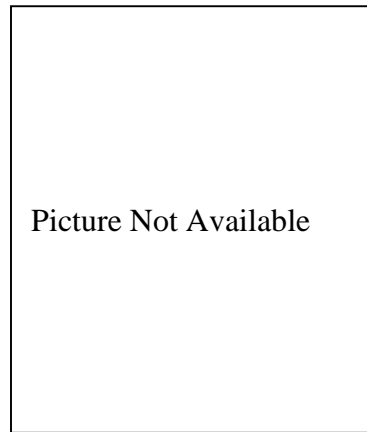


Henry Cosgriff began his professional training at Quinnipiac College, from which he received an Associate degree in Liberal Arts in 1962. Henry went on to receive his Bachelor of Arts degree from Duquesne University in 1964 and then his Master of Arts degree from Central Michigan University in 1974.

Henry began his career in education as a grade 6 teacher with New Haven Public Schools. Then, in 1965 Henry began work with the Department of Defense Education Program. During the years 1968 to 1988 Henry’s teaching career took him to Iceland, Portugal, Cuba, the Bahama Islands and England. Having seen at least a portion of the world, Henry joined Torrington Public Schools in 1988, accepting a sixth grade teaching position at Wetmore School. He continued teaching at Wetmore until 1995, when he moved into the new Torrington Middle School, where he has continued to teach ever since.

Henry Cosgriff is well known for his big smile and even bigger concern for the welfare of his students. While students could mistake Henry for a tough guy, we all know how tender are his ways when working with even the most challenging student.

Barbara Gall – 33 years



Barbara Gall, a graduate of Torrington High School, began preparing for her professional career by attending Good Counsel College in New York. Barbara received her Bachelor of Arts degree in Area Studies from Good Counsel in 1968. Between 1971 and 1972 Barbara did graduate studies in Elementary Education at the University of Hartford. Still seeking additional studies, Barbara went on to receive her Master’s degree from Central Connecticut State University in 1980.

Barbara began her first teaching assignment in 1972 as a teacher of Reading and Literature for grade eight at Vogel School. In 1977-1978 she taught for a year at Southwest School, grade six, but then soon returned to Vogel in 1979 to teach Language Arts. Barbara continued to teach Language Arts at Vogel School up until 1994, when she became part of the Torrington Middle School, where she has remained.

Over her years of teaching the students of Torrington, Barbara has worked to always provide her students with a truly quality education. While Barbara’s quiet ways would not allow her to discuss her accomplishments, Barbara should feel very proud of her contributions to the lives of so many young boys and girls who have had her as their instructor.

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Mary Ellen Harmon – 35 years

Mary Ellen Harmon, after graduating from Torrington High School in 1966, left Torrington for a few years to attend school at Southern Connecticut State University. She graduated from SCSU with a Bachelor of Science degree in Education in 1970. Mary Ellen received a Master of Science degree in Elementary Education from Central Connecticut University in 1975 and a second Master's degree in Primary Education from CCSU in 1995.

Mary Ellen's first teaching position was in her hometown of Torrington back in 1970, when she was hired as a grade 4 teacher at East School. Mary Ellen continued at East until 1973. Then she moved to the Riverside School, where, over the years, she taught grades 1, 2 and 3. In 1985 Mary Ellen moved again, this time to Forbes School, grade 1. Mary Ellen has continued to teach in grade 1 up through the current time, except with a final transfer in 1988 back to East School, where her career all began.



In her personal reflections on her career Mary Ellen states:

“Sometimes my 35 years in teaching seem to have gone quickly, and other times the beginning years seem a lifetime away. I think changing grade levels, school buildings, and principals kept me fresh and continued my learning. My favorite times were always when I'd see the spark in a child's eyes when he or she finally understood something or made a meaningful connection. I also loved reading to children, especially my favorite stories and books. I loved seeing the children begin to love the very same stories and books that I did.”

David Lopardo – 35 years



Thirty-five years ago, young Mr. David Lopardo decided to continue spending his days in Torrington Public Schools. David, who graduated from Torrington High School in 1966, accepted a teacher of English position at Torrington High School in 1970. David continued at THS until 1977, when he decided to work with some younger students and transferred to Vogel School. David remained at Vogel up until the Torrington Middle School was opened in 1994. David and his fellow teachers then packed their bags and moved into TMS, where he has continued up to the current time.

Regarding David's teacher preparation, David received his Bachelor of Science degree in English from Western Connecticut State University in 1970. In the years following his undergraduate studies, David continued at Western Connecticut to pursue graduate studies in English.

Other accomplishments clearly needing mention regarding David's career include:

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- David has served as the Cross Country Coach at TMS since 1977 and the Girl's Track Coach at TMS since 1989. David plans to continue coaching after retirement.
- David has authored six award-winning short stories among the nineteen he had published.
 - David has been named to Who's Who Among American Teachers three times, twice in the early 90's and most recently this past year.

Marie Morro – 26 years

Marie Morro came to Torrington Public Schools in 1967 as a grade 3 teacher at the South School. Marie continued at South School until 1973, when she left teaching for a while to have her first child and then a second child. In 1985 Marie returned to Torrington Schools, this time to East School, where she once again taught grade 3. Marie has, since that time, continued to teach at East School.



Marie received her Bachelor of Science degree in Education from the University of Connecticut in 1967. In 1970 Marie was awarded a Master of Science degree in Reading at Central Connecticut State University.

When asked to comment on her teaching career, Marie had the following comments:

“Teaching in Torrington where I was born and raised and planned to raise my family was a perfect fit for me. I attended grades K-8 at South School, so I was elated to return to South as a new teacher. My mentor turned out to be my former 3rd and 5th grade teacher, whom I loved and respected. Although she did not know it, her kindness and love for teaching were instrumental in me becoming a teacher. In third grade she introduced me to a new book, *Charlotte's Web* by E.B. White, which is still my all-time favorite book for children. I have shared this book with my classes every year, and within the last few years it has been on the third grade core reading list. Although the pages are yellowed and falling apart, each year I still ready from the first copy I used with my first class. Ella Muller was the perfect teacher and one I was proud to emulate. I would like to think that perhaps I have influenced at least one student in the way Mrs. Muller influenced me.”

“I have been so fortunate to have taught with very talented teachers and caring, sensitive principals at the greatest schools in Torrington. Joseph Roman (South), Marie Carrubba (Torrington), Mr. Robert Kelly and Robert Doyle (East), and now Grace Michnevitz (East) have been good friends and the best Principals to work with.”

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Carolyn A. Mosher – 35 years



After thirty-five (35) years of teaching elementary grades, Carolyn Moser has decided to move from her second home at East School. Carolyn began her teaching career in 1970, when she accepted a fourth grade teacher position at East School. Since that time she has divided her years of teaching among the fifth, sixth, and third grades.

Carolyn received her Bachelor of Science degree in Elementary Education from Central Connecticut State University in 1970. She then went on to receive her Master of Science degree in Guidance from CCSU in 1974. During her teaching career Carolyn was selected as East School's Teacher of the Year and was given the Celebration of Excellence Award from the State of Connecticut.

Carolyn leaves us with the following comments regarding her career:

“I feel very fortunate to have begun and ended my career at East School. As a young teacher in 1970, I was welcomed and aided by a wonderful group of professional people. Now as a veteran I am amazed at how much our children learn and accomplish at the elementary level.”

“I feel that I have accomplished my goal to help children realize that education is the key to their future success. Many of my former students are teachers, doctors, lawyers, etc. and have kept in contact with me throughout the years. East School is like a family to me and I shall truly miss being a part of it.”

Carol Parnell, after graduating from Torrington High School in 1966, attended Annhurst College in Connecticut. Carol graduated from Annhurst in 1970 with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Elementary Education. Wishing to continue in her education, Carol entered Central Connecticut State University from which she received a Master's degree in Reading in 1974 and a Sixth Year degree in Reading in 1978.

Carol began her first year of teaching in 1970, when she accepted a position at Wetmore School as a teacher for the second grade. In 1978 Carol moved into Torrington School, where she taught grade four for four years. Carol has continued at Torrington School through the current time, with the last twenty-three years at the second grade level.

Carol Parnell – 35 years



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When asked to reflect upon her thirty-five years of teaching in Torrington, Carol has the following comments:

“I have really enjoyed working in the Torrington Public School System for the last 35 years. I have been fortunate to work with so many wonderful teachers at both Wetmore and Torrington School. I will treasure the many friendships I have made over the years.”

“Teaching was a rewarding experience. I will never forget all the students I had the pleasure of teaching throughout my career. It really was an experience that I will never forget.”

John Pelchat - 35 years



John Pelchat, with the end of this school year, will have completed thirty-five years as an educator in the Torrington Public Schools. Thirteen of those years were spent in the classroom as a teacher. John’s first teaching assignment was at the Riverside School, where he taught grade five for eight years. In 1978 John then moved into the Forbes School to teach grade six for five years. John became the Teacher in Charge at Southwest School back in 1983 and was appointed Principal of Southwest School in 1986. Regarding his years in Torrington, John has said that, “All my years have been most rewarding. Becoming a teacher was always my goal for a career and I was lucky enough to be able to realize that goal in a community that supports education and values the role of the public school”.

When asked to share his thoughts about his retirement John leaves us with these comments:

“This decision was very difficult for me because of my love for the students and the teachers at Southwest School as well as in all of the schools that I have had the pleasure to be a part of during my tenure in the school district. However, I feel confident that the initiatives and community feelings that have been instilled in the fabric of this school will continue on even after I have departed. I still have things to complete and I will work very hard during the remainder of this school year to complete them.”

“It is such a pleasure for me to work in the community where I grew up. I enjoy meeting former students, teachers and colleagues when traveling through the community, because for me it signifies the successes of my career knowing that I can make a significant impact on the lives of everyone I have worked with in the schools.”

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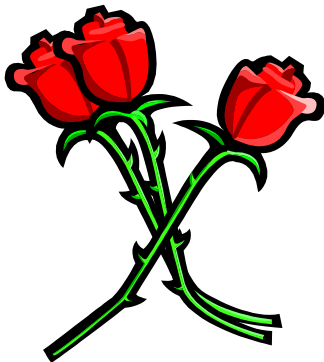
Judith Pernal – 30 years

Judith Pernal began on the road of higher education that would eventually lead her into teaching in 1969 when she entered the University of Connecticut at the Torrington Campus. After two years at the UCONN branch, Judy moved to the UCONN campus at Storrs and completed her Bachelor of Science degree in Education in 1974. Ready for further study, Judy enrolled at Central Connecticut State University in 1975, from which she received her Master's degree in Reading.

The Torrington Public Schools welcomed Judy Pernal as a teacher in 1975, when she was hired to teach Language Arts at Vogel School. Judy continued at Vogel until 1994, when the Torrington Middle School was opened. Packing her books, Judy moved into TMS, where she has continued to teach Language Arts for the past eleven years.



“So much to do - so little time. That should be my motto,” says Judy. “I still enjoy my work. Nothing makes me feel better than to see that special light in a child's eyes when they finally "get it." Over the years I have been blessed to have worked with some of the finest, talented, helpful and dedicated teachers imaginable. The secretaries and aides have been wonderful. My years with drama students have been both strenuous and delightful. When a youngster succeeds at some endeavor, be it academic or cultural, you become party to something very special. Having the opportunity of exposing my family and my students to a foreign culture through sponsoring Hitoshi Sato has proven to be an immense and lasting enjoyment. I have spent the last thirty years feeling that I have contributed something to my community and knowing that I have frequently derived more from my experiences than could have expected. I only wish that my colleagues and my students knew how very much they have enriched my life.”



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Paul Putnoki – 34 years



Paul Putnoki joined Torrington Public Schools in 1971. Paul came to Torrington after having taught ninth grade English for a year for the Hartford Public School district. Paul's first assignment in Torrington was as an eighth grade Reading-Literature teacher at Vogel School. Paul continued to teach at Vogel up through 1994, when he and the Vogel staff moved into the new Torrington Middle School. Since entering TMS, Paul has continued to teach Language Arts throughout his years of service to his students.

Paul, who was a 1963 graduate of Torrington High School, attended Central Connecticut State University, from which he received a Bachelor of Science degree in English Education in 1967. Wishing to continue his education, Paul attended Andover Newton Theological School where he received a Master of Divinity degree in 1970. Still seeking additional study, Paul returned to Central Connecticut State University to obtain a Master of Science degree in Inner City Education in 1976.

As Paul prepares to end his teaching career with Torrington, he has the following to say:

“I have been fortunate to teach the children of Torrington, the city of my birth, and I have enjoyed teaching Middle School students, especially seventh grade...because we all know the best part of the sandwich is in the middle...also I have come full circle and taught not only the generation when I began to teach, but also the second generation, their children. It has been an honor to see my students who have matured and have their own families and are a productive and integral part of our community, to have been a part of their lives and future, I feel honored to have played a part in their lives.”

Merlene Round – 11 years

Merlene Round began her teaching career in Scranton, Pennsylvania in 1965 as a grade five teacher. From Scranton Merlene moved on to teach at the elementary level in Jericho, New York and then in Yorktown Heights. Merlene began with Torrington Public Schools in 1994. At that time she accepted a Language Arts teacher position at Torrington Middle School and has continued in that role over the past years.

Merlene received her Bachelor of Science degree in Elementary Education in 1965 from Marywood College in Scranton, Pennsylvania. Wanting to pursue her graduate degree, Merlene enrolled in Queens College, New York. She received her Master of Science degree, also in Elementary Education, in 1969



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As Merlene prepares to depart the Torrington Middle School, she leaves her students and friends with these words:

“Teaching in the Torrington Public Schools over the past ten years has enriched my life in many ways. First and foremost was the chance to be with young people each day and, hopefully, change their lives in some way, no matter how small, for the better. Secondly, was the chance to work with a great many wonderful and professional educators. Teaching, and working with young people, would not be nearly as rewarding if your co-workers did not enhance your environment with support, friendship, and encouragement. In conclusion, teaching, to me, is the single most rewarding profession one can choose. As a teacher I felt it was my responsibility to provide my students with an environment that allowed each student to know that he or she was important to me in some way, that I cared about them, and that I wanted them to succeed. To me feeling and showing compassion to my students was the single most important quality I could bring to my classroom each day. Hopefully I succeeded in doing that.”

Ralph Shove – 37 years

Picture Not Available

Ralph Shove began his professional teacher preparation at Fairfield University, where he completed his undergraduate work in education in 1967. Ralph then continued his studies at Fairfield, from which he received his Master of Arts degree in Education in 1969. A few years later Ralph went on to pursue graduate study, this time at Central Connecticut University. He received his Master’s of Science in Education from CCSU in 1975.

Ralph joined Torrington Public Schools in 1968, when he accepted a teacher of Social Studies position at Torrington High School. Since that time, Ralph has taught Social Studies at THS.

Ralph chose not to comment on his years of teaching in Torrington, but we all know that Ralph has been an outstanding professional and a true gentleman throughout his career. Many new teachers and a few new administrators have gained from having Ralph as their friend and colleague.



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Alan Silano – 35 years

Alan Silano, having spent his boyhood days in Torrington Public Schools, entered the University of Connecticut after graduating from Torrington High School in 1966. Alan earned his Bachelor of Arts degree in Education from UCONN in 1970. Alan continued his professional studies at the University of Hartford, from which he received his Master of Arts degree in School Administration in 1973 and then his Sixth Year degree in 1974.



Alan began his teaching career by returning to Torrington High School, where he accepted a teacher of Social Studies position in 1970. During the past thirty-five years, while Alan has continued to teach Social Studies, he has also served in the roles of Social Studies Department Head, Quad Leader and Class Advisor. Alan has been a teacher whose warm smile and friendly outgoing manner have made him a well-liked and respected teacher by his students and colleagues alike.

As Alan prepares to leave Torrington Public Schools we know he will still be seen around town, continuing in his second job of real estate and in his favorite pastime – golf.

*Upon your retirement...
We wish you walls for the wind
A roof for the rain
A warm cup of tea by the fire
Laughter to cheer you
Those you love near you
And all that your heart might desire.*