

Susan Kern 1/9/10

Boys and girls, you will meet lots of people throughout your life. Some of those people will be very memorable to you. Mrs. Kern is one of those people – no matter where you go or where you live when you are a grown-up. Trust me when I say that you will ALWAYS remember Mrs. Kern.

Mrs. Kern loved to read and share Junie B. Jones with you – I picture Mrs. Kern being like Junie B. as a first grader, don't you? Another favorite character was "Skippy Jon Jones", probably because of the Spanish in the story. Mrs. Kern incorporated Spanish into your classroom everyday, she embraced diversity and shared many multicultural experiences with you. She greeted students each morning with a cheerful "HOLA". She and I even greeted each other each day the same way.

I'll bet you each have had some work in the Razzle Dazzle folder at some point. You might remember her excitement when you gave a correct answer in class or solved a math problem correctly – "Exactamundo" she would say and just beam as she celebrated your success with you. She loved teaching you to read and write, teaching about Egypt and China, and teaching math out of "Big Fatty" – her endearing term for the math book. When she summoned you to the rug in her classroom, she would often say "Okay everyone, downy down down" – and you knew exactly that the lesson was about to begin! And sometimes she would sing, "To the board, to the board, to the board board board" when it was your turn at the Activeboard.

Did you know that Mrs. Kern always arrived to pick you up from gym class 5 minutes early? She stood outside the gym door and watched you practice throwing, catching, jumping, shooting hoops – whatever the skill may be. I think she sometimes was watching for basketball talent to tell Coach Hicks about for future CS Knight basketball players. She was also very appreciative of Mrs. Fortner's routine of dispensing hand sanitizer to each of you as you left gym class. You would ask permission to visit the "loo" in the classroom. Once another teacher visiting your class did not know what that meant. Someone had to explain to her - that's the fancy first grade word for bathroom.

Everyone that entered Mrs. Kern's classroom was welcomed warmly and visitors were introduced like celebrities. I used to "pop in" to her classroom (as she would call it) and immediately become entranced in the lesson or activity along with you.

She often had you tell a visitor what you were working on which gave you an opportunity to show visitors just how smart you are.

Many of you know how early Mrs. Kern arrived at school each day - it was usually still dark. Did you know she put bells on her car in an attempt to scare deer on her drive to school? Some of you spent time after school helping Mrs. Kern in her classroom, I can assure you this was a highlight in her day. One of you commented yesterday that you hoped there are Cheetos in heaven because you know how Mrs. Kern loved Cheetos!

Each summer she looked forward to the start of the school year, but she was especially excited to return to school this Fall. Even when her doctors were unsure that she would be ready to start school in August, she was determined that she would be there to welcome her new first graders with a smile and excitement for the start of a new school year! She told me that even if the dr did not know it yet, he **WOULD** give her the green light to begin school in August. Mrs. Kern spoke honestly to you about her cancer, she explained to you that this was part of her life right now and for you not be afraid of it.

She has inspired each of you (current and former students) to be the very best you can be, and she expects nothing less than that from you. She has also inspired the grown ups in her life in the same way. She welcomed opportunities to share her faith, inspire us on a daily basis, and give us hope.

Mucho blessings to you, Professora Kern – and gracias for the mucho blessings you have bestowed upon each of us.