

Street name honors friend

Richard Hensley made ex-student's life bright

By [Lou Grieco](#)

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WEST CARROLLTON | Richard C. Hensley spent a lifetime in West Carrollton schools, as a student, a teacher, an administrator, an active retiree.

To Joe Kuhns, class of 1996, Hensley was simply a friend.

"He was so good to me," Kuhns said.

Hensley died in August, but his name sits above the Student Street signs in front of the high school.

Kuhns' father, Jim, won the West Carrollton Education Foundation's yearly "Name That Street" contest, and he decided to honor the man who befriended his son, who has Down syndrome.

"You could call him Uncle Rich if you knew him," said Joe Kuhns' mother, Jackie. "Wherever he was, his presence was felt."

The two met at the junior high, where Hensley was principal and Kuhns was a student and an office manager.

The friendship endured for more than a decade.

At a junior high fund-raiser, Kuhns earned the chance to throw a pie in Hensley's face — and the two laughed about it for years.

The Kuhns family became friendly with Hensley and his wife, Carol.

Hensley attended Kuhns' graduation party, and was the first non-family member on Kuhns' list of party invites after his successful treatment for cancer a few years ago.

Hensley wasn't so lucky. He lost his fight with cancer Aug. 18.

Family members said Kuhns took his death harder than those of his grandparents.

"He's quite emotional about Mr. Hensley," Jackie Kuhns said.

Kuhns, 30, lives with his parents at their Moraine home. He works as a gym monitor at the Moraine Recreational Center.

His parents said they wanted to honor Hensley to thank him for giving their son genuine friendship.

Hensley did not patronize Kuhns, did not call attention to his disability, did not treat him any differently than anyone else. He treated Kuhns as a dear friend, they said.

"We were fortunate that he ever touched our lives," Jim Kuhns said.

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