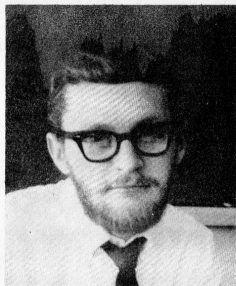
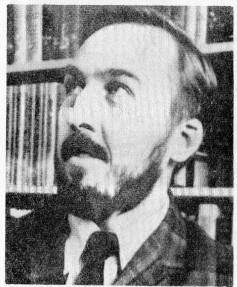


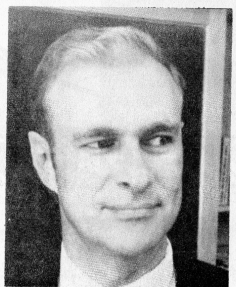
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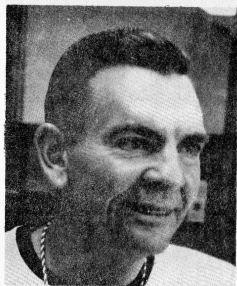
Mike Hanily



Curtis Johnson



Ted Molitor



Lars Overskei



Kathleen Detjen

# Teachers evaluate their profession

by Grant Blank

With the coming of greater teacher activism at Ramsey, especially the "withholding" of extracurricular activities last fall, faculty attitudes toward different facets of Alexander Ramsey have become more and more important in the school.

In an attempt to explore these attitudes seven Ramsey teachers agreed to air their views to Blueprint. The participants were Lars Overskei, the football coach and phy Ed instructor, Earl Ireland, math teacher, Ted Johnson, social studies teacher, Kathleen Detjen, German teacher, Mike Hanily, English teacher, Ted Molitor, Chemistry teacher and Minnesota teacher of the Year, and Curtis Johnson, Chairman of the Social Studies Department.

The experts were picked because they were either representative of what the rest of the teachers in the interview were thinking or because they seemed to represent unusual points of view, at least in this group.

But remember in the final analysis, the quotes are only personal opinions and are only representative of the faculty, as a whole, in so far as the teachers making them are members of and participants in the faculty. Also remember that these opinions were given under relatively unusual circumstances, in a taped interview that would be printed--this might have had a strong effect on which opinions were presented and how they were presented.

The interview opened with a discussion of faculty attitudes toward the community beginning with the effects of the withholding action last fall.

Ireland: . . . it seems as though the only thing the public has become upset about is salaries. . . . When curriculum is an issue the average citizen simply doesn't (become involved).

C. Johnson: I think, (since last fall) the community sees teachers as a more valuable commodity . . . not as a public servant who will do its bidding but as a professional who is employed to carry out certain services on a contractual basis.

Hanily: When we consider the perspective that the general public has on the teachers, it is basically what they remember as a student 20-30 years ago. . . . We are in the process of redefining the role of the teacher and I think some of the confusion that we see resulting is (because of the difference between). . . their perspective on our role and our perspective on our role.

We really don't understand one another. If you say (to parents) 'independent study', 'mod-

ular scheduling', 'self-direction'. I don't think they understand. They weren't educated in the same atmosphere.

Ireland: Certainly the emphasis is going to have to change, in the past we've taught a lot of facts in the school and at that time it was all right, facts weren't doubling very fast. Now there's doubling every seven years.

What implication does this have for us? We have to teach students how to learn on their own, how to learn individually. We just can't teach enough facts to take care of this student throughout his lifetime.

Molitor: I think what we are doing is emphasizing process--the way of getting knowledge. People are going to have to get knowledge by themselves, out of school and I think we're trying to teach this. . . . I see where we're groping to emphasize this for a while and we're eventually going to swing back.

Hanily: How consistent is this approach? Is it conceivable that a student could go from process learning (in one class) back into the middle ages of learning. . . in his next class?

(There were scattered nods and comments of "Yes" and "Certainly, of course" from most of the rest of the teachers. But they also seemed to agree with C. Johnson when he said, "It seems to me that at least the intent is present in almost all classes." Detjen, Ireland, and Molitor also gave examples of 'process learning' in German, Math, and Chemistry respectively.)

Blank: How do you think most of the students feel about this new type of learning--do you think they really prefer it?

Ireland: I think you will have as many opinions as there are students. But it is how students will have to learn 10 years from now.

C. Johnson: Students like old forms. . . . They are most secure in old forms. They may ask for process learning but when process learning comes and it's difficult they would like to return to the more secure form where the teachers tell them what to do.

A school has to reflect the society that the student is going to have to live in and today people are asked to work together. . . . so it seems to me we have to talk about study with small groups where students can learn to interact bring together ideas and to come to some sort of a group conclusion.

T. Johnson: The idea of working together as a group is important, however, individual instruction fits in. . . . so that a person learns how to be an actual functioning member of a group. Right now a lot of students just sit there and don't contribute.

Blank: How are these changes reflected in the rules and regulations that govern students here at Ramsey?

Molitor: Are we talking about rules that govern

a student's physical behavior or his mental behavior? I think that without question you have to control physical behavior when you have 1800 people in one building 8 hours a day, 9 months a year.

Mental behavior I think is a little different. In some cases there may have been attempts to control mental behavior but I think the trend is to less control--to more free thinking. There is an attempt to control physical behavior within our school but a lot of people confuse this issue. They say, you're controlling us here in the hassles to keep the halls clean. O.K. we are. But we're not controlling how these people think and that's important.

C. Johnson: I think there is more free thinking now. (In the social studies now)...we ask students to make a judgement, a tentative judgement that seems valid for this time (until some thing else comes about this seems like a good rule of thumb seems valid for this time. Until something else comes about this seems like a good rule of thumb to follow. (This is what project Social Studies. . . tries to do.)

Hanily: What percent of the student body would you say is involved in this approach?

C. Johnson: Ultimately it seems to me all of them must be.

Hanily: But what percent is now?

T. Johnson: I tenth grade class, 4 eleventh, and 3 twelfth.

(note: to the nearest significant figure this is about 20% of 1700 students)

Blank: What are your feelings toward district and school administration in general? How do they affect the faculty?

Molitor: This district is one of the best in terms of change, I think they're more receptive to change and they have many more experiments (in progress). . . here than any other district I know. I can't really see how they could do much more.

Overskei: I think now the faculty has more of a voice in things that are going on than we did.

C. Johnson: Yes, and I think we're going to have more than we have now. . . they are starting to listen to us.

Blank: Do you feel the administration is listening to students as it is listening to you?

Overskei: I think students are getting what they want. If they want something they usually get it.

Molitor: If students really want something and they really push for it I'm sure the administration will give it to them. You see often only a small part of the whole student body is really behind something and maybe another part of the student body. . . is opposed. . . This makes it very hard to tell what students really want. I think the administration has done a good job of (determining). . . what students really want and need.