

Robert Wayne Clark, (Died 23 Feb 1985), Philadelphia Inquirer, Wednesday, February 27, 1985. Educator In Phila. Schools For 45 Years

Robert Wayne Clark, 85, an educator who proved to be something of an individualist during his 45 years in Philadelphia's school system, died Saturday at Lancaster General Hospital. He lived in the Lancashire Terrace Retirement Village in Lancaster.

Mr. Clark, who wrote and lectured and was active in civic work, took stands on issues when others were silent. Though his stands sometimes brought him criticism, he still won promotions and commendations for his work.

In one such stand, he persuaded the National Education Association to jettison plans to hold its 1950 convention in St. Louis. He raised the issue at the 1949 meeting of the NEA in Boston, offering a resolution barring any meeting in a segregated city.

"We have fine Negro teachers in our schools, and we're going to stand up for them," Mr. Clark said. "We're not Bolsheviks. We just believe in what's right."

The teacher-delegates voted to support the position that the organization would avoid cities that discriminate against race, religion or creed.

A graduate of DePauw University and a Rhodes Scholar, he earned a master's degree at the University of Pennsylvania and a doctorate of education at Temple University.

He taught at Central and Benjamin Franklin High Schools and went on to serve as principal of Oliver Wendell Holmes and William L. Sayre Junior High Schools and Thomas Edison High School.

He retired in 1968 and moved to Duncannon, Perry County; he moved to the retirement home 12 years later.

He chose to work in schools in disadvantaged areas. He wanted to work with youngsters who could use education to improve their lives.

For his work, Mayor Richardson Dilworth named him to the Youth Services Board. In that position in 1957, he told the community that they could not blame the schools for the troubles of their children.

In an in-depth statement written for The Inquirer, he stressed that no school "can impose standards of conduct higher than the community as a whole is willing to accept and enforce." The community's choice, he said, lay between accepting and living with delinquency or taking decisive action against lawbreakers. No indecisive or overly tolerant stand would work, he wrote. He also rejected suggestions that computerization of classrooms would improve the quality of education. Learning, he said, is dependent on the quality of the teacher.

"No programmed text or teaching machine can replace a good teacher," he declared after running a series of controlled experiments to prove his theory.

He was sometimes blunt, direct, unequivocal, but his students and their parents held him in high esteem. A scholarship fund was established in his name at Central and at Edison. He wrote in the education field, and he tried other fields as well. He wrote a "Heads Up" operetta for junior high school students and in 1974, his poetry was published under the title "Along the Way."

He spent his spare time serving on advisory committees. He also served on the board of the YMCA and in committee posts for the Lions Club.

Retiring to the quiet life in Duncannon, he served as lay leader of the Methodist church there. He also wrote a weekly column on education and child rearing for the Duncannon Record and served on the curriculum advisory board for the Susquenita School District.

He is survived by two daughters, **Elizabeth Ruggeri** and **Carolyn Evans**; a son, **Robert W. Jr.**; nine grandchildren; three great-grandchildren; two sisters, and a brother.

Services will be at 3:30 p.m. today at Rose Glen Methodist Church in Duncannon.

Contributions may be made to the educational scholarship funds established in his named at Central and Edison High Schools.