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Strever Interview.WAV

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DURATION

1h 2m 6s

3 SPEAKERS

Speaker 1

Beth Goldberg

Martha Strever

START OF TRANSCRIPT**[00:00:03] Speaker 1**

I hope it's recording.

[00:00:08] Beth Goldberg

Hello, this is Beth Goldberg from historic Red hook. It is November 15th, 2025, and I am interviewing Martha Streever, a teacher in the Red Hook Central School District since 1961. So I'm going to ask you a few questions, if that's okay, and we'll begin the interview. But before I do that, I just want to introduce to everyone who else is in the room. We have Thea Burgess, who is the president of historic Red hook, and we have Mary Chang, who is coordinating our oral history program. And with that, Martha is okay. We'll start asking some questions to learn a little bit about your wonderful background. So just to set some context can you tell us where you were born and a little about your family?

[00:01:00] Martha Strever

Well, I live in Hyde Park, New York, and I've always lived there. My. It's my parents home. And it was naturally in 1939 at the Northern Dutchess Hospital in Rhinebeck.

[00:01:18] Beth Goldberg

Oh, excellent. And can you tell us an early memory from Red hook? Maybe as a child? Do you remember visiting Red hook?

[00:01:26] Martha Strever

We always traveled in the direction of Poughkeepsie since it seemed that's where we could do our shopping. So it was not common to be in Red hook, although we had a cousin that lived in Chatham. So like once a month, we'd always go visit the cousin. And that's when we passed through Red hook.

[00:01:49] Beth Goldberg

Did it look a lot like it looks today?

[00:01:51] Martha Strever

I remember the the corner where the, the hotel and like that was, and that stands out in my mind. And then my dad had, when he got out of school, he had worked for the trimper's and naturally the Trimper building here in Red hook.

[00:02:15] Beth Goldberg

Are.

[00:02:15] Martha Strever

Very familiar.

[00:02:16] Beth Goldberg

So tell us then, how did you become a teacher in Red hook?

[00:02:20] Martha Strever

Well, technically I graduated from New Paltz, and naturally, they assign you for your student teaching. And my dad had gotten quite ill at that time. And I didn't have extra money to be able to rent, and they wanted me to go to Schenectady. So I appealed that. And finally, just like a couple of days before the start of student teaching, they gave in to me and said, okay, you can go to a red hook. And I never forget the day that I wanted to enter the building in Red hook. I went to the front door, which is not where you were to enter, and I'm banging on the door. Nothing happening. And finally I wandered around and found that, oh, that's not the entry door at all. And so it was an experience that was revealing. And I really was so happy that I wound up there. At that time, it was K through 12 in the main building.

[00:03:33] Beth Goldberg

And this building is that the building that the middle school is in today?

[00:03:38] Martha Strever

That's correct. Yes.

[00:03:40] Beth Goldberg

So it was K through 12, all.

[00:03:43] Martha Strever

Originally in.

[00:03:44] Beth Goldberg

The district.

[00:03:45] Martha Strever

You didn't have your other buildings because the high school then was being built after I got hired. And I'll have to say that Red hook wanted to hire me, but I had graduated from the FDR. Franklin Delano Roosevelt High School, and I had babysat for the superintendent at that time. And I wanted to really go back there and prove, hey, I'm the math teacher coming back. And he said to me, I don't have an opening. I want you to be here. And I no sooner had signed for Red hook. Next day, got a call. We have an opening, I said, too late.

[00:04:28] Beth Goldberg

Wow, that is a great story. So tell us about your daily life. When you first started teaching, what was that like?

[00:04:38] Martha Strever

Well, at that time I'm certified math and science. And therefore in my early years, for ten years, I taught both. And therefore it was quite a lot of preparation because you were doing like a seventh grade, eighth grade math, science. And the preparation was intense. And naturally, the provisions for making copies, that was the ditto machine or the mimeo, the machine. And therefore it wasn't as easy as it is today.

[00:05:18] Beth Goldberg

How many students did you have in a class?

[00:05:21] Martha Strever

They were big classes. You could have up to 30, and often it was 28, 29. And like if you had a study hall in the library, that was gigantic number of students that you would have.

[00:05:35] Beth Goldberg

Wow. Oh, can you tell us some memories of your students from the early part of your career?

[00:05:42] Martha Strever

They were much different than today because naturally, the internet and social life today is so different that they weren't trying to outdo another student. And you hear the word bullying used today. And yes, students would maybe push each other a little bit and like that, but it really wasn't a bad situation. They were kind to each other. And I found the creativity in those days was so much deeper than it is today. I had a math club after school and they would do all sorts of topics that you would not do in the classroom, and they just wanted to be on top of it. I think one of the projects we did back in those days, we actually took pictures of the Red hook library in order to prove about geometry, the octagons and all like that. So it was the kids really dived in and they didn't have an internet to just resort to. They had to go get the information.

[00:07:08] Beth Goldberg

Quite different. And how about working with parents? How can you tell us a little bit about your memories of working with parents from the early part of your career?

[00:07:18] Martha Strever

When you called the parents in the early years, they didn't immediately say, oh, it's not my child's fault. I'm sure they did not do that in the classroom. You had much more cooperation, and they would follow up even afterwards to be sure things had changed. So I felt the support was a lot stronger in those days.

[00:07:47] Beth Goldberg

And how about can you tell us some memories of the school and the school district from the early days?

[00:07:57] Martha Strever

Very supportive. I would say you felt like it was a family. Like when I first arrived my early years, naturally, I did not know a lot of the people since I really had not been in touch with the Red hook area. Selma Hardiman actually was my cooperating teacher. And therefore, that's a word that you would recognize from the Hardiman family. And it was a case that it made it so that I began to know people better that way because she had been been my cooperating teacher and my. You at that time, since I really had gone to New Paltz, and that at that time you had to say like going to junior high. And therefore it was in my master's degree and like that, that it then allowed me to have. I actually am certified K through 12 for my math. I'm certified. Naturally, like the six through 12 and the science, I'm six through nine on that. So you will find that they were very, very supportive of your Tas at that time. You were required to be there and it was a very big functioning organization.

[00:09:40] Beth Goldberg

Were required to go to the PTA.

[00:09:42] Martha Strever

Or Yes they would. They would see that you were there or that you weren't there. And I was very active in the Red Hook Faculty Association. I at one point was treasurer of that too. So it, it was a real supportive school district.

[00:10:06] Beth Goldberg

You know. So you talked a little bit about your own educational experience at New Paltz. Maybe we can go back a bit and just talk about your education. What was it like going to school in Hyde Park and how you felt about your educational experience?

[00:10:23] Martha Strever

I I had applied to like Albany and Oneonta and New Paltz, but financially, I knew it was not going to be very easy to do that. And I was very fortunate that I did get a the High Park scholarship, and then I got the Ruth Mack Haven Scholarship, which really made it possible. And come to find out, later on, she was the one of the organizers of the New York State chapter of Delta Kappa Gamma International Honor Society for Women Educators, of which I am a member and have been very active in. So I wound up going to New Paltz, but I did live on campus being an only child. That was one thing that needed to happen that I lived there. And very fortunately, I was able to be in the, what was called annex at that time. So there were what we called army barracks for the others, where you had eight in a room, whereas it was only four in the room with bunk beds. Where I was, and I always in high school was wanting to be into basketball and volleyball. And very fortunately, our annex had our own team. And that's where I started to be in the sports every week. And even at one point I was shown to be the top scorer in the basketball. And so with my being so short, you wouldn't expect that.

[00:12:22] Beth Goldberg

That's that's a great story. I didn't know that. How about middle school, elementary school, middle school, high school in Hyde Park. Did you enjoy it? Did you like going to school there?

[00:12:36] Martha Strever

I enjoyed it very much. And I did have wonderful teachers. As I say, I really couldn't get into the sports. I thought I wanted to even be like a, a twirler and like that. And I just didn't. My parents were not like owners of dealerships and like that and it seemed like never I had was not in any sport. So it was really great when I got to college. That was a disappointment. But I actually my math teacher in high school, that's who I wanted to imitate. Very much so. And that's why I wanted to go back and show that, hey, I did become the math teacher. And another thing there not only in the high school, but I had a teacher in my junior high where the math teacher was fantastic.

[00:13:42] Speaker 1

What were those teachers names?

[00:13:45] Martha Strever

Well, it was Hyla Erwood in the high school, and it was Sal Forte in the middle school.

[00:13:55] Beth Goldberg

Those are great stories, Martha. I'm kind of curious. So why did you have why have you continued to stay in Red hook all these years?

[00:14:05] Martha Strever

It's my family. I guess I've got to say it that way. Never got married, and it was fortunate my parents didn't seem to be disappointed not to have grandchildren. And in fact, they said, I think you're always going to cherish your career. And right now, I am so fortunate to have an administration that has even said to me. In other words, Stacy Smith has said to me.

[00:14:45] Beth Goldberg

That's the principal of the.

[00:14:46] Martha Strever

School currently. And she said, I said, gee, now we're over Covid and you. They had asked me to rescue the students that really fell behind. And I'm teaching co-teaching special ed. And she said to me, I'm not taking your name off until you say I'm retiring. So I am very fortunate to have administration that is supporting me. And I still enjoy the students a lot. The behavior is entirely different. You have to discipline in a different way than you ever did years ago.

[00:15:27] Beth Goldberg

You want to sort of talk a little bit about that. What works today. What work then? You know.

[00:15:34] Martha Strever

Well. In other words, you try to stay calm about it. Whereas you used to try to immediately stop the actions that you're doing. And that just doesn't work. You try to have them working. Every moment I find is the thing you don't want to like we're supposed to take our attendance. It's a new policy. In the last few weeks that you immediately. Well, I always call the office if I see a child that I know is somewhere and not where they belong. And so I'm a little late sometimes taking the attendance, and it's because I don't want to waste time at the beginning of the period and say, oh, I've got to go to my computer to send the attendance because I want to start like you people as past teachers, you might do a do now or something like that.

[00:16:37] Beth Goldberg

You want to use every moment that you have with them. Yes. So what would you like as a child? You talk about discipline. Did your parents discipline you or.

[00:16:46] Martha Strever

They expected you just don't do things wrong. It would be worse if you got home and had been reported on, so I never tried that. In fact, the one time that a call came from the school to my folks, it wasn't for anything like that, but it was like, I think it may have happened twice. I can't be quoted on that one. The best. But once was to become the babysitter of the new superintendent. They didn't call them superintendent those days. And I had never babysat at all. And oh yes, you can do this. Well, he had two children and I babysat. And then the other time that I was contacted was I wanted to start having a summer job. And naturally my mother did not drive. So it really had to be when I got my license and because dad was at work and I got notified that there was a need for somebody at the Hyde Park gift shop, which at that time was across from the Roosevelt mansion and everything. So it was very fortunate to be asked to do it because I heard that my employer chose who she wanted. And so I went and I was interviewed and got the job. And then my eye. In other words, I did that all through college in the summer.

[00:18:31] Martha Strever

And then if I came home on a weekend and it maybe was a holiday weekend, my employer would beg me to come in. So that gave me a little more money. And the wonderful part of my experience was waiting on Eleanor Roosevelt. And she would come in and my employer would say, you can wait on her. And it was quite an experience to think that she would bring her guests there to see if they wanted to purchase something, because there would be like expensive busts of Franklin Roosevelt. And you had Staffordshire and Bone China all very crystal Austrian crystal there. And if you were, you had to dust all the time. You were scared to death that you might drop something. And then even on as the years went on there I was left in charge of it, like on Mondays, which was not normal to happen for a younger person, because that was the day that my employer would go to the bank. And so she got so that she would leave me, but accidentally in dusting once one of the crystal rings toppled over on it, it broke and I was scared to death while I was gone. No, no, I know it's all right. So I never got a charge for it.

[00:20:00] Beth Goldberg

Well, that's wonderful to have met Eleanor Roosevelt. You've been selected for that position.

[00:20:05] Martha Strever

Eleanor Roosevelt would speak at a convocation at New Paltz a couple of times, so it made it nice when I told my friends, oh, I waited on her at the Hyde Park shop.

[00:20:18] Beth Goldberg

That's a beautiful story. Do you have a story, perhaps, that you could tell us about a historical event that was particularly meaningful or impactful, or happened perhaps during the school day and affected how you taught.

[00:20:39] Martha Strever

Well, I'd like to maybe point out one thing because of the connection. When you think about Hyde Park and Red hook and the closeness. A couple of the teachers knew of this experience of mine, and one of our social studies teachers asked me to do a presentation to their classes. And it really became very important in my life. So the kids reacted so nicely to it. And it's that my uncle was a president of the Board of Education at the time of Franklin Delano Roosevelt. And there are murals in the Hyde Park Post office, and it shows the car of President Roosevelt. And it actually had the picture of all the members of the Board of Education. And that's where my uncle shows in the picture. And you will find that my uncle got very ill at and my mom was an RN, so she was actually attending to him until like two months before I was born. And so President Roosevelt would come and park his car on the front lawn of my aunt and uncle's and security had to go through and everything. And so telling that story to the students, I enjoyed that. So that was a day that I really felt very, very much in tune with the students to show how closeness to Red Hulk, things of big importance can occur. And that was when they were put going through getting the various schools in the High Park District is what it was. And then another day that was important to me was the celebration of my 50 years of teaching in Red hook, and a gathering occurred one evening. The band the orchestra part played on the stage at that time. And the various dignitaries even were there to.

[00:23:22] Beth Goldberg

Write, I believe what some local politicians. I honor you.

[00:23:26] Martha Strever

That's what I was going to say. Can you.

[00:23:29] Beth Goldberg

Mark Molinaro was there.

[00:23:30] Martha Strever

Yes he was. Yes. Yeah.

[00:23:33] Speaker 1

What about the most recent achievements with your Guinness Book of World Records?

[00:23:39] Martha Strever

That's what's holding us up and getting us very upset about that. My principal is upset about it. I keep on asking for additional information.

[00:23:52] Beth Goldberg

Well, you know, let's back up a little bit and let's give some context because I know about it, but that's for posterity. Yes, yes. So how did this come about? It just suddenly with the Guinness people, it.

[00:24:09] Martha Strever

It really developed from the CBS Mornings thing.

[00:24:17] Beth Goldberg

And that CBS news came to interview you and all day long. Why did they come to interview you?

[00:24:23] Martha Strever

Well my cousins In other words my cousin's mother in law had wanted to tell the story and she had contacted actually channel seven, and nothing ever happened and she was upset about that. She's now I think it's 90. I'm trying to remember the exact year. And then I guess she contacted CBS. Well, at the same time something happened at school that all of a sudden they were contacting. So it appeared that it was through my school that this all because I guess maybe they contacted the.

[00:25:09] Beth Goldberg

Why did they contact. Well, why why did this school reach out? What was the contact made?

[00:25:15] Martha Strever

In other words, because of the 65 years and then all of a sudden nicer.

[00:25:20] Beth Goldberg

Because you because you've been teaching at Red hook for 65 years.

[00:25:24] Martha Strever

Right. And they kind of had the feeling that that's the longest person has taught and nice. It really went into great detail.

[00:25:38] Beth Goldberg

At being the New York teachers union. Right.

[00:25:41] Martha Strever

And they interviewed me and started researching and all of a sudden I was notified that I am the longest one in New York State. But then it just kept developing further and further. Senator Hinchey got involved in it, and she had actually been a few years before that. I can't tell you exactly whether it was three years or. I'm not sure which it probably was for years. Maybe when she honored, she was at the honoring at the Red Hook Educational Foundation at Bard College, where I was honored there for the number of years that I had taught. And that was a nice and that was for the Frank Knoblock Award on that. And it just kept going forward because the American Federation of Teachers then got involved and Sue Serino and Pat Ryan in other words, during the past little over a year now and then New Paltz, they had me there for a day there too, along with Stacey Smith too. And you will find that it just kept progressing.

[00:27:14] Beth Goldberg

So I just want to take a moment here. So I just want to paraphrase. So you've been teaching 65 years, you're still going strong. And no other teacher in the state of New York has taught for that length of time of time. So the New York State Teachers Union, the American Federation of Teachers, you know, the so the National Teachers Union all were wanted to celebrate you, along with our county executive, Sue Serino, our Congressman Pat Ryan, and your alma mater. Yes, New Paltz. So everybody was wanted to celebrate this enormous achievement. And it's still going strong. You're saying, well.

[00:27:55] Martha Strever

They keep saying, okay, we're still investigating this. In fact New Paltz had wanted me to be at the celebration last month, hoping that the the Guinness records had been established and we had to. Guinness.

[00:28:13] Beth Goldberg

The Guinness Book of Records is now researching to see if you're the teacher who's taught the longest in the world in the in the country.

[00:28:22] Martha Strever

In the country, and well, you know, I never thought of it that way when you asked that. I assume that's what it meant. And then it's a case that they asked for money at one point. And that's what we wonder because as Stacey says, yes, we could give the money, but is that buying it? And that's why we don't want to do that. We want it to be the actual fact. And technically it's through three areas. It's not only just the length of time, but being a chairperson for 49 years in math, a woman doing this. I was the first in our district that was even a woman chair, and I really when our person had resigned, I thought, gee, maybe I'd like to be a chair, but I'm not that outgoing. I'm shy. In fact, when I student taught. Although my fellow teachers here wouldn't agree with this, when I. Student taught, my supervisor from New Paltz was there the day that my sixth grade cooperating teacher wanted to have a little going away. Event and it was a tea. And here I don't drink tea for one thing, but I could have put on. And I kind of was over in the corner because I wasn't that outgoing. So would I really want to become a chairperson? Well, I found out a male was applying and I discussed it at home and everything, and I said, gee, I wonder if I should try for that. Maybe this would be exciting. So I did apply, but the one thing about it, and it was ten years after I had come to Red hook, you have to give up teaching science if you become a math chair. So I thought, well, that was my second major that I took under my bachelor's degree. And therefore I thought, see, math really was my first love. So I gave it up and all of a sudden I became the first female chairperson in the district.

[00:31:02] Beth Goldberg

Wow. Now, were there many women teachers at that point or were mostly male teachers?

[00:31:08] Martha Strever

It was a kind of mixed on that because Dick Berenger, who was one of our high school principals, had been the math teacher. And then Bob Barrett who was in the science and he, I believe had taught a couple of the math that's going back so many years. I can't quote the exact number on that.

[00:31:41] Beth Goldberg

No. Very interesting. So you talk about, you know, being sort of a quiet person.

[00:31:45] Martha Strever

Yes, I.

[00:31:46] Beth Goldberg

Was. Made me think a little bit about your friends growing up. Did you? So what were your who were your best friends when you were growing up and how did those relationships develop?

[00:31:58] Martha Strever

The disadvantage of my mom not driving made it difficult. And my dad worked for his brother and that the garage was right across from where I live today. And therefore there weren't children around me. Like if there was one person there was a boy that was around me. It was not exactly a lot of contact with my age group. And then as I was in junior senior high, which was at the FDR at that time, high school, now it's Havilland Junior Middle school. We had a family that had moved in a couple of houses from where I lived and had two children. And the one was a boy and the other was a little sister, and the boy was a little bit closer in my age. But I learned that he had hemophilia, and it was devastating in the sense that if he fell naturally, he could bleed to death. And like that. And to tell how I was shy and everything. But he would fall sometimes and couldn't get up on the step of the bus. And we had a driver at that time that would not get out and help the person.

[00:33:37] Martha Strever

I would lift the boy up onto the bus and then all of a sudden he had fallen. We used to play a like have a little cars and trucks in the in my uncle's house. House was right next to where I lived, and I could walk over there. He could walk over there because it was just like the yards behind our houses. And he never told his mom. And I did not know that originally he had fallen off the rocks which were south of their house. And all of a sudden he really he passed away. So it was heartbreaking because as soon as I heard that he was in the hospital, I said, mom, he fell down the rocks. Did mom, did his mom know? And she didn't know that he had not told her. And so it was heartbreaking. And as I say, I wasn't really I had a couple of friends that lived like 2 or 3 miles away from me, but that was only like on a weekend when I could be driven there. Sure. Yeah.

[00:34:56] Beth Goldberg

Well, I'm going to switch gears a little bit. And I know that technology is very important to you. Do you want to talk a little bit about your experiences with technology and how that's changed over time, how it's impacted your teaching?

[00:35:13] Martha Strever

And I can't keep up to date and try to teach because I had never taught actual special ed students. And in other words, after the Covid occurred, I then was asked, what would you think of teaching special ed? And I said, well, I'm not certified in that. No co-teaching cert, the special ed. I said, oh, as you know about you picked up teaching my accelerated algebra grade eight students, which I had brought to the district in the 80s and had been teaching regular math and also needy students, not ones that were special ed, but they had needs beyond the regular math student. So I said to my principal when she called me and I thought, what have I done wrong? I said, A new challenge. Oh, this is a great idea. I think I would like to try that. And Chris Wood, who is one of our teachers in our district, and I think he's just a couple of days ago. What is it, 25 years? Something like that, I think. And I said, oh, I've never taught with them before. Sounds great. And so I did that. And therefore I no longer and this happened even a couple years before that, they needed a math teacher in the high school. Because one of ours had retired. So I was teaching over there for two periods and coming back and teaching in lambs, but I had to give up my computer classes.

[00:37:12] Martha Strever

So I'm leading to why was I teaching computer naturally. And so I can't keep up with it right now. It seems like every day something new is happening and all of this getting into the accounts and everything, it's really making it hard for us. And what happened in 1982 is that that's when your computers started to come about RadioShack computers. And Tom Turchetti was my principal at the time. And he suddenly placed on my desk a computer and said, you're going to teach that? And I said I hate to tell you, but that didn't exist when I went to college. And even in my workshops, I had been taking. That wasn't really keeping me there. Well, here it is. And we want the math department to become not only math, but math and computer. And therefore, how do I get caught up? Well, started investigating since it was a model three RadioShack in Poughkeepsie. The RadioShack store there had a classroom in the back of the store. So I was going there, I think it was two days, two nights a week learning how to use the computer. But that wasn't enough. I knew that because we were going to have a few computers in my classroom, my math classroom, and like four tables in the back of my classroom where computers would be put.

[00:39:07] Martha Strever

So it was teaching out of the same room. So Vassar Institute then also started providing a class after school. And I would rush down there and it was held in the old, old Poughkeepsie high school. And there I would be taking classes there. So got through that year learning more and more. And then in the summers, and I don't recall how many summers Ulster Boces had classes there and I would take courses over Ulster Boces and Ted Dixon was the instructor of that was doing it, and that really enabled me to be able. But I was not a certified math and computer teacher because it would mean in college. And in 1990, I think it was when Kim Goldhirsch came to us and she was certified. So Kim and I taught computers picking up grade six, seven, and eight. And finally they got the actual fact I drew on graph paper how to design the actual computer labs and annex to it. But then, as I say, I did have to give it up and it was good because naturally, the classes I was teaching over in the high school for the two periods were also different than what I was teaching in my middle school classes.

[00:40:47] Beth Goldberg

How many years did you teach computers then?

[00:40:49] Martha Strever

Oh, right. Probably. Oh, dear. That's. Now, I don't know if I totaled that because it was probably maybe four years before Covid that I stopped doing that. I haven't got that number.

[00:41:09] Beth Goldberg

Over ten years. It's close to 20 years.

[00:41:12] Martha Strever

It would probably now be let's see, probably about ten years that I haven't been teaching it yet.

[00:41:22] Beth Goldberg

But you taught it for about.

[00:41:23] Martha Strever

Oh, I thought I taught it. Yes. In other words, right through until probably about 2018, maybe something like that from 1980.

[00:41:35] Beth Goldberg

And has technology in the classroom changed how you teach?

[00:41:40] Martha Strever

I have to admit that what I'm teaching right now. I find that the students like Excel. Originally I had brought that there and then all of you jumped on. I'm with it. I find that they have a habit. Like if they make a mistake, they have a tutorial right there with it, but they click click and really are not grasping it.

[00:42:12] Beth Goldberg

So I excel just for people. So that's an online software tool that students can use to practice math. Correct. Okay.

[00:42:22] Martha Strever

And it shows when they make mistakes and then it will give a tutorial, but it's according to how the students use the tutorial that I find has an influence yet. I at times I had over the years, but I'm not doing it as much now as I did. I find the actual standing right alongside of the child. Then I can pick right up immediately instead of waiting for each student to grasp it. Because so often the error is common in an eyes class, which is your academic intervention service for students that are, they've possibly failed their regular math class and like that. So I find that being right there with them, like this past week, they were not getting what I call combining terms in math and also using the distributive law because we're going into solving equations. And I could not quite get exactly what they were getting hung on. So then I'm very visual, and I know you know that your visual Beth you were. I have them make boxes. Like if it's two a minus maybe nine a and like that, put those boxes around the a terms and then I call them apples so that they can think of eating apples or getting apples. And then I'll call my bees like bananas. And I said, I don't want an apple banana together. And you shouldn't be doing that either. Put circles around the B terms. And so I find that actually I'm not using as much. We do use it for practice at home maybe once a week. The I excel since it is special ed classes.

[00:44:34] Beth Goldberg

Okay, so you sort of find that you don't use the software in the teaching, just as a supplement to reinforce your practice. So sort of interesting. Just you told us a lot. I just want to hearken back to the discussion of how you embraced learning about computers. And so what is your approach to learning something new? So if you had to summarize and you talked a lot about how you immersed yourself in the technology. So so when you have to learn something new, like when you have to take over the special ed curriculum, what is your approach to learning something new?

[00:45:14] Martha Strever

Well, to be honest, the very last meeting, that's our state math teachers events where they come from throughout the whole New York state. You sit at times with keynote speakers and like that, and then you have all the workshops. Strangely enough the very last in person, although I have, they did have the virtual during the Covid and I was on it there too. And I also do the state supervisors, they let me stay on even though I'm not the chairperson. And that's how I keep up to date. And what I found that to approach the special ed, I had gone to workshops in person the very last time that before the Covid and it was about how to approach kids that had issues in learning. And it was very visual. It's project based, which you will relate to. Beth and I enjoyed it, but I didn't fully like the approach to it. It was because I thought I can use things from it in order to get to where I was doing it. And as I say, then I also go on YouTube and I will watch this one is math antics. Well, then I tried to imitate some of the things that I will see that they're doing that maybe I hadn't thought of because it's the newer approach and I don't want to be just, just using in the past.

[00:47:08] Martha Strever

And I found that in the classroom with my co-teacher, he is a coach and everything I did back and I didn't do it as much when I was doing it with my other classes. He and I will use our sports because he's Football. Baseball. I'm. Basketball. Volleyball. So if we're talking about just recently, a lot with integers because of the approach to the equation, solving students, even though we have number lines, I have those up there and I'll say this is a little bunny rabbit hopping along the number line. Then he'll hop in and say, and have you watched football last night? Have you watched football on the weekend? All of a sudden the runners are going in one direction. Whoops. Then they're going in the opposite direction. Isn't that using integers? And that's the thing I will do with them. And even in the basketball shooting angles, because naturally you can visualize I could not have been under the net trying to get a basketball in the hoop and. And those days when I played, you couldn't run the whole floor. You were stopped at the halfway part on the floor. And so I had to shoot from just about where that center line was. And therefore, it was a long shot. And so then I can talk about angles of doing it. And I relate that to geometry.

[00:49:00] Beth Goldberg

Well, it sounds like you really try to ground the math in the real world.

[00:49:04] Martha Strever

I knew you were going to come out with that.

[00:49:07] Beth Goldberg

Which is beautiful. So we're coming. You know, we've been talking for a while. I guess this is a point. Maybe we can reflect a little bit and sort of get ready to wrap up. Okay. So just

[00:49:19] Martha Strever

She's going to ask probably. When are you retiring?

[00:49:23] Beth Goldberg

No, I never asked.

[00:49:25] Martha Strever

That. Yeah, but others have.

[00:49:27] Beth Goldberg

Yeah. But what I was going to ask you is, tell us what you've learned about yourself through your teaching career.

[00:49:35] Martha Strever

I feel that actually, I begin to think about being so much more supportive, really, in the last four years of these children that we have in our special ed classes. Often it's families that are really maybe broken up where mom and dad are not in the same house. And I think it's made me so much more aware of patience, kind of trying to. Did you have a good start of the day? Did you eat this morning? Things like that. That probably I did not do as much. So even in these last few years, I've grown that way to be more that way. In fact, the first year that we started this co-teaching, I had a child that was known not to talk and was in our sixth grade special ed class. And I thought to myself, I've got to somehow get her to talk. But I knew the special ed teacher was the one that really should be doing this. So both of us would do it. But if he was trying to relate to the special ed part of it, I'd be right over next to the girl because I had introduced the math part of it and I'd say, just copy it down. So you're imitating. Just copy it down. Well, in the beginning it was a slow start and I would point. All of a sudden she would. Then all of a sudden she started to. Because she wasn't even trying. And then all of a sudden she would try look up at me.

[00:51:45] Martha Strever

Yes, keep going, keep going. But I was right at her desk and he was maybe wandering to the other students because like, we have ten in our special ed classes. Not some of them, but right now we have ten a class. We had that last year. And all of a sudden she would say, is that correct? Yes. That's correct. Good. So then she'd try a next one by January. Have I got that answer right. And others were raising their hand. Wanting to answer, I said, yes, I bet you want to share it, Mr. wood. She wants to share it by the end of the year. She was proud of herself. That she actually was talking to me. That felt like such a reward. And I think that's what I will have to say. It's taught me to be more patient, probably because they take a lot longer and they're key words that you don't necessarily think of, even in eyes that you've got to reach out to. And I feel that I'm using like you are asking maybe what am I doing? Maybe different. Over the years, I do resort to the internet not to have the students necessarily go to. But I find myself very receptive of getting ideas from others since I don't get to as many in house workshops. And I mean like even ten county we were involved in. And I really, I don't get to, I don't see them even online really communicating like they used to with us really.

[00:53:49] Beth Goldberg

It's wonderful story, by the way. So if you were to give advice to a new teacher, what would you say? How could you?

[00:53:57] Martha Strever

Well, as I've seen new teachers come to our own district in the last few years. I find that I wish maybe they would always remember to maybe seek some advice, some Experiences that the teachers that have been there have gone through, because they can relate some of the things they experience to overcome, and especially in classroom management. That's where I'm seeing that. I wish I sit at team meetings and I'd like to open my mouth a couple of times, but if they're not asking me, I bite my tongue.

[00:54:47] Beth Goldberg

I. And how about for great advice for new teachers? For sure. What about for a principal, for a leader, a leader of a building, or even.

[00:55:00] Martha Strever

I hope they have a. In my case, anyway, Stacy actually reaches out to me when we will see a common thing going on. She said, thank you for sharing what you have experienced through the years. So I would hope that the administration would kind of you. I feel a little overbearing if I brought something up the other. No, no, I want to talk to you about it. I want to see your feeling. So that's something that I wish that both ways would happen, that administrators would reach out to those that are maybe more experienced because they may be newer. Well, definitely newer than me in the career of education because I think working together makes happiness more. And I think now we have so many more teacher aides throughout the building. Some of them are teacher assistants and therefore you need everybody working together.

[00:56:18] Beth Goldberg

Very, very powerful advice. Is there anything you feel that we haven't talked about that I should have asked you? You know, because there's so much information to share and so many wonderful stories. Is there anything else you'd like to tell us?

[00:56:35] Martha Strever

I think one thing that I would like to share is. How how touched I've been by the people that have honored me in the last year and a half. I never thought of this ever, ever happening. And even if I go shopping, well, in fact, the day it was on a Thursday. Day before yesterday, I was at our local stop and shop. And several months ago this lady had approached me as I was going to my car. You're the person that has been on the front page of the Poughkeepsie Journal, and I had no idea who the lady was, and I thought with everything scamming and everything, you get a little panicky. Here I am with all my my items that are just beginning to put in my car. I only live a couple of miles above you. Probably three maybe. And she says, I've seen you out mowing the lawn and things like that. And I said, yes, I, I love to do that. I love to be out in nature. I love to see the birds flying, flying around. And I like to keep my property. I like to put little decorations out and things. Oh, I've met you, I've met you. Well, I am actually.

[00:58:10] Martha Strever

I've been a teacher, I've had different, she says to me. And she works now at Dutchess Community College. And what happens now? That was several months ago. And naturally, I couldn't quite remember what she looked like at all. She stops me as I had just gotten in stop and shop. There you are. Oh my word. I'm. So if you need anything, you've got to let. Let me help you. And I think she's going. She said, do you remember I gave you my phone number? Well, she did, in fact, at that time. And here she was, you know, she wanted to talk and talk. And let's see, that night I was supposed to be preparing something for the next day at school. I thought, I've got to go. I don't know how to approach it. I haven't had my meal yet. And I'm picking up my meal like that, and I find my past students even. And naturally, I cannot recognize big white beard. No hair on the gentlemen. Some of the ladies naturally, the color of the hair does not look identical. And I'm saying, I, I realize I see the shape of the face, but I can't get the actual name. And then they'll tell me.

[00:59:41] Martha Strever

Yeah, but you're the one that helped me get through me. Or the other day, one of them said to me, I was not one of your good students. I said, yes, but you tried. When she told me the name, I knew who it was. And then back in let's see, that was September, when the Red hook alumni honored me there. And naturally, they were all different age groups and I really had to keep saying, no, I can't get the name, I can't get the name. But several of them said it was the manner in which you presented things, and that I just have to share this in this interview, because I never thought this would ever happen. I was at the Dutchess County Fair and I bumped into a few people there. One came up to me and said I was a terrible math student, but I'm a top lawyer in New York City now. I said, oh, fantastic. Yeah, but you don't realize I don't have to use the math that I learned from was the structure of your class. You were so had to do it this way, organized. And he said, that's very essential in my lawyer practice. So that's why I'm.

[01:01:11] Beth Goldberg

Sure.

[01:01:11] Martha Strever

You.

[01:01:12] Beth Goldberg

Changed so many lives for the better. And you've made such an impact on so many people in such a positive way. If so much to be proud of. And Red hook is so fortunate to have you as part of its community, really a local icon and celebrity. And we're so grateful that you took the time to chat with us. So thank you so very much. Martha Streever.

[01:01:36] Martha Strever

I thank you for interviewing me. Your questions were really things that made me think back, and thank you for honoring me in the place that I have been in my profession all my life.

[01:01:54] Beth Goldberg

Well, we look forward to many future honors that we can celebrate as well. So thank you again.

[01:02:00] Martha Strever

Thank you.

END OF TRANSCRIPT



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