

Ronald Maggiano

West Springfield High School, Springfield, VA

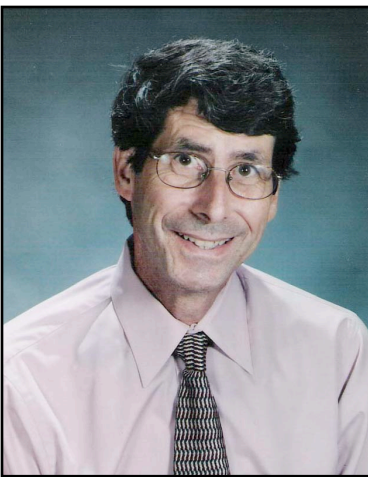
High School Humanities Education

11th grade U.S. History and

11th and 12th Grade AP European History



2005 Honorees



“William Butler Yeats once observed that, ‘Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire.’ Unfortunately, in the modern standards-based classroom environment, learning more and more resembles the filling up of a pail (a student’s brain) with disconnected facts, figures and dates. In the

history classroom, this has often translated into a ‘Trivial Pursuit’ approach to the last. Indeed, many students routinely play games based on Jeopardy or Trivial Pursuit to practice for standards based exams and end of the year tests. Such activities have their place in the classroom; but I invite students to go beyond the minimum standards which require only rote memorization and simple recall of facts without interpretation, analysis, or critical thinking. While students need to fill the pail with the basic ‘stuff’ of history, facts by themselves have little meaning without an interpretive framework that gives them meaning and coherence. So while many teachers are busy trying to ‘fill the pail,’ I am constantly trying to ‘light the fire’ of leaning in my classes. Then I find that students can do a pretty good job of filling their own pails. That is what leaning in the truest sense is all about.” – *Ronald Maggiano*

“Mr. Maggiano gives his students unique learning opportunities. A talented musician, he often sets historic events to music or performs period pieces in class. This method creates enthusiasm, attracts and holds students interest and is memorable. He expects and requires his students to make extensive use of technology as they work with course content. For example, his U.S. History students produce professional quality pamphlets that are intended to convince prospective colonists that Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, Virginia, etc. is the best place to settle. His students had to deeply engage with material related to the colonies as they used and further developed their technology skills.”

“Mr. Maggiano measures students success in many ways. He understands what students know and are able to do by the enthusiasm and creativeness they show as they work with him and by the quality of assignments that they produce. Traditional assignments are not nearly enough for Mr. Maggiano.... Ron’s students do well. More importantly, he helps other teachers’ students do well.”

– *David Smith, principal, West Springfield High School*

Other Highlights:

Member, National Council for History Education

Member, American Historical Association

Ph.D. student, History, George Mason University

Years Teaching: 20

Average Class Size: 28

Classes Taught Per Day: 3-5

School’s Percent of ESL Students: 3

School Type: Public, Large City

Type of Class: Self-contained