



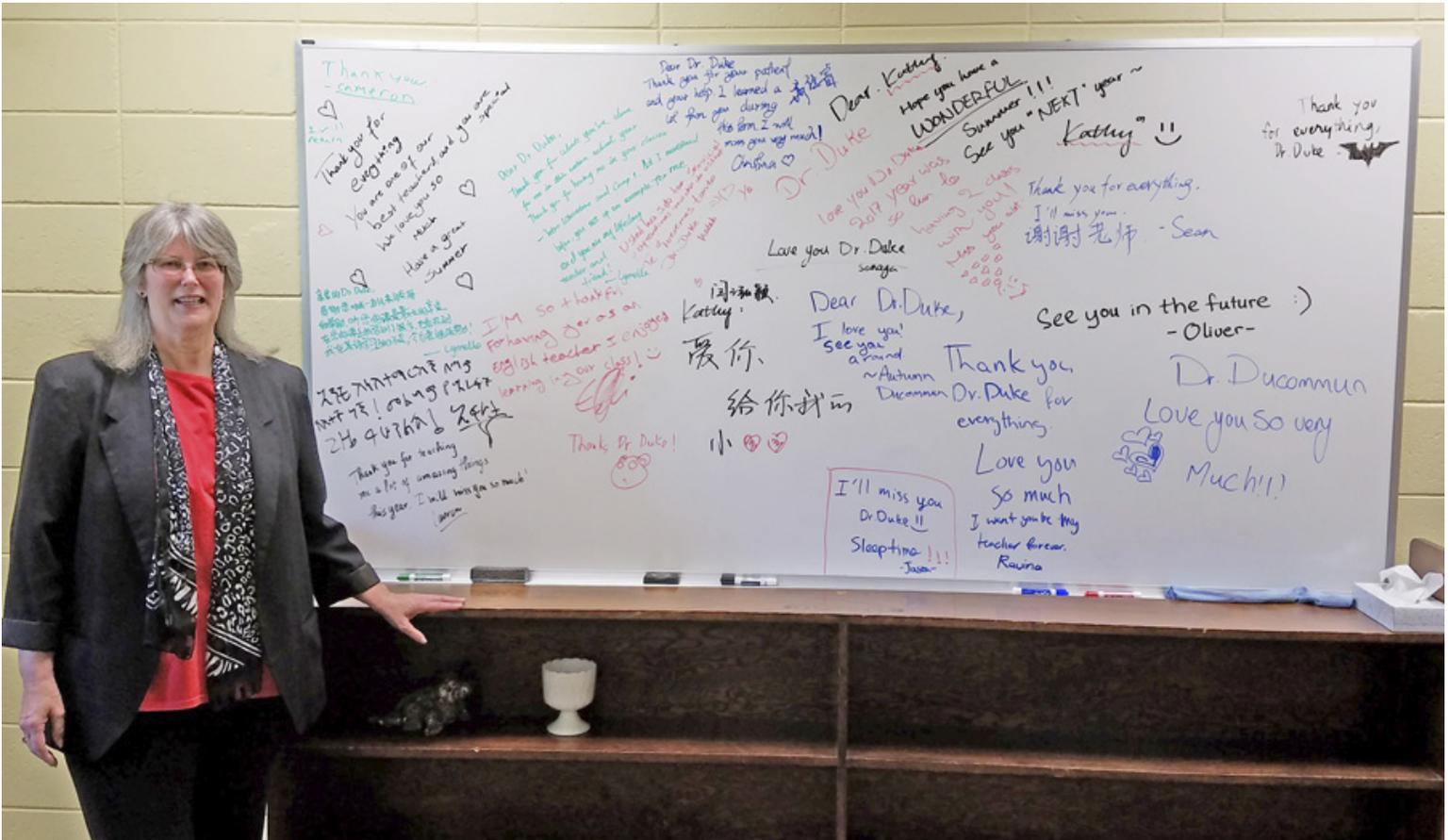
INSTRUCTOR PROFILE

Kathy Ducommun



Kathy “Dr. Duke” Ducommun’s teaching philosophy is quite simple: every student has the ability to improve upon their writing, critical thinking, and critical reading skills. She challenges every student in her classroom to reach and exceed their own potential, and she will “bend over backwards” for students who have the motivation to improve their English skills.

Dr. Duke has been teaching at North Cedar Academy for two years, and just recently was honored by an NCA student with the Educator of Distinction Award by the National Society of High School Scholars. The Educator of Distinction Award recognizes outstanding educators who have made a difference in their students’ lives by encouraging them to reach their full potential both inside and outside of school. Even though Dr. Duke was incredibly honored by the nomination, she believes that the daily accolades from students are just as important to her. For example, during Thanksgiving last year students were assigned to thank someone in their lives by writing them a letter showing appreciation. One of her students ended up writing her a letter thanking her for pushing him to succeed, and for never giving up on him. Small student successes are incredibly important to Dr. Duke, and she encourages and pushes each student to raise their own individual bar.



Dr. Duke has always had a strong connection to Ladysmith and the North Cedar Academy campus. She has lived in the Ladysmith community since she was 12 years old and obtained her Bachelor of Arts in English degree from Mount Senario College, which once existed on the current North Cedar Academy campus. She later attended Southern Illinois University - Carbondale (SIUC) and completed both her Master of Arts in English, and her Ph.D. in Rhetoric and Composition with minors in Renaissance and Medieval Literature. Dr. Duke taught for 7 years as a graduate assistant at SIUC before beginning her teaching career at Mt. Senario College. Here she taught college level English and was also an administrator - Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs, and later Acting President of Mount Senario College until it closed in 2002. She has also taught at Conserve School, an environmentally conscious high school in Land O' Lakes, WI, and at the University of Wisconsin - Marathon County. Because of her experience working in the UW system, Dr. Duke was the perfect fit to teach at North Cedar Academy, where students have the option to start taking UW college courses while still in high school.



One of Dr. Duke's favorite things about teaching at NCA is seeing a student's confidence grow throughout the year, especially regarding their writing skills. Dr. Duke teaches her English classes similarly to how they would be taught in the UW system. She creates assignments similar to the ones used in UW English 101 or 102 courses, uses college textbooks, and sets university-level expectations for the students. She focuses on getting her students prepared for university-level English courses.



Dr. Duke is eager to work alongside new NCA English teacher Deborah Somerville for a variety of reasons. Most importantly, she has expressed interest in starting a literary magazine at NCA. Dr. Duke notes it is a very healthy outlet for students to write for fun in addition to writing academically. Dr. Duke works tirelessly assisting her students improve their rhetorical awareness by staying after class to assist students, giving individualized feedback on assignments and essays, and by holding them accountable to their work. Her efforts show through the success of her students and she will continue to be an incredibly valued teacher at North Cedar Academy.