



Personal Profiles

Learn more about the people who treat you like family.

Interview with Erin Mulligan

Middle School Science and Social Studies Teacher

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WHAT WERE YOU LIKE AS A STUDENT?

I went to high school in Rochester, Minnesota at Lourdes High School. Go Eagles! Then, I attended Marquette University. Go Golden Eagles! My favorite school subject when I was younger was math. I enjoy solving math problems and logic puzzles and all puzzles, really.

I participated in figure skating for 13 years and synchronized figure skating 6th grade to senior year. We were amazing and went to Nationals a few times. I tried to continue this in college but found it mighty difficult to get to the rink without a car so I joined Marquette's Women's Club Rugby team and learned a wonderful new sport with a wonderful new team!

I also participated in band from 5th grade until I graduated college. I played trumpet first (well, piano first), then French Horn, then mellophone in marching band and picked up the accordion to continue family traditions. The French Horn is my favorite! It is such a cool instrument and it usually gets fun harmonies. Sadly, you also get stuck playing syncopated staccato notes frequently, which is slightly less fun. One time, I went all the way to DisneyWorld and all they wanted me to do was play staccato notes on the offbeats. Anywho, my favorite composers are Eric Whitacre and Richard Wagner and probably someone else I am forgetting. The first Eric Whitacre song I played was "Godzilla Eats Las Vegas!" And I learned how to do a rip on my horn and it brings me so much joy. I do not know the first time I encountered Wagner but my favorite piece of his is "Elsa's Procession to the Cathedral" because the horn part is powerful, majestic, and glorious.

WHY DID YOU DECIDE TO BE A TEACHER?

I was blessed to grow up going on a family road trip each year which had a schedule largely determined by National Park Service Units. This meant that whenever we were studying US History in school, I was always that kid who was always like, "Totes been there." Except that wasn't a phrase commonly used in my youth. Being able to see historical reenactments and archeological remnants growing up gave me a passion for storytelling and history. It also instilled in me a great respect for the environment, obsession with conservationist John Muir, and fear of bison. I decided to pursue history as a major in college as well as secondary education with a minor in broadfield social studies. At some point in my college career, I didn't have a full course load so I tacked on a Mathematics minor as well. I had tested out of math courses in college due to high school AP life and missed doing math. Also, it was the perfect amount of classes.

Throughout college, I spent my summers teaching outdoor ethics and adventuring at summer camp. It was at this time, and through my practicums in college, that I discovered an appreciation for the middle school aged (pre) teen. I appreciate their passion for life and ability to have metacognitive conversations while still being dreamers.

WHY DID YOU BECOME A WILDCAT?

The Saint Bruno staff made me feel so welcome when I came for my interview that my excitement was palpable to everyone with whom I discussed my decision. An extra bonus is that I moved closer to my family and living in lake country has allowed me to see my niece and nephew more often.

This is my 2nd year at St. Bruno and I appreciate the **focus on service, community, and family**. All of my students have things that they are passionate about and I try to bring these passions into the classroom. We all become historians and scientists, though some embrace these monikers more than others. The middle school students have made some very impressive documentaries, websites, exhibits and innovative designs in class. Their creativity and curiosity constantly astound me and they fully support our institution of a class mascot, Clark (or moose-cot). Every character in our classroom is named after an explorer, apart from Mr. Bones who came to us already named, and Bob Ross the Chameleon. Middle school students ask tough questions such as, "Who's your favorite Chris?" and "What is the airspeed velocity of an unladen swallow?" We work hard, think critically, and laugh at Clark and Carl's ridiculous puns.

HOW WERE YOU CALLED TO CHRIST?

I was born and raised in the Catholic faith and participate in Brew City Catholic events often to talk about Jesus with people my age. One of my favorite prayers is from Thomas Merton's book *Thoughts in Solitude*

*My Lord God, I have no idea where I am going.
I do not see the road ahead of me.
I cannot know for certain where it will end.
Nor do I really know myself,
and the fact that I think I am following your will
does not mean that I am actually doing so.
But I believe that the desire to please you
does in fact please you.
And I hope I have that desire in all that I am doing.
I hope that I will never do anything apart from that desire.
And I know that, if I do this,
You will lead me by the right road,
though I may know nothing about it.
Therefore I will trust you always
though I may seem to be lost
and in the shadow of death.
I will not fear, for you are ever with me,
and you will never leave me to face my perils alone.*

I often look to this **prayer in times of uncertainty and transition**. It brings me comfort and reminds me that God is rooting for me and all of us. We simply have to choose to follow Him. I strive to be humble for my students. I am in no way perfect and it is okay, even empowering, to admit that and own it. I think it is important for students to see that everybody messes up sometimes and it is how we deal with our mistakes that matters. Apology and forgiveness are very powerful things.

I also like wandering into the woods to connect with God's creation. One of my favorite adventures was right after my brother was ordained. My family went on a wilderness canoe trip to the Boundary Waters Canoe Area and had mass every day in the middle of the woods. That is some powerful stuff. When I go adventuring without bringing a priest along, I like to bring a rosary with or reference the breviary on my phone to say daily prayers.

HOW DO YOU SPEND YOUR TIME OUTSIDE OF SCHOOL?

Outside of work, I like to hike and backpack and go on other adventures. Last summer, I backpacked the first 200 miles of the Appalachian National Scenic Trail and I have hiked about 200 miles of the Ice Age National Scenic Trail here in Wisconsin over the past four years. My bucket list is the 11 National Scenic Trails and a few other long trails. I also like to travel in other ways and have driven much of the drivable National Historic Trails in the US.

I also enjoy spending time with family. I have a 3 year old niece and a 1 one year old nephew that live close by and see them often. The rest of my family is in Minnesota/scattered about the country and we drive the 4 hours to visit each other frequently.

WHAT DO YOU WANT PEOPLE TO REMEMBER?

I hope my students remember that they are **loved** and that **every day choices matter**.