



2007 Alumni Honor Roll | Reasons to Believe



Role models who give us *Reasons to Believe* in the power of education

Dr. Mary F. Simonich Ventura

Wyandotte High School, 1968

Mary Ventura's life-long commitment to Kansas City, Kansas and Wyandotte County as a teacher, administrator and community volunteer make her a reason to believe.

Since 1983, she has worked as a special education administrator for the Wyandotte Comprehensive Special Education Cooperative, ensuring that students in KCK, Bonner Springs and Piper, are provided with the services they need.

Her career in the field of education dates back to 1973 when she began working for the KCK Public Schools first as a special education teacher and later as a general education teacher at Hawthorne Elementary School. She went on to serve students through the Cooperative as a diagnostic and resource teacher and coordinator of the Instructional Media Center.



Ventura said while growing up in the KCK Public Schools, she toyed with the idea of medicine as a profession because she had an outstanding biology teacher. Journalism and other career ideas followed, based on the ideals of her teachers. But upon befriending some teachers in the field of special education, she saw the importance of the profession, and realized the need.

Today, Ventura has a bachelor's degree in elementary and special education, a master's degree in learning disabilities, and a doctorate in special education administration (with a minor in business), all from the University of Kansas.

She is strongly vested in the community as a member of the Junior League of Wyandotte and Johnson Counties. She has been a member and served in various offices in the Kansas City chapter of the Council for Exceptional Children.

Her fondest memories of her days at Wyandotte High School include the camaraderie among the students, and the vast array of activities available. Her teachers always set high expectations and provided great support.

Ventura's advice for today's students is "don't limit yourself. Take advantage of all opportunities and pursue them. Don't be afraid to try new things."