

High School

SUBMITTED BY: Sona Buchholz

WINNING TEACHER: Lacey Kinning

For seven years I have tried to win Lacey Kinning this award, and she has yet to win so this year I am writing again to say that I would have the honor of nominating Lacey Kinning.

I would not be the person or future educator that I am without Lacey Kinning. I had the pleasure of meeting Mrs. Kinning during my freshman year of high school at Lincoln High School, and the relationship we built I feel will last a lifetime. Mr. Larson, our principal, told me I needed to find one teacher that was going to be "my teacher" one that would help me be successful, I did that. I would not be the person I am today without the dedication and compassion that Mrs. Kinning provided me every day since day one.

I struggled with science courses throughout school and I absolutely hated them because I always felt weak and incapable due to my Cerebral Palsy. However, Mrs. Kinning changed my view forever. She made me see that I was strong, smart, and truly capable of anything I set my mind to.

As we fast forward a few years she was right, I got accepted to Nebraska Wesleyan University on scholarships due to Ms. Kinning's gracious effort and time spent on me for months of recommendations. Just recently though, I was trying to get into the Teacher Education Program at Nebraska Wesleyan, and she coached me on how to pass my exams, and how to impress the faculty on my interview.

One of the questions was who was a teacher in the past that helped shape you today, that question was tremendously easy as it rolled off my tongue so fast, Mrs. Kinning was my answer. I said my first goal is to build the same relationships with my students that Mrs. Kinning did for me because "students don't care how much you know until they know how much you care" - Theodore Roosevelt.

As I was answering these questions all I could think of was what would Mrs. Kinning say. I remembered that once a Link always a Link and I wanted to make Mrs. Kinning proud. I contacted her the night I found out I had been accepted into the program. I will never forget what she said, she said: "Sona Bear, I am so proud of you I knew you'd be a fabulous teacher if you believed in yourself, I was just here to guide you, you did all the work."

Lacey's dedication and commitment are what make her the greatest teacher of all, and when I become a teacher I hope to be half as amazing as she is. Thank you to all educators for what you do for students on a daily basis, but thank you Mrs. Kinning for always believing in me, supporting my career choice, and not letting me give up on teaching and myself when it got hard, because you didn't give up on me I will not let future students give up on themselves and I will not give up on you.

Lacey is the most phenomenal teacher. I tell my classmates that have practicum at Lincoln High she is a teacher worth meeting. Thank you a million times over again Mrs. Kinning for helping me find my purpose and passion, I always knew I wanted to be a teacher.

Thank you,
Sona Buchholz