

## **You Said My Name – Donna Butler - Alabama**

**From the first year of my 25-year teaching career as a high school Spanish teacher, I always made a habit of standing in the hallway outside of my door, greeting my students by name as they came in class. Adolescence can be a difficult time in the lives of many people, and, having come from an often-tumultuous home life myself growing up, I always tried to empathize with my students in understanding some of the difficulties they might be experiencing. Yes, at times, I grew tired of dealing with their raging hormones and adolescent angst. But as a senior class sponsor for most of my career, nothing made me prouder of my students than watching them walk across the track by the football field to receive their high school diploma. And I was always careful to pronounce the full name of each of the graduating students in my homeroom as they came forward to receive their diploma. I would ask them during graduation practice how to say their names correctly, and then I would practice making sure I said all the names exactly right.**

**I have always enjoyed seeing my former students again over the years after they graduated. Some would come back to see me in my classroom and tell me what they were doing. And some would make a point of talking to me when they came back to ball games and other school events. I have always been very interested in hearing about their lives now that they were adults.**

**Social media, particularly Facebook, has made it very easy for me to keep up with many of my former students since I retired. But I have never thought much about what a difference my standing at my door greeting students by their name made to them until one of my former students, now a teacher herself, wrote a post to me about that. Haley posted,” I learned how important it was to take that extra step and show interest in every student from the great example Mrs. Butler set for us every day! I will never forget how you stood in the hall between classes and made sure to say hello to each student by name. Most of the time you also had individual compliments about each one of our lives! Thank you for being an amazing teacher who taught me how to love my students, simply because when you greeted me, you said my name.” Several other former students added comments too about my greeting everyone by name.**

**I was overwhelmed with emotion as I read Haley’s post and the others’ comments as well. Through tears, I responded to Haley’s post and everyone else’s comments with love and gratitude. We educators may not always realize the impact we can make on the lives of our students. How wonderful knowing we can show how much we care simply by greeting them and saying their name!**