

To: Geneseo Board of Education CUSD #228

From: Building/Facility Naming Review Committee

DATE: May 5, 2021

RE: Proposal Review and Recommendation for naming the Geneseo High School Theater

Per Board Policy 4:155, a committee comprised of: The School Board President, 1 central office administrator, 1 building administrator, 1 GEA member, 1 PTA representative, and 1 student representative reviewed and discussed a proposal to name the Geneseo High School Theater "The Joseph and Marilyn DePauw Theater."

The following are the guidelines outlined in Board Policy 4:155 for naming a building or part of a facility after a living individual/employee, and a summary of the committee's discussion regarding each guideline.

Naming of living persons shall not be considered "except under special circumstances."

The committee discussed the following criteria as "special circumstances."

- The longevity of Mr. DePauw's tenure as the theater director is extremely rare and exceptional. Mr. DePauw has been directing the spring musical and fall play at Geneseo High School every year since 1978. No other individual has had the impact on students who have participated in Geneseo High School theater productions for the past 43 years as Joe DePauw. His name and legacy are synonymous with Geneseo High School theater.
- Given the new theater is a unique and dedicated space for theater productions, separate from the concert hall which was designed for band, choir, and orchestra performances, makes the naming of the theater space in honor of Mr. DePauw even more appropriate.

A nominee must have made a significant contribution to society.

- Mr. DePauw has been the McKinney Vento coordinator for the District for 20 years, which includes the past 10 years he has been retired. He has worked with countless families in the most difficult of circumstances as they struggle with homelessness, and he continues to serve in this capacity for the District.
- Mr. DePauw's work and dedication throughout the years as he served as the lead administrator at Geneseo High School serving at risk students in the special education department was also discussed by the committee as a significant societal contribution.

A nominee should lend credibility and validity to an institution of learning.

- It was discussed by the committee that Mr. DePauw's character and reputation are impeccable, and his devotion to this District for over 4 decades serving students and families in this District lends considerable credibility and validity to an institution of learning.

Naming facilities after a living employee only if she/he has provided a minimum of 20 years of service to the District and has been retired for at least 5 years.

- Mr. DePauw meets this criteria. He successfully served the district for well over 20 years, has been retired for ten years.

After all discussion concluded a vote was taken and a 5-0 unanimous "Yes" vote was recorded by the committee to move forward with a recommendation to the Board of Education.

The recommendation from this committee to the Geneseo Board of Education is to consider and approve naming the High School theater the "Joseph and Marilyn DePauw Theater."

Respectfully submitted,

Tim Gronski, Chief School Business Official
Travis Mackey, Principal, Geneseo High School
Heather DeBrock, Board President, Geneseo CUSD 228
Sharon Neumann, GMS/GHS PTA Representative
Tayt Haeger, GHS Student Council Representative
Melanie Henderson, Geneseo Education Representative (not present)

Hunter Kuffel
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January 28, 2021

Dear President Snodgrass and Members of the Geneseo CUSD 228 Board of Education,

It is with great enthusiasm and with an optimistic outlook towards approval that I humbly request your consideration in applying Board Policy 4:155 as it relates to the Geneseo High School Theater.

Per this policy, I submit for your review a request that you name the theater **"The Joseph and Marilyn DePauw Theater."**

The guidelines for the policy state that "names of living persons shall not be considered except under special circumstances". While Mr. DePauw is alive, he lost his lovely wife, Marilyn, in 2017. Naming the theater in their honor helps to memorialize both their lives and contributions to the fine arts world in Geneseo. I believe this would be a more than appropriate act considering all that Mr. DePauw has contributed to Geneseo High School and the theater community of Geneseo.

Mr. DePauw began his teaching career at Geneseo High School in 1978, and for his entire educational career, he served one of our most at-risk populations with exemplary commitment and professionalism. As he moved from classroom teacher to part-time vocational director to assistant principal, Mr. DePauw embodied the district's mission long before it was ever put into words. One would struggle to find a person who demonstrated more care and concern for the welfare of others than Joe DePauw, except perhaps his wife.

During my time as a student in the district, I was extremely lucky to participate in theatrical productions at school, St. Malachy's church and the Richmond Hill theater. None of these experiences, which I count among the fondest memories of my childhood and adolescence, would have been possible if not for Mr DePauw's kindness, reliability and commitment. Deepening my gratitude further is the knowledge that I am one of thousands of students to have benefitted from such an experience. You'll find many of their signatures beneath mine at the bottom of this letter.

Following retirement from his administrative position at Geneseo High School in 2011, Mr. DePauw continues to commit to service to students, staying on as the Theater Director and as a liaison to students who are homeless and experiencing life challenges. For more than four decades, Mr. DePauw has been the face, voice and heart of theater at Geneseo High School.

I can think of no greater tribute to the beautiful space in the Fine Arts addition at Geneseo High School than to name the theater in honor of Joe and Marilyn DePauw. I would also be honored to pay for any signage that is agreeable to the Board and to Mr. DePauw, should you agree with this naming request.

Please contact me should you have any questions or require anything further from me.

Respectfully,

Hunter Kuffel, Class of 2013
Ryan Zum Mallen, Class of 2013
Jack Scherer, Class of 2012

Allison (Yerkey) Donaldson, Class of 2013

Anna Mason, Class of 2012

Emily Knezz, Class of 2011

Clare Possin, Class of 2014

Dan Sears, Class of 2013

Kelsi Ford, Class of 2012

Emma Evans-Peck, Class of 2013