

Moshiko Hamo

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Danny's Classroom Dedication

Danny was a model learner and educator. He was a voracious reader. (I probably learned the word “voracious” in this room.) One summer in high school, he read the entirety of *War and Peace* simply because he wanted to. Who does that? Danny loved the humanities, absorbing history from Mr. Mate and literature from Mr. Cogan. Many of the books were very high on the D.I.M. scale, Mr. Cogan's measure of “Deep Inner Meaning,” which corresponds to the difficulty of a book. Danny was brilliant.

If Danny wasn't always the picture of good behavior as a student, it was no doubt because his intellect was so beyond what one might expect for someone his age. There was the time he would hide in the closet of the cozy, windowless Spanish classroom until about ten minutes into class, when he would jump out and scream “albóndigas,” which translates to “meatloaf.” There were of course the bells in Tami's class. Tami exhausted every method she knew of to try to get us to be quiet, when she decided to get a bell and ring it to get the class to quiet down. We would not be silenced. Danny and I managed to steal and hide the bell. Tami would then get a new bell, which we would in turn steal. This happened several times. Thus went this war of attrition. One day, Tami opened her desk drawer to find that we had returned all the bells. In spite of this turn of fortune, Tami was not pleased. My understanding is that future classes took up the tradition of stealing the bells from Tami.

At some point years later, Danny, Tami, and I were at some gathering together—I can't remember which. Danny or I told the other that we should apologize for being such

nuisances in her class. We both walked up to her, and Danny apologized for taking the bells and then turned to me for me to begin my apology. I couldn't resist turning to Danny and yelling, "That was you who took the bells!?" Before he could say anything, Tami was furiously shouting at him. He turned and looked at me, just seething. When Tami found out Danny planned to become a teacher, she said, "I hope he has five students just like him." That was not intended as a compliment.

However, it was here that he set his heart upon becoming an educator. When I asked him what he was studying in college, he told me that he was basically becoming Mr. Mate. His professional aspirations and identity were formed here by remarkable, inspiring teachers. Danny had a deep understanding of the importance of education. He and I both valued the liberal arts educations we went on to receive and spent many hours discussing philosophy, literature, and education. Danny knew that education enriches life. He was an open-minded and deep thinker. Some insights that were obvious to him would take me years to learn. Danny worked hard to accomplish his goal of teaching, and he did in fact take up the mantle of Mr. Mate and Mr. Cogan, by becoming a teacher in both history and literature. His students were fortunate to have learned from him. I know I certainly am. There is no doubt in my mind that Danny is deeply honored to have this classroom named for him.