

2004 Regional Woodie Flowers Award Winner - Mr. Budish!!

The Woodie Flowers Award is given out at each Regional Event in honor of Dr. Woodie Flowers, the Professor of Mechanical Engineering at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Dr. Flowers designs the FIRST Robotics Competition specifics each year with FIRST's founder, Dean Kamen. The Woodie Flowers Award is given to a mentor or engineer who has helped their team find out what FIRST is all about. This year at the Motorola Midwest Regional, our own Mr. John Budish was given this award. The essay that our team submitted for this award is below. Congratulations, Mr. Budish!!

Our Committed Pig

Someone once told me a story about my breakfast. More specifically, about the eggs and bacon I devoured earlier in the day. He then changed tactics and asked me what the difference was between being involved and being committed. When I looked at him with a bemused expression, attempting to find the correlation between breakfast and commitment, he told me that the chicken was involved by laying the egg; however, the pig was committed because it gave its life for the bacon. Our mentor, Mr. John Budish, is the "pig" of our Robotics team. Not only is he deeply committed, but he inspires the students to find their inner "pig". With an encouraging smile and an optimistic attitude, Mr. Budish has led our team for the past four seasons.

In our charter season, Team 537 consisted of 12 students. Over the course of four years, our team has more than tripled in size. With this increase in students, there has been a corresponding increase in talent, as well as new challenges. Mr. Budish fosters this budding talent with creativity and dedication. He is actively involved in recruiting new members with a multitude of different strengths, including leadership, technical abilities, and problem-solving skills. Using these talents, Mr. Budish has transformed a previously mentor-based program into our current student-driven team. He communicates his aspirations to our team and allows us to interpret and act accordingly. The challenge presented with this form of interaction enables students to control the fate of our team and our success.

Last year, Mr. Budish coordinated a school-wide assembly to promote the success of our Robotics team. The excitement and passion he conveyed proved to be contagious. Students are not only more eager to participate in robotics, but are also more appreciative of the sciences. This assembly attracted many new members to our team who lacked a technical background. His ample supply of enthusiasm has also been enough to motivate teams around the state. This is demonstrated by his leading of Team 537 as the host for the Statewide Open House for four consecutive years.

For students who are new to the program, Mr. Budish is capable of communicating complex ideas through basic terminology. He continuously challenges our perspective with a non-traditional approach. At the beginning of our season, Mr. Budish led a team discussion to demonstrate how various cognitive styles can integrate. Our team was directed to separate into two groups based on creative or technical preferences. Mr. Budish then proceeded to incorporate the contributions of

both groups to exhibit the interdependence needed to achieve mutual success.

Mr. Budish may not be the obvious choice for an honor traditionally granted to an engineer; however, we commend him to FIRST as our beloved and respected teacher. His passion for robotics brings out the best in his students. His easy-going, fun-loving nature makes him approachable and his students come to know him as a friend. An outsider can quickly recognize something different about this robotics program. The students are positively influenced through their experiences with Mr. Budish and Team 537.

Mr. Budish epitomizes the difference between being involved and being committed through his charismatic personality and multitude of talents. He is a dedicated teacher that connects with his students, encouraging and motivating them to achieve their greatest potential. Through open communication, Mr. Budish provides opportunities for students to take on new responsibilities within Team 537. He is the comedy relief, alleviating the tension by causing challenges to appear less daunting. His inspirational attitude is the keystone of our team's spirit. When all is said and done, Mr. Budish brings home the bacon!
