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Faculty Spotlight: Steve Hall

Mark Twain once said, “Biographies are but the clothes and buttons of the man. The biography of the man himself cannot be written.” Mr. Steve Hall, an English faculty member in his third year of teaching at the school, admirably tried to refute this statement for this week’s Wire Spotlight.

Born in 1957 to Barbara and Bill Hall, Mr. Hall grew up in Rome, Georgia. In his youth, he cultivated a love for all life forms (his father routinely brought home injured or abandoned animals to rehabilitate, much to his mother’s chagrin), a sense of resourcefulness, and a thirst for knowledge that was quenched by frequent visits to the Bookmobile. He spent his first years in the public school system, and entered Darlington School in the sixth grade, with the help of a family benefactor.

Upon graduation from the Darlington Upper School, Mr. Hall enrolled at the University of Georgia, where he earned his BA in English. He earned his MA in English from Clemson University. During summer breaks and in his time outside of the classroom, he worked as a river guide on the Chattooga River. Hall quips: “If you have not felt the gravity of a 250 pound male collapsing on your knees while plunging over a 10-foot drop and still maintaining control of a 14-foot raft, you have not lived!”

He taught for several years at the McCallie School before returning to teach English, Literature, and Creative Writing at his alma mater, Darlington. There, he also coached women’s soccer and helped with the outdoor program. “I thoroughly enjoyed my time at Darlington, as a student and as a teacher,” says Hall. “Yet the itch to go west remained an insistent undercurrent.” Hall cites several contributing factors that formed his educational and professional career and ultimately delivered him to Wasatch Academy, among them: an aptitude for reading and writing, a rich imagination, a love of nature, an adventurous spirit, and a passion for educating. “Working on my third year at Wasatch Academy, I certainly have felt no better about any other school where I have taught. I have never seen a school that is so student-centered,” says Hall. “This place personifies friendship, great mentoring, knowledge, security, and success for every student who lands in a town appropriately named Mt. Pleasant.”



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Mr. Hall's goals in life include being the best father, teacher, and writer he can be; getting published; travelling to Alaska, Australia, and New Zealand; and building his own mountainside log home. Canoeing and kayaking remain hobbies central to him today, though he also enjoys sci-fi and fantasy movies, Clint Eastwood westerns, and Camelot.

When pressed to name his source of inspiration, Mr. Hall gives a well-measured response. "I find that we are all part and parcel of all we have met. My reading of great writers; my personal writing about writers and the creative writing I plan to publish in the near future; the formal teachers I have been in orbit around from kindergarten through college; the thousands of students I have taught over the past 23 years; the animals I have raised and rescued; the environment I have traversed and protected; my industrious dad; my kind mother and sister Amy, who loves animals the most; and most of all, my two children, irrepressible Ridge (5) and judicious Emery (11)... These all have been and altogether constitute the book of me, and every page I write each day will determine the happy or unhappy ending of my life."

As a parting thought, Mr. Hall offers the following piece of advice, one that seems apropos for students of any age, even those who finished their schooling long, long ago. "As I tell my students, I always have intelligent students in my classes, always. But it is the hard-working, persistent student who is uncommon. The good news is that everyone can become that superb, uncommon student by putting aside distractions and working. It is a choice we all have. Choose to be better. If you put in the effort, your book, I believe, will be a best-seller with a happy ending."

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