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Alumni Profile

A track record of learning

Even when she was young, Roberta McWoods knew she would work for and with children. “I always wanted to teach. It was a goal I had since kindergarten,” she says. And she accomplished her mission. For the 23 years since her graduation, she has had one job: to teach and coach the children of the Kirkwood, Mo., school district.



Photo by Rob Hill.




McWoods, BS Ed '85, of St. Louis, started her career as a first-grade teacher. After earning her master's degree, she now works as a literacy specialist at North Glendale Elementary School. She teaches reading skills to children who need help learning to read or who have learning disabilities, and visits classrooms to help other teachers. “I like the idea of working with kids who are really struggling,” McWoods says. “It gives me the chance to design lessons that are going to help them become lifelong learners.”

For McWoods, learning is the goal inside the classroom, and the same can be said for outside the classroom. McWoods is also head coach of the Kirkwood High School girls' track team.

“Sure, it's nice to win, but it isn't always about winning,” she says. “It's about being dedicated and learning perseverance, respect and lifelong skills. I've had kids — kids who are doctors and lawyers now — come back and tell me how the discipline they learned on the track has helped them in their lives.”

McWoods' dedication to her students does not go unnoticed. “One parent said of me, ‘She treats every student as if they were her own,’” McWoods says. “I feel like that's a huge accomplishment because I have the same goal for everyone, and that's for them to achieve.” — Sarah Garber

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