

Allen Clark, an alumni of Warren Local (1969) leaves after 43 years of teaching Agriculture Education. He has worked his entire career at Warren Local, which he started in 1973. He gives credit to Bill Tackett, a second teacher of Agriculture Education at Warren, for his success in the classroom and as an FFA Advisor. He started his career by teaching Agriculture Science part time and part time as a driver's education instructor.

Allen grew up on a Washington Country dairy farm and attended Bartlett Elementary School, where his parents attended as well as his three children. He played baseball (he could RUN) and basketball during high school as well as being an officer in the Warren FFA. One of his "claims to fame" is that he has attended 50 of the 58 FFA Banquets held at Warren. He won several awards while in the FFA and received his State FFA Degree in 1969. He earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Agricultural Education from The Ohio State University in 1973 and completed his Master's degree in 1978.

He married Debbie (Secoy) in 1975 and they recently celebrated their 43<sup>rd</sup> wedding anniversary. He has three children, all of whom have teaching degrees, Calandra Cook of Searcy, Arkansas, Courtney Clark of Williamstown, West Virginia, and Tristen Keller of Hurricane, West Virginia. All of them have been involved with Warren High School since their graduations. Calandra was an English teacher at the high school, Courtney is currently the instrumental music teacher at the high school, and Tristen has served as a chaperone for her father on FFA trips with students for several years.

As a teacher, Allen received numerous awards. In 1988, he was selected as the Outstanding Vocational Agriculture Teacher of Ohio. He has also been awarded the State and American Honorary FFA degrees, as well as the 2015 Washington Country Council of Cooperatives Agriculture Award, the OAAE's Distinguished Service Award in 2017, and recently received the Golden Apple Award from WTAP. During this time, he has also been an officer in his local teacher's union, held the office of Chaplin in the Ohio Vocational Agriculture Teachers' Association and was the newsletter editor and membership chair of OVATA as well. He is a lifetime member of the National and Ohio Associations of Agriculture Educators, and the National FFA Alumni Association. Currently, he is serving as the president of the Washington County Farm Bureau.

Allen Clark creates thoughts of integrity, kindness, patience, trustworthiness, honesty, and uprightness. He has devoted his life to serving God and others, especially in the school and the community. Now, he is very excited to REALLY retire and plans to thoroughly enjoy his family, especially his seven grandchildren -- and, of course, be able to climb onto a tractor whenever he wants.

### Allen Clark – A Farewell from Three Teachers

I've heard him called by many names over the years Mr. Clark... Mr. C... Big Al... ALLEN KEITH (when he's in the doghouse with Mom) but I call him Dad. One thing that hasn't changed no matter what he's called is the respect that comes with that name. Allen Clark has taught thousands of students and touched even more lives over his 43 years of teaching. Although many see him as teaching 'just farming', it is so much more. I noticed once the bottom of his letterhead reads "Agriculture- the science of living". How true! What he teaches covers so much more than just farming. Through the classes of Agricultural Education and FFA activities, I have learned more than I can say, but what I can tell you is...

- I can fix problems at my house and help lay new flooring from learning to use power tools and the importance of measure twice cut once in Ag shop.
- I can help plant and harvest the crops from my time in the land lab.
- I can identify plants, seeds, and trees from my time in Ag class.
- I can teach my children that not every "cow" in the field is really a cow and the difference between a bull and a steer.
- I can help my children's school and teachers run their greenhouse and show children that food doesn't come from the store but from the hard work of farmers.
- I can stand in front of 500 plus students and teach them about dairy farms, how they've changed, and how to make butter, not only from Ag Ed classes but from public speaking contests and being an officer.

- I can run a meeting, perform a job interview, balance budgets, speak in front of people, and know the importance of delegation from experiences throughout my FFA involvement.

The lessons learned from Dad differ for every student but no matter how much time you have spent with him, you have been taught manners and respect. Whether in Ag class, study hall, or just around the halls or community, you were taught respect through his actions. The saying "Actions speak louder than words" is a powerful lesson. Yet, some lessons can't be taught any other way. So, however he has taught you, I hope you always remember his actions and the respect, patience, and love that he showed to all.

Love you, Daddy!  
Tristen

Many reading this will have had the great opportunity to meet Mr. Allen Clark. Although we didn't all meet him in the same manner nor have we known him for the same amount of time, we can each say that we know a truly great man. I've known Allen, though, for a bit longer than most - truly one hundred percent of my entire life! Jealous? I wouldn't blame you.

I've learned many great lessons from my father during a lifetime with him. I learned the greatest pancake recipe (with help from Betty Crocker), the right way to bake a pie (let Debbie do it), the best way (not) to butcher turkeys and to truly love the open road (destination optional). As a teacher, Mr. Clark taught me how to pinch a potato, get a sister out of a locked locker, read the stock market and even how to shake hands. Still, the greatest lesson he shared with me was one simple statement. When I was much younger, we were working on our small farm at home when I did something I'm sure was ill-advised or maybe even blatantly warned against. It went poorly. With a calm that only Verle Clark (Allen's Father) himself could rival, dad looked at me and said, "Experience is the best teacher." Is it possible that a truer statement had ever been spoken?

Allen Clark is like that, though. You know? His wealth of knowledge and wisdom comes from a lifetime of collecting experiences, loving his family and teaching his students. Allen Clark's experiences have made him the best teacher. I had great teachers in my many years of schooling but none so great as the man who I am blessed to call my Father. No man I know has ever expressed so much patience, genuine care and concern, authentic interest or moral fortitude. He deserves all the great honors and awards which have been bestowed upon him and many more. He took a lifetime of experiences and shared them with each student to pass through his doors and we are all the better for it. I hope you'll join me in celebrating with him as he concludes his distinguished and honorable career.

I'm honored to know you. I will always look up to you. I love you, Dad.

Courtney

A few years ago, after 39 years in the classroom, Allen Clark (aka Dad) tried to retire. Needless to say, it didn't take. Instead, "retirement" turned out to be a two-year sabbatical, and he shortly returned to his job. But now, after another four years of teaching, Dad is going to try retirement again.

In a way, this second go-around is a bit anticlimactic. I mean, it already happened once--can a second retirement be all that different from the first one? Also, it is a bit superfluous. How many going-away parties does one man need? It isn't like he is *special*.

Oh, wait.

He is.

He came back.

He could have stayed at home. He could have spent more time with his grandchildren. He could have chosen to dedicate his time to the Farm Bureau or other community groups. He could have done a lot of things. Instead, he came back. And for that reason alone, he is worth celebrating again.

Dad has taught us (his children and his students) many lessons over these 40+ years. He taught us how to drive. He showed us how to weld. He demonstrated how to set a table. He modeled how to speak in public settings. He encouraged us to work with others. Under his mentorship, we learned about agriculture, but more importantly, we learned about Life. However, I think perhaps his greatest lessons are found in the decision to return to teaching.

In coming back, he taught us to not give up on something we love. He reminded us that personal sacrifice is often necessary for the community at large. He proved that it's never too late to learn new things. He displayed courage, honor, and integrity, and these are the lessons that matter most.

And so we celebrate again. We show our appreciation and gratitude in every way we can imagine: hugs, handshakes, newspaper articles, cards, food, awards. We fill every "last" moment with as much love and laughter as we can to etch it more fully in our memory. When we have done all that we can, we do the hardest thing of all: We say good-bye and we let him *really* retire.

Love you, Calandra