May 5, 2020

Mrs. Cope-Cost Long,

 Congratulations on your retirement! It is certainly well deserved. I’m sure most retiring teachers wonder how big of an impact they’ve made on their students. Almost every teacher I had impacted my life in some way, but very few transformed my life like you have. Through your efforts to make KYA possible for HMS kids, I was able to be a part of something bigger than myself for the first time. You allowed me to build some of the greatest friendships that I still hold dear today, and you gave me a platform to advocate for things that I am passionate about to this day.

 It’s hard to believe it’s been a decade since middle school KYA. I’m not sure where time has gone. You and Mrs. Batts set a great example of how to be servant leaders. Now that we’re older we see how hard you worked to make the annual trip to Louisville and Frankfort, and you always kept smiles on your faces and we felt like you were having just as good of a time as we were.

I’ll never forget how much fun I had with you and Mrs. Batts late at night working on my final campaign speech after we made it to the second round of elections. I can’t say I’ve ever seen any group of people in such a slaphappy mood. Thank you for staying up so late to help me prepare that speech, and for giving me the confidence to deliver it from memory the following day. Those are some of the moments I will never forget, and the ones that inspired me to pursue politics and law.

 I’m finishing my second year of law school thanks to KYA showing me my passion for law. I also got involved in politics in college by driving Ryan Quarles around when he ran for Ag Commissioner, working for a U.S. senate campaign, and interning in the state legislature. I’ve also stayed in contact with many of the friends I made through KYA, and volunteered for the Kentucky Y as an alum. The list could go on and on about the ways KYA has influenced my life, and it all started with you making it possible.

 I would have come to the parade to celebrate you, but I am stuck in Lexington until final exams are over this weekend, but I am there in spirit. Thank you for your many years of service to students, and for taking the time to show us we matter. I hope our paths cross again soon. You will always be the teacher I credit for introducing me to the passion that has transformed into a career. THANK YOU!

Sincerely,

Fletcher Lyon