

Dr. Greenlee (Lee) Buchanan Naughton



A veteran teacher of 18 years, Greenlee (Lee) Buchanan Naughton, an English teacher and English Department Chair at Highland Springs High

School in Henrico County Public Schools, is the Region 1 Virginia Teacher of the Year. Dr. Naughton earned a Bachelor of Arts in English from Randolph-Macon College. She earned a Master of Arts in English from the University of Richmond, and in December 2016, she earned a Ph.D. in Educational Leadership from Virginia Commonwealth University. Dr. Naughton received National Board Certification in Adolescent and Young Adulthood/English Language Arts in 2007.

After beginning her teaching career in North Carolina, Dr. Naughton taught in Hanover County Public Schools from 2004 to 2013. She joined the staff at Henrico County Public Schools in 2014.

Through the years, Dr. Naughton has received numerous recognitions and engages in community involvement. In addition to being named Henrico County Public Schools' Teacher of the Year, she received a Highland Springs High School Champion of Excellence Award in 2016; a Henrico County Public Schools' Henrico 21 Technology Award for Creativity and Innovation in 2015; an R.E.B. Award for Teaching Excellence in 2012 which included a professional development grant to study Ernest Hemingway in Key West, Cuba, and Spain; and Hanover County Public Schools' Honored Educator designation. Dr. Naughton works with Henrico County's Troop 777 of the Boy Scouts of America, where she has served as an Advancement and Rank Chair since 2013. She was appointed as an Executive Board Member of the Broken

Women Foundation in 2017. She is a member of the National Council of Teachers of English.

In addition to working with students in her classroom, Dr. Naughton considers her mentorship of both new and experienced teachers to be her most significant contribution to the field of education. By willingly sharing her own best practices while seeking guidance from others, she promotes a collaborative, supportive environment among her colleagues. Dr. Naughton also served as clinical faculty at Virginia Commonwealth University from 2007-2012.

Because both of Lee Naughton's parents were career educators, some people assumed that she always intended to follow them into teaching. She only agreed to minor in secondary education as a way to appease her parents. One of her most vivid memories is, as a five-year-old, seeing her mother, a first-grade teacher, come home from school barefoot. She watched her mother try to clean her beloved, genuine alligator-skin pumps because a student threw up on them; however, her mother gave up and dumped them in the outside trashcan. From that moment on, Dr. Naughton wrote, "whenever anyone mentioned teaching as a possible career choice, that image would flash in [her] mind. Nope. No child was going to ruin [her] favorite pair of shoes." However, in April 1999 Dr. Naughton was home on maternity leave from her corporate job when the news of the mass shootings at Columbine High School broke. Even though she was not so naïve to believe that she could prevent a large scale tragedy, she thought she did not want to be on the sidelines anymore; she felt a strong urge to teach!

"Outstanding teachers model enthusiasm for learning and endeavor to make their curriculum relevant for all students," wrote Dr. Naughton. "My students may poke fun at my dress made from fabric depicting famous book covers, or call me an English nerd when I wear my 'Team Oxford Comma' t-shirt, but they also know that I love what I do. I make my lessons meaningful for my students because I know it's essential for them to communicate

well and learn to think for themselves. If I'm doing my job correctly, the theme from a reading selection may spark a meaningful discussion about the importance of facing one's fears or the need to respect differences among cultures. While I know it's important for my students to learn how to properly punctuate a compound sentence, I also want them to understand how to interpret the world around them so that they can be productive critical thinkers."

Dr. Naughton also stated, "The rewards I receive from teaching are, as most educators, would say, intangible. Teaching feeds my soul in a way that no other occupation can. When I meet new people, and they tell me that they can't imagine a more thankless job than teaching, I tell them that they've never really understood pure joy until they've seen a student suddenly 'get' an idea or a concept that he or she has been struggling with. At that moment, a child is invincible, and witnessing that for myself, and knowing that I played a part in that moment, is all the reward that I could ever need."

Ms. Jan Collins, Educational Specialist for School Improvement – Literacy K-12, Henrico County Public Schools, wrote: "As an educator, Lee Naughton is innovative and engaging. She embraces recent and relevant research and immediately applies this new learning to her teaching. After purchasing a classroom library for her students with her own funds, Lee sought out professional development for not only herself, but for the entire English department at Highland Springs High School [HSHS]. She then implemented new and innovative practices in her classroom that led to tremendous growth in both reading and writing for many HSHS students... Dr. Naughton is a risk taker in the classroom, and the results have been nothing short of phenomenal. ...I am certain that I speak for many people in Henrico County when I say Lee Naughton is quite simply one of the finest educators I have had the opportunity to work with."