

Life Legacy Award

Tom Sterndale, Maintenance Director, 1993-2021

Hardworking, faithful, fun, dedicated, friendly, knowledgeable, spiritual. These are just a few of the adjectives that describe Tom Sterndale, former maintenance director.



Tom was born and raised in Wilmington, Delaware.

His parents loved the Lord and valued Adventist Education.

Consequently, Tom attended Adventist schools for his entire education, graduating from Blue Mountain Academy and then Walla Walla College. His wonderful boarding academy experience motivated him to pursue a career in secondary education, with a major in industrial arts.

Tom married his academy sweetheart, Joan, and after college graduation found his first boarding academy work at Maplewood Academy in Minnesota. Later, he and Joan moved their family to Thunderbird Academy, and then Highland View Academy in Maryland. Finally, in 1993, an opportunity opened for Tom to serve as maintenance director at GCA, a position he retired from in 2021.

Former GCA principal Greg Gerard worked with Tom for 20 of the 28 years Tom served at GCA. Greg shared that "Tom is passionate about Christian education and cares deeply about students at GCA. More than anything else he wants young people to know Jesus as their best friend and Savior."

Clint Higginbotham, '99, said, "Mr. Sterndale has been such an influence on all of us. He has always been a person that would help you with anything. For those who worked for him, he didn't just fix things, he also taught us how to fix them. He also wasn't nervous about anything, especially driving in NYC or a blown tire on a highway."

Tom says, "The best part of my career in education has been working with the staff and students. There is real joy in supporting students through their life experiences. Hopefully I have taught them how to work and to walk with God at their side no matter what they are doing."

Now that Tom is retired, he enjoys the flexibility of part-time work, maintaining the buses for GCA. He and Joan have time to visit family and travel. He also has time for his hobbies, which include restoring old jeeps and heavy equipment.

Because of Tom Sterndale's life of service and the impact he had on GCA students, the class of 1999 has selected him to receive the Life Legacy Award.