A Legacy of Learning: The Life and Impact of Johnny Hill

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Abstract

In the following pages, we celebrate the life and legacy of Johnny F. Hill (1936–2025), a distinguished mathematics educator whose career spanned more than five decades in Ohio and beyond.

Keywords: Mathematics education history, problem solving, mentorship

1 Introduction

In 2025 Ohio lost a premier mathematics educator who was renowned for promoting problem solving among mathematics students and teachers, from elementary school classes through post-graduate workshops and conferences. Known by many and loved by all, this was a leader who exemplified what would become major themes of the NCTM Standards for mathematics instruction even before such standards were published – a pioneer in the use of investigative reasoning, working in small groups, using manipulative materials, and the inclusion of topics such as transformation geometry in pre-college mathematics.

Figure 1
Johnny Hill (1936–2025)

*We thank the following colleagues, friends, and former students for sharing their memories and reflections: David Kullman, Wendy Kretschmer Duvall, Tom Kopp, Suzanne Harper, Ted Kirkpatrick, Bonnie Beach, Jeff Wanko, Dick and Laura Little, Duane Bollenbacher, Brian Boyd, John Skillings, Peggy Kasten, Nancy Hawthorne, Tom Romano, Don Pribble, and Jim Shiveley.

Early Years

Johnny F. Hill was born in Murfreesboro, North Carolina on May 22, 1936. His father was an auto mechanic, and his mother was a teacher. After graduating from Murfreesboro High School, Johnny briefly attended Chowan College before transferring to Duke University, where he majored in mathematics and fell in love with his future wife, Rachel McCastlain. They were both members of the Duke Chapel Choir, and Johnny was also president of the Men's Glee Club, which performed on the Ed Sullivan Show during his senior year. Their love of music would continue throughout their years in Oxford and be passed along to their children.

Marriage and Career

Johnny and Rachel were married on December 28, 1957 and graduated from Duke the following spring. He began his life-long role as an educator and mentor, teaching mathematics and coaching football in Martinsville, Virginia, while earning a master's degree at the University of Virginia. He was awarded an Ed.D. degree at Indiana University in 1976.

In 1964 Johnny, Rachel, and their growing family moved to Oxford, Ohio, where Johnny joined the faculty of Miami University in the Department of Teacher Education, where he taught undergraduate courses in mathematical content and methodology for elementary education majors. He also taught 7th and 8th grade mathematics at the McGuffey Laboratory School for 13 years, including two years of service as the principal, until that school closed in 1983. His classes were recognized for their informal atmosphere where small groups of students (or the whole class) worked together on challenging math problems using time-tested problem-solving strategies.

Although Johnny was never an officer or board member in the Ohio Council of Teachers of Mathematics (OCTM), his presence in that organization was certainly impactful. When his name appeared on a conference program, attendance at his session would often be "standing room only," and attendees could be heard talking enthusiastically about his ideas afterward. He helped plan various OCTM statewide meetings, including the 1984 OCTM Annual Meeting, held on the Middletown Campus of Miami University, where attendance first topped 600. In 1993 he received OCTM's Christofferson-Fawcett Award for lifetime service to mathematics education.

Figure 2
Johnny talking to young students about their solution strategies.

Note: *This illustration is based on footage from a 1980s episode of* Action Mathematics (Wesson, ca. 1980)*, a public television series produced by the Ohio Department of Education. Watch a full episode at https://youtu.be/o0OKqgr0ALY?feature=shared.*

2 Leadership

Ohio Mathematics Education Leadership Conference

In March 1987, Johnny served as the “convenor pro-tem” of a new organization named the Ohio Mathematics Education Leadership Conference (OMELC). The idea was to hold ”no nonsense” informal meetings of K-12, college, and university mathematics education leaders, in conjunction with the annual OCTM conferences, that would address Ohio’s mathematics education issues and do work without being bogged down in formalities. When a constitution for the group was adopted, Johnny insisted that a “no claptrap” clause be included.

Ohio Conferences on Problem Solving

Among Johnny Hill’s other contributions to mathematics education in Ohio was his role as an instructor for the Ohio Regional Conferences on problem solving in the elementary grades. This project, directed by Len Pikaart at Ohio University, and funded by the National Science Foundation (NSF), delivered mathematical problem-solving materials and strategies to elementary and middle school teachers at a half-dozen sites around the state. Johnny also served as co-director of a Governor’s Institute for talented and gifted students, a speaker at the annual Bluffton University summer workshops for teachers, and for many years, the leader of the statewide Jennings Foundation Summer Mathematics Institutes in Northeast Ohio.

Project Discovery

In 1991 Miami University was host to the mathematics component of Project Discovery, Ohio’s NSF-funded Statewide Systemic Initiative, and Johnny was designated as one of the instructors. After the first week, participants were complaining that challenging problems were being assigned without directions as to how to solve them. Johnny saved the day with his calm reassurance that genuine problems are like this, and that the participants shouldn’t feel “dumb” if they had difficulty solving them. Years later many of these same teachers would say that Project Discovery “changed their life.”

Figure 3
Johnny and colleagues at a regional NCTM conference. Left to right: Bob Reynolds, Betsy Carter, Johnny Hill, Iris Johnson, Nancy Hawthorne.

National Council of Teachers of Mathematics

Johnny’s influence also extended to the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM). He was a frequent speaker at their regional and national conferences, and he served a three-year term on the NCTM Professional Development and Status Advisory Committee. Linda Gojak, a past president of NCTM (2012-2014), can recall how her path to national leadership was influenced by Johnny Hill encouraging her to run for OCTM vice president many years earlier.

Miami-Talawanda Primary Mathematics Project

At his home institution, Johnny served as director of a Miami-Talawanda Primary Mathematics project, funded by the Ohio Board of Regents, and a Governor's Institute challenge grant awarded to Miami's mathematics education program. He served on the Faculty Rights and Responsibilities Committee and was the Grand Marshal at several Miami commencement ceremonies. Along with Jim Wesson and a student, he organized the Miami University Council of Teachers of Mathematics (MUCTM) that became the first undergraduate affiliate of NCTM. In 1990 Johnny received the Miami University Alumni Association's Effective Educator Award, having been nominated by his former students.

3 Impact and Legacy

In the following section, we provide a series of direct quotes from friends and colleagues of Johnny Hill that were elicited after his passing. The authors extend a sincere thank you to those who took time to share their memories with us.

Teaching Through Discovery (David Kullman, Colleague)

One thing that made Johnny Hill an outstanding teacher was his talent for listening to students' ideas and asking pointed questions that led them to discover some mathematics for themselves.

Figure 4
Johnny Hill guiding students in hands-on geometric exploration.

Note: This illustration is inspired by an episode of *Action Mathematics (Wesson, ca. 1980)*. Johnny leads students through collaborative construction of polyhedral models, encourages them to articulate and test Euler's formula, and invites them to notice patterns and explore dual relationships between shapes. Watch at https://youtu.be/zRd1v1uRmns.

I once had the privilege of observing some math classes that Johnny was teaching at Miami University's McGuffey Laboratory School in the 1980s. One day a seventh-grade class was using mirrors and cutouts to investigate transformation geometry.

On another day they were using manipulative materials to construct platonic solids. Responding to some directed queries from Johnny, they discovered Euler's formula relating the vertices, edges, and faces of a polyhedron. They also began to investigate the concept of the "dual" of a polyhedron.

Problem solving was an underlying theme in all of Johnny's classes. As seen in this short video, the class was trying to determine the number of diagonals in a 32-sided (convex) polygon. Using the problem solving strategy, "solve a similar but simpler problem," they began by exploring polygons with fewer sides.

Figure 5
Johnny Hill demonstrating problem solving with polygons and diagonals.

Note: Inspired by an episode of *Action Mathematics (Wesson, ca. 1980)*, this picture depicts Johnny Hill guiding students to discover a general formula for diagonals in a polygon through strategic questioning and collaborative board work. Here's a clip: https://youtu.be/pW_DxDuKQZ8.

They quickly made sketches of a triangle, square, pentagon, and hexagon, and counted the diagonals of each. Then a student observed that, from every vertex there are diagonals joining all the other vertices except the two adjacent ones. This led to the answer 32 times 29, and Johnny seemed perfectly willing to go along with the idea.

As they started to compute the result, two students, who had been animatedly talking to each other, raised their hands and said, "Mr. Hill! Mr. Hill! This answer counts every diagonal twice." Johnny then asked those students to explain their reasoning, and the whole class eventually conjectured and proved a correct general formula for the number of diagonals in a convex polygon.

Making Everyone Feel at Home (Wendy Kretschmer Duvall, Friend)

Our family moved to Oxford when I was seven years old. My father got a job in Teacher Education at Miami, and Johnny and Rachel were among the first people to welcome our family. They provided ongoing support as we settled into the community. As a child, I was often brought in as a test subject at the university, and I fondly remember Johnny's energy and enthusiasm. Whether at Miami, in Oxford, or beyond, Johnny had a knack for making everyone feel at home. My daughter is heading to Duke this fall, and I hope she can find Johnny's joy and sense of adventure while she's there!

Where Kindness and Leadership Met

Only now am I beginning to recognize Johnny's stature in the math education profession. But what I do know, and have relished for decades, was the warmth and cheer he projected in everything he did. When I went to a faculty meeting, if Johnny was there, things were going to work out. When I would see him in the hall, it was always a big smile and a pat on the back. As you know, I came into EDT from another department. It was a rather puzzling time not quite knowing how we would be received. Johnny Hill made a point of shaking my hand and personally welcoming me to the department. I will never forget that.

The other thing I'll never forget is when I told Johnny I was retiring to Asheville and told him where in town we would be living. He smiled and sighed and he told me the story of Camp Tecumseh. I am a great believer in summer camps for the people we meet, the lessons we learn, and the character we develop — Johnny's heartfelt story was all of that. It touched me deeply. When I finally arrived in Asheville, I sought out the location of Camp Tecumseh just so I could see and sense what had affected him so deeply. The camp had changed a bit, but looking at the pond nestled in the surrounding mountains, I could picture a smiling little Johnny being sweetly molded by this Blue Ridge Mountain haven.

It was a great privilege to have had Johnny Hill both in my personal life and in my professional work. And, he remains a role model for me to this day — for person can be a polished professional but if they lack that human touch, they'll be largely forgotten in the long run.

Tom Kopp, Colleague

A Friendly First Encounter (Suzanne Harper, Colleague)

My connection to Johnny began before I knew anything about Miami University or Oxford, Ohio. At the 2000 National Council of Teachers of Mathematics conference in Chicago, I was presenting with fellow University of Virginia graduate students in an enormous room that seated hundreds of people. While distributing materials, I noticed a nametag reading "Miami" and made the common mistake of assuming it referred to the city, not the university.

This simple misunderstanding created an opportunity for Johnny to introduce himself. With his characteristic warmth, he immediately put me at ease. After our presentation, Johnny offered compliments on our work, noting that "UVA was doing great things!" He shared that he, too, had once been a graduate student at the University of Virginia—a connection I couldn't have anticipated.

A year later, when I noticed Miami University had posted a mathematics education position, I applied with Johnny's friendly encounter in my mind. During my interview, Johnny took me to breakfast and once again made me feel comfortable, describing the strong collaborative relationship between the Mathematics Department and the College of Education.

Though Johnny retired the year I was hired, I feel privileged to continue the UVA-Mathematics Education legacy at Miami. Johnny was truly a legend in Mathematics Education, and he will be missed by the countless lives he touched throughout his career.

The Reason I Became a Math Teacher (Ted Kirkpatrick, Former Student)

I was fortunate to have Mr. Hill (that is how I first knew him) as a middle school student. He is the reason I became a math teacher. I then had him as a professor in undergraduate studies and in graduate studies. It was obvious that his passion for teaching was universal at all levels. He was also my baseball coach in the Babe Ruth League.

Figure 6
Composite photo of Ted Kirkpatrick's baseball team with Coach Johnny Hill (front left).

Profound Impact (Bonnie Beach, OCTM Colleague)

My first "Johnny Hill Encounter" was at an NCTM annual conference early in my teaching career. I was somewhat overwhelmed by the number of attendees and the number of choices of sessions. A more seasoned friend suggested that I attend a presentation by Johnny Hill from Miami University. She encouraged me to get to the assigned room early as she was sure it would be packed. I thought that was rather silly advice given that the guy was from Ohio and there were several concurrent sessions. But she was spot on. Not only was every seat taken, but people were standing along the perimeter of the room. His session was fabulous. He was informative, funny, and engaging.

Later in my career, as a doctoral student, I had the amazing opportunity to work with Johnny (and others) in NSF-funded regional conferences held in various locations around the state of Ohio. These conferences addressed problem solving for elementary teachers. As always, Johnny engaged elementary teachers, many of whom expressed a dislike for mathematics. His sessions were transformative.

I probably have heard Johnny speak dozens of times — at state, regional, and national conferences and numerous professional development sessions. When I worked as a mathematics curriculum specialist in West Virginia, Johnny conducted sessions free of charge. Never once did I leave his presentations disappointed. I always learned something and left each presentation inspired to be a better mathematics educator. Once, towards the end of his career, Johnny was unable to fulfill a speaking engagement and asked if I would handle the session for him. Being asked to fill in for Johnny was one of the greatest honors I ever received. Johnny Hill had a profound impact on my life and on the lives of countless other educators.

Many Wonderful Memories (Jeff Wanko, Former Student, Colleague, and Friend!)

I have so many wonderful memories of my time with Johnny Hill. He helped to establish me as a teacher, a teacher educator, and a workshop presenter. It was always a joy to hear from people about how lucky I was to have worked so closely with Johnny, and I couldn't have agreed with them more. First, I was a student in his undergraduate methods course in the fall

of 1986. The first NCTM standards were on the horizon, and Dr. Hill helped us future teachers to understand the importance of teaching using problem solving. I remember one problem that he gave us where we were tasked with thinking about slicing a cube with a plane that would go through three points: two midpoints of adjacent edges on a cube and a midpoint of any of the other edges on the cube. Finding these cross sections was beyond anything I had ever done before! But I was determined to figure these out. Eventually, I grabbed a milk crate that I was using as a storage container in my dorm room and modeled the problem with string and tape. I spent many hours on this assignment, and I got the most positive and supportive message from Dr. Hill on my written paper.

Figure 7
Johnny Hill engaging students in exploring patterns through geometric transformations.

Note: *In this clip from* Action Mathematics (Wesson, ca. 1980)*, Johnny Hill uses careful questioning to help students articulate their thinking about patterns and geometric transformations—such as sliding, turning, and repeating shapes—while encouraging them to explain and justify their observations. Watch the lesson at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cf5e18MDD8U.*

I also had the fortune to return to Miami as a faculty member. I have taught math methods and mathematics courses to well over a thousand students who have gone through our programs. My first few years overlapped with Johnny's last few years, and I cherished getting to work with him as a colleague. He was a voice of reason who was very well respected in our department and across campus. When Johnny spoke at our department meetings, everyone knew that his words would matter and were important in shaping the future of our work together. He proudly served as the University Marshal at commencement exercises, and I loved seeing the respect the role afforded him.

Finally, Johnny had worked many years with the Martha Holden Jennings Foundation in Cleveland, delivering mathematics workshops for teachers in the summer. When he was retiring, he suggested to the foundation director that I take up the mantle of workshop presenter. I met with the director and got approval to serve in this capacity—which I continued to do for 17 years. I connected with so many smart and passionate teachers across the state through this program, and I have Johnny to thank for making this possible. Johnny Hill was incredibly influential on my life as a mathematics teacher and teacher educator. Johnny was such a kind and caring person, and I am privileged to have been in his presence.

Passion for Life, Learning, and Teaching (Dick and Laura Little, OCTM Colleagues and Friends)

We first got to know Johnny Hill as a dynamic Ohio math colleague, and then became friends with him and Rachel. Johnny's joy and genuine passion for life, learning, and teaching shone through in every setting. We were privileged to visit the Hills in "almost heaven" West Virginia, where they reveled in being together and sharing their beloved mountaintop home. Every discussion with them included important topics and twice as much laughter. He was a strong follower of his faith and a gentle shepherd. We have been blessed by crossing paths with the warm and wonderful Johnny Hill.

Presenter Extraordinaire (Duane Bollenbacher, OCTM Colleague)

Johnny Hill was at Bluffton University to speak to my workshops one summer. Early on for my workshops, I had asked Steve Meiring to speak, but he said that Johnny Hill would be a much better fit for that group. Marilyn Link (my co-presenter) had had many connections with Johnny, so she was so excited and spoke very highly of him. He spoke with both groups and connected with the many teachers of both MS and HS. He was impressive with his down-to-earth presentations. He was a big hit and excited everyone.

Kindness, Energy, and Enthusiasm (Brian Boyd, Former Student)

While I remember meeting Dr. Hill for the first time in the Fall of 1991, I had heard about how amazing Dr. Hill was for some time. When my mom began working at Miami University, she was Dr. Hill's secretary, and she often shared stories of how he regularly helped students. During that first meeting, I was a first-year student at Miami and struggling with changing my major. Dr. Hill patiently sat with me and listened, but also laid out my course plan for the next three years - to finish both my math degree and education degree. In that first meeting, and later as a student in a couple of his classes, I was fortunate to witness firsthand all the qualities I had heard about Dr. Hill - his kindness, energy, enthusiasm for what he was teaching, but also his enthusiasm for the students in his class. It was clear that he was someone I would want to emulate in my own teaching. To his students at Miami, he was just Dr. Hill. But in attending things like OCTM conferences, you quickly realized that he was pretty well known - he had quite the following of fans that packed his sessions during the conferences.

I am now a mathematics education faculty member at a university, filling a role similar to what Dr. Hill did at Miami. I hope that I demonstrate just a fraction of the kindness, empathy, and energy that Dr. Hill shared with me and many others. He impacted me greatly, as well as many other teachers. And as teachers we continue to impact many students in our schools. I'm sad that Dr. Hill is gone, but it is clear that his impact lives on.

Tribute from an Arts and Science Colleague (John Skillings, Colleague)

Dr. Johnny Hill was an outstanding mathematics educator and professor at Miami University. He impacted the lives of his students and colleagues in many profound ways. First, and most importantly, Dr. Hill was an outstanding teacher who helped develop hundreds of mathematics teachers at all levels. When meeting a math teacher who attended Miami University during Johnny's tenure, one would hear nothing but praise for him as a teacher and a mentor. Johnny knew his mathematics and knew how to teach the subject. But his claim to fame is knowing how to teach others the best way to teach mathematics.

Dr. Hill and I provided several workshops for in-service teachers. I was always impressed by the quality of his presentations and the respect he had from the people in the workshops. In

Figure 8
Johnny Hill introducing geometry as a foundation for exploration and problem solving.

Note: *Inspired by an episode of* Action Mathematics (Wesson, ca. 1980)*, this illustration shows Johnny Hill discussing geometry. Watch at https://youtu.be/nz8l3Xkh3ek.*

fact, it was somewhat of a letdown for me to note how much more people preferred Dr. Hill's presentations than mine.

In 1991 the state of Ohio funded a Statewide Systemic Initiative Program for mathematics and science teachers. The program aimed to offer intensive, multiple day programs for current teachers during the summer. Universities were invited to apply for funds and Dr. Hill worked closely with Dr. Jane Butler Kahle (science education) to develop Miami's proposal. The proposal was funded for 10 million dollars and Drs. Hill, Kullman and Skillings served as the lead teachers for the summer courses. Dr. Hill provided the teaching methods courses, and Kullman and Skillings provided content courses. The summer program was very challenging for the teachers both in content and time management. On many occasions Johnny provided counseling and encouragement for teachers who felt the strain of the summer program and were ready to withdraw. Fortunately, almost all the teachers completed the program, and many commented that the experience was one of the best for their professional development.

Besides being an outstanding math educator, Dr. Johnny Hill was an excellent colleague and provided many important services to the University. As just one example, Dr. Hill was a member of the University's Committee on Faculty Rights and Responsibilities (R&R). As an administrator, I interacted with Dr. Hill on many occasions as he served as the R&R representative. Johnny was always fair-minded and helped find solutions to difficult personnel problems. He was an outstanding advocate for the faculty. When the University needed a faculty member to serve in challenging service position, Dr. Hill was among the first to be asked to serve.

Dr. Johnny Hill was wonderful person. He was a friend to many, cherished as a colleague, a great family man, and a fine citizen in the Oxford Community. He loved to sing and always had a good story to tell. He clearly made a strong and lasting impact on many mathematics teachers, colleagues and friends. He made those of us at Miami University proud to have known him!

He Made Other People Better Human Beings (Peggy Kasten, Friend)

Many people who knew Johnny can do a better job of writing tributes to Johnny than I can, what can you say about a person who personified good teaching and just good personhood? But perhaps I can tell a story that is just a little bit unique. Lots of Johnny's students will write about how he changed their lives for the better but one of those students is especially dear to me. You see in 1997 I had been a state math consultant at ODE for more than 15 years and was fortunate enough to know dozens of world-class professors of mathematics education in Ohio. In 1997 they were EVERYWHERE, I don't dare name names but at University of Toledo, Bowling Green, Baldwin-Wallace, Youngstown State, Kent State, Ohio State, Ohio University, University of Cincinnati and of course Miami University, there were the "best of the best" professors of mathematics education. I knew all of these Giants, and so when my only child declared she wanted to be a mathematics teacher, there was a bit of a problem. On one hand, she really couldn't go wrong there were good folks everywhere. But she was my only child ...so we visited Miami, and I had a talk with Johnny. I told Johnny I wanted her to know how to teach mathematics and I wanted her to know how to care for her students, and I wanted her to be at the Methodist Church on Sunday mornings. He said he would take care of it, and he did. She became a successful classroom teacher, got her PhD at Michigan State is on the faculty at Northern Kentucky University and takes her kids to the Methodist Church on Sundays. I guess she deserves some credit, but certainly Johnny Hill (and Rachel) deserve credit too. He was never too busy to take care of individual students and he taught his students to take care of students. He wasn't just a fine human being, he made other people better human beings too. Knowing him, and especially working with him, was a professional and personal privilege.

Such an Inspiration! (Nancy Hawthorne, Graduate Assistant from 1990-92, Mentee)

Johnny was an inspiration to love life and people through his love of mathematics, teaching and students—and geography. I was fortunate to have Johnny for undergraduate methods where he built a learning community that extended to the math classes we took together. We would all go to the methods room the hour before class to work on math homework and play games that were in the back of the math room, further deepening our friendships and mathematical understanding.

After teaching high school for a few years, he pulled me into the Martha Holden Jennings workshop. A few years later he invited me to take an assistantship with him while I got my Master's full time. Just imagine—getting to work with him for hours a day every day. I left campus every day overflowing with new perspectives on teaching mathematics and being a good human. While I was supposed to be there for just one year, we worked it out that I could get a second Masters in Education Leadership and keep my assistantship for another year. He and Dr. Wesson took me on the road to do teacher workshops and were always encouraging. Their approach to working with teachers was full of respect for their hard jobs while still pushing them to higher standards. I remember that I had a difficult personal meeting to attend while working for Johnny and he offered to go with me. He and Rachel went out of their way to include me during those years and we stayed in touch as I moved to Washington, DC to work at the National Research Council and NCTM. Later, when I moved back to Oxford, he showed up to help us unload our moving truck in the snow.

We visited Rachel and Johnny several times in West Virginia on our way to camping. What a treasure they both were. Because they believed in me it changed what I thought was possible. I never felt encouragement like that from my own family and it was life changing. I am honored to work at McGuffey Montessori School in Oxford, a continuation of the Lab School that he loved.

Integrity, Humor, and a Voice for Students (Tom Romano, Colleague)

I met Johnny Hill in the late 1980s when he asked me to teach a one-week summer workshop in creative writing for gifted Ohio students who were rising seniors. At the time, I taught English to adolescents at Edgewood High School in Trenton. I jumped at the chance to do what I loved—teach others to write—with students eager to write and learn. Johnny was a generous man whose work in higher education enhanced the experience and growth of countless students and teachers.

When I joined the faculty of Miami University's department of teacher education in 1995, I came to know Johnny in the last years before his retirement. I was fortunate to have him as a colleague. His intelligence, integrity, and sense of humor were a winning combination. Johnny's bottom line was what was best for our Miami students and children in public schools. He didn't play academic politics to protect his turf at the expense of the common good.

And he did it this with eloquent, extemporaneous talk in his deep, North Carolinian voice. Listening to Johnny speak at faculty meetings, following his thinking as he raised a point or defended a position, was instructive, persuasive, and pleasurable. The words he spoke were enhanced by how he spoke them–unhurried, courteous, rancor-free. Even exchanging words with Johnny in the hallway was a delight.

Shakespeare's words from Hamlet surely apply to Johnny Hill: "He was a man, take him for all in all. I shall not look upon his like again."

A Master Teacher and a Great Friend, (Don Pribble, Colleague)

I met Johnny when I first came to Miami in 1976. We were colleagues at the McGuffey Laboratory School. He was a friend and mentor from the start. He was always the one people would turn to with questions or problems. Over the years we became quite close. He was a master teacher and a great friend. I shall miss him. He was the epitome of a gentleman. He truly was a gentle man. Rest in peace Johnny Hill.

Universally Loved, Widely Remembered (Jim Shiveley, Colleague)

By the time I came to Miami University Johnny Hill was already a legend in mathematics and teacher education, and I quickly began to see why. As I taught beside him for the next 10-12 years, I came to realize what a privilege it was for me to work with someone so knowledgeable, kind, and generous—both in their craft and as a person— someone so universally loved and respected. As I began to travel throughout Ohio and the country with my own work, people would often come up to me once they realized I worked at Miami and ask about Johnny Hill. Inevitably they would go on to share a story regarding the life changing impact he had on their career and life. This continued long after Johnny retired. It is not an overstatement to say that Johnny Hill was a giant in the field of mathematics teacher education. He did what many of us aspired to do—impact teachers in Ohio and the U.S. in such a way that generations of teachers would share a bond of being mentored by Johnny Hill. He was our gold standard. And while he is greatly missed, I take comfort in knowing that his influence will continue to impact students for many many years to come.

4 Retirement and Closing

During the summers of his college years, Johnny had been a counselor and program director at Camp Sequoyah in the Appalachian Mountains near Asheville, North Carolina, and he and Rachel decided that the mountains would become the setting for their retirement. They built a new home near Marlinton, West Virginia, and became active in their new community. Johnny died on March 29, 2025, at the age of 88.

Johnny Hill was an inspiration to myriad math teachers and students at all levels, but more than that, he was a friend. His long-time colleague at Miami, Joe Kennedy, observed that "Johnny liked people and people liked Johnny. A positive relationship between teacher and pupil is a huge factor in the learning process. It was Southern hospitality, sure, but more than that. We all liked Johnny."

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David Kullman is Professor Emeritus of Mathematics at Miami University, where he served for 40 years until retiring in 2008. At Miami he taught calculus, geometry, history of mathematics, and courses in mathematics education. He also served as Department Chair. After retiring, Dr. Kullman served as Executive Director of the Ohio Council of Teachers of Mathematics. He now resides in Bradenton, Florida.

Jeffrey J. Wanko was a faculty member at Miami University for 25 years and is now the Dean of the College of Education and Health Sciences at Bradley University. Dr. Wanko's research and teaching focus on mathematical problem solving, logic puzzles, proof, and the integration of inquiry-based approaches in mathematics teacher education.

Suzanne Harper is a professor in the Department of Mathematics at Miami University. Throughout her career, there's a consistent thread of interest in how technology can transform mathematics education, but her work has evolved from basic implementation of technology tools to more sophisticated examinations of how technology shapes mathematical thinking and creativity, teacher beliefs, and authentic problem-solving experiences.

Todd Edwards is a Professor of Mathematics Education and Armstrong Professor of Education, Health, and Society at Miami University. He is the editor of the *Ohio Journal of School Mathematics* and the co-director and founder of the Technology Educator Alliance (TEA). His research interests focus on the teaching and learning of school mathematics with GenAI and writing as a vehicle to learn mathematics at all levels of instruction.