



Living50Plus

An unlikely experience teaching Red Cross swim lessons led to a lengthy career in teaching and coaching for Franklin Fisher.

Fisher taught world history at Warren County High School for 28 years prior to becoming the current principal at Warren Academy. According to Fisher, a friend convinced him to walk to the city pool when they were just 9 years old so they could volunteer to be aides and swim in-between classes.

"We lived over by the Civic Center," explained Fisher. "I was a big, tall guy and I was kind of shy, but thanks to Patti Nunley, who ran the program, she introduced me to getting in there, talking to people, seeing them doing what you instructed them to do and I learned to teach right there."

It may come as a surprise to some that Fisher originally wanted to become a lawyer. However, after getting through his first quarter of classes in political science at Tennessee Tech University, Fisher decided to change his major to health education. After completing one year at TTU, Fisher transferred to Middle Tennessee State University where he earned bachelor's and master's degrees in health.

"When I went back for the master's degree, half of my master's was in history and that was an experience because the reading was almost insurmountable," explained Fisher. "I was trying to help coach football at MTSU with coach Donnelly so I was working 116 hours during a season on top of my studies."

Fisher attributes his hard work ethic to his parents, whom he

said exemplified it. His father was a general practitioner and would go on house calls at all hours. Fisher's mother was also in the medical field caring for people as a nurse and later as a healthcare administrator. She, too, was on the road five days a week or more doing her job. Fisher has obviously passed this trait onto his daughters, Mary Kate and Blair.

"I'm pretty proud of my kids," said Fisher with a smile. "Mary Kate is a pastor and takes care of people and helps try to guide them in the right direction. Blair is into social services and she is working with at-risk youth in Johnson City and recently accepted a job for Project Transformation, working with at-risk kids in a reading program."

Fisher takes his philosophy of life from the Led Zeppelin song "Nobody's Fault But Mine" which he uses to explain to students about taking ownership of their decisions whether good or bad. At Warren Academy, the student population fluctuates between 25 and 45 students a year depending on what is going on. Fisher has been the principal there for the past five years.

"For the most part, we get kids who understand that when they come through the door there's no more chances and this is the end of the line, said Fisher. "Our positives probably transpire a lot later. We see them get scholarships to college or a good job and we've seen kids totally turn around and go in the right direction."

Right now, Fisher has no plans to retire and proves that turning 59 hasn't slowed down his unbeatable work ethic. Fisher and his wife Leann are enjoying their new home and their sweet grandson, Bo, along with family visits from their girls.

Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.
- Nelson Mandela

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