



The high school's recipient of the Robert Ax award has been teaching in Glen Rock for over 12 years and has exhibited a level of dedication and commitment to our students and community that is unrivaled. Many students assigned to her say they feel lucky; expressing a deep appreciation for her energy and passion.

First, back to student teacher days... This teacher completed her undergraduate work at Fairleigh Dickinson and certificate work at Ramapo College. After student-teaching former GRHS Principal Jim McCarthy's son in middle school, McCarthy – recognizing her talents, devotion and creativity – invited her to apply for an opening at Glen Rock High School. She got it!

She recently earned a Master's in International Relations from William Paterson with special courses at Oxford University in England, where she will be traveling this summer. Word has it that there's a plaque with her name on it celebrating her program!

The drama inherent in American government comes part-and-parcel with her classroom delivery. She doesn't have a catch-phrase, but rather a catch-"LOOK." This teacher's stare could either mean you did something terrific or that maybe you needed to work a little harder...all done with but a singular glance.

This teacher's mother used to call her Katherine Hepburn because of her dramatics, but she employs those theatrical skills in the classroom to bring history to life for her young charges. This educator utilizes creativity, higher-level thinking skills, and karate moves (she is almost a black belt) to develop a love of learning in her students as well as a greater appreciation for the American forms of government.

This dedicated teacher has been a class advisor, club advisor, a union representative and enthusiastic project volunteer – she's been a chaperone on every concert choir trip since coming to GRHS no matter what the distance, she is the social chair of her department, she never misses coworkers' big life events, and she is that cheerleader on the sidelines for her students.

Government is her driving passion. From her early days as an undergrad in student government, this educator showed an avid interest in policy development and democratic systems. So much so, that she has been the Student Council advisor for 11 years, creating new and inventive ways to run elections in the school, to increase participatory government with the students, and making Glenstock an enduring hit.

But wait, there's more...

Running the Model United Nations Club, this teacher treks with her students all over the east coast. From Boston to Washington D.C., she shares her enthusiasm for international relations and exposes her students to history, public policy, and diversity. It definitely shows, because she even got them in to meet Senator Cory Booker, making her the envy of all her colleagues in the department!

Yup, she is very busy, but that's not all.

Practicing what she preaches in her classroom about civil service...getting involved in making or changing policy, this diehard Democrat is currently running for office in her hometown of Maywood.

Did I happen to mention that she's getting married?

In just two weeks she will be celebrating her wedding to Rohit with her family by her side – adding more joy to her life.

Whew.

Our recipient's effort to develop the love of policy and civil service in her students has proven to be a successful motivator. Numerous students over the years have attributed their interest in pursuing a career in government to the experiences they have gained in her classroom. Her leadership and dedication to her profession are inspiring.

I am pleased to announce this year's Robert Ax award winner:

Ms. Katherine Bennin.