

---

[Databases selected:](#) ProQuest Newsstand, Argus Leader, St. Cloud Times

## After 39 years, school's out for Richmond teacher

*Mitch LeClair. St. Cloud Times. St. Cloud, Minn.: Jun 3, 2011. pg. E.8*

### Abstract (Summary)

According to her, that closeness of space and spirit is simply a part of the parish community and the commitment parents make in supporting the Catholic school in Richmond.

### Full Text (596 words)

*Copyright 2011 - St. Cloud Times MN - All Rights Reserved*

Special to the Times

RICHMOND -- In these times of red tape and curriculum more complex than smartboard circuits, one local teacher has kept her philosophy simple: faith, service and reading.

After 39 years at Saints Peter and Paul school in Richmond, Johnda Hebert is preparing for another summer away from her first-grade classroom. But for the first time, she won't be returning in the fall.

A graduate of St. Cloud State University, Hebert didn't venture far from home to find a teaching position. In fact, she lives next to the house where she grew up in Avon.

According to her, that closeness of space and spirit is simply a part of the parish community and the commitment parents make in supporting the Catholic school in Richmond. While enrollment numbers have shrunk to fewer than 90 students, Hebert said that support network -- a sort of ongoing, voluntary subsidy program -- continues to thrive.

"Recognizing the works of others, serving community, volunteering -- that's what the first Christians did," Hebert said, stressing the importance of engagement as parents and teachers.

Even in the perceived "slower" times of decades past, she would have to remind children of differences between real life and virtual stimuli.

"Remember kids, I'm not Big Bird," she would tell pupils to help them regain grips on scholastic reality, though she admitted to having a healthy imagination herself.

Hebert has remained dedicated to the power of books, saying her "most fond and greatest source of teaching is still literature."

"I love books; I'm crazy for books. If I could, I would read stories and talk to the kids about them all the time. Literature is one of the greatest things in the world," she said.

While her trips may pale in comparison to the tales of Odysseus or Gulliver, the veteran instructor praised the printed word for bringing her on countless adventures.

The overflowing shelves that line Hebert's classroom and testament from one of her colleagues support that sentiment.

"Johnda is really a lover of books and quality literature. That is one thing that she really shared ... her love of reading," Principal Jacqueline Walz said.

The school administrator, who has worked at Saints Peter and Paul since the 1985-86 school year, said Hebert has been an asset as a staff member, whether it's volunteering or involving her students in hands-on activities.

"She is always looking for new ideas, learning new things, attending workshops," Walz said, adding that the seven teachers and staff at Saints Peter and Paul have formed a faith community.

"I've learned more about my faith through people in the parish, how they deal with situations in life," Hebert said. "It's been so wonderful to meet and work with them here. A blessing, for sure."

With those bright years of teaching coming to an end, she said her location near Upper Spunk Lake will soon provide some much-deserved, postretirement relaxation.

"This summer, I'm going on the pontoon to the middle of the lake and getting a sun tan," she said. After 39 years of readying her room for five days of lessons, Hebert said she's looking forward to the rest of her life being summer Sundays.

"I've loved teaching, I've loved this school, but I know when it's time to say, 'Time to move on,' " she said.

Before doing so, Hebert offered two 12-word golden rules based in her faith and decades of teaching experience: "Make sure to make reading a part of your day, every day," and "Remember to treat other people the way you want to be treated."

### **Indexing (document details)**

**Subjects:** Books, Teaching, Reading

**Author(s):** Mitch LeClair

**Document types:** News

**Section:** *Rocori Times*

**Publication title:** St. Cloud Times. St. Cloud, Minn.: Jun 3, 2011. pg. E.8

**Source type:** Newspaper

**ISSN:** 08995028

**ProQuest document ID:** 2369968581

**Text Word Count** 596

**Document URL:** <http://proquest.umi.com/pqdweb?did=2369968581&sid=1&Fmt=3&clientId=47943&RQT=309&VName=PQD>

---

Copyright © 2011 ProQuest LLC. All rights reserved.

