

Naperville Central honors notable alumni

May 03, 2013 | By Melissa Jenco, Chicago Tribune reporter

When Dave Linne graduated from Naperville Central High School he couldn't wait to leave the western suburbs.

But years later looking back at his career writing ads for McDonald's, Kraft, Disney, Pepsi, Nintendo, Hallmark and more, he realized the impact his hometown really had on him.

"All the memories, all the stories, all the moments that I drew on for inspiration for what I did for a living it all came from right here," he said as he stood on the stage at his alma mater. "It all came from Naperville."

Linne, class of 1979, was one of four Naperville Central High School graduates honored Friday as part of the school's 17th annual Alumni Recognition Program. Other honorees included Courtney Clark, class of 1997; Dr. Sudip Bose, class of 1992; and Robert Mazurek, class of 1983. The alumni shared their stories Friday with the seniors preparing for their own graduation.

"In not so many years this senior class will also have the opportunity to be the next great professional in whatever careers you may decide to pursue and it's inspiring to know that anything is possible once you find your passion," communication arts teacher Nicole Figi told the group.

Linne found his passion in advertising, and his resume has included executive creative director and executive vice president of Leo Burnett advertising agency. He has won numerous advertising awards and also saw one of his creations, Hallmark's "Dance Card" commercial, land on a list of TV Guide's 50 greatest commercials.

He now works as senior vice president of content creation at ConAgra Foods and wound up returning to Naperville to raise a family with his wife who also grew up here.

He encouraged students to find something they love.

"At the end of the day if you don't make any money at least you go to work being happy every day because you love what you do," he said.

Clark knew exactly what she wanted to do when she left Central – become a Broadway star. But when that didn't work out she made a new plan, producing TV news spots. Her plans got thrown for a loop again in her mid-20s when she was diagnosed with cancer and three years later when the cancer returned. And five years after that when her doctor discovered she had a brain aneurism that was about to rupture.

But medical issues didn't stop Clark from founding Austin Involved, which helps young professionals find volunteer opportunities and from joining numerous volunteer efforts herself. She also works as a motivational speaker and is earning a master's degree in philanthropy.

"Be the kind of person who goes out and goes after their dream, but also be the kind of person who can get a new plan when the circumstances call for it," she told students. "That is what will make you successful in life."

Persistence is a characteristic Bose learned when he failed his first AP U.S. History test as a sophomore at Central. He credits his teacher, Kathy Linder, for not letting him give up.

Bose went on to graduate from the Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine and join the Army where he served as a battalion surgeon and earned a Bronze Star among other awards. His patients not only included front-line soldiers, but also Saddam Hussein after the Iraqi leader was captured in 2003.

Bose now works as an attending emergency medicine physician in Texas and an associate clinical professor of medicine at the University of Illinois College of Medicine and has also been active in veterans' issues.

He his messages Friday to his 1992 self and to the class of 2013 included the importance of perseverance, making good decisions and learning from failure.

"It's an inexcusable waste to worry about what you cannot change," he said. "Focus on what you can change."

The school also honored Mazurek although he was not able to attend the ceremony. While a student, Mazurek played trumpet and cornet and performed with numerous musical groups at Central. He continued to pursue that passion and went on to become a well-known Chicago jazz artist who founded a workshop at the Green Mill jazz club and ensembles like the Chicago Underground Orchestra. In 2012, he was named Musician of the Year by Musica Jazz magazine. Mazurek also is a visual artist and has shown his paintings and multi-media pieces around the world.

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