

# Mark Henning

## Memories

In the early 1990's, I received a phone call that a gentleman from South Africa was coming to Chicago and wanted to meet me. At the time, I was providing educational services in the National School-to-Work program whose mission was to teach work-based learning skills – “critical skills” – to students. The name of the gentleman who wanted to meet me was Mark Henning.

The result of that meeting and subsequent conversations was an invitation to come to South Africa and speak to schools throughout the country regarding the development of programs to teach such skills.

I went to South Africa and spent approximately ten days as a guest with one of the most gracious and intelligent couples I have ever met – Shiela and Mark.

During those ten days, we took day trips to Durban, Port Elizabeth, Capetown, Praetoria and the University of Johannesburg where I gave talks about work-based learning programs. Toward the end of my visit, Shiela and Mark took me to the Pilanesberg National Park and Sun City where we spent a marvelous two days touring.

When we were in Sun City, we were walking by one of the large luxury hotels where they had a “wave pool.” Mark mentioned that he had never seen the pool but, being very proper and obeying all the rules, was reluctant to go through the lobby to the pool since we were not guests.

I told him that he and Shiela could follow me because I could get away with being an ignorant American who didn't know better . . . Mark shrugged his shoulders, smiled, and through the resort we went to the

wave pool. I enjoyed that because it clearly showed Mark's respect for order and regulations and for behaving properly; but he had fun following the ignorant American.

As hosts, Mark and Shiela could not have been more gracious. We spent a lot of time sitting and visiting about the history of South Africa, the educational system in the country, and what was going on in the world. Mark was genuinely interested in politics in the United States.

Years later after that wonderful trip, I received an email from Mark. He told me that his granddaughter was coming to Chicago and would I consider taking a phone call from her.

A phone call? Of course! It was an honor to reconnect with Mark again! Shortly thereafter, the phone rang and our lovely adventure with Candice began!

Candice's arrival in Chicago led to a revival of our communication and a strengthening my friendship with Mark. We corresponded from time to time – he was always checking on his granddaughter – and we communicated about the book he was writing as well as the sorry political scene in the United States.

Mark was one of the kindest and most thoughtful persons whom I have ever known.

I will miss my friend.

~ Charlie Jett

Chicago

September 30, 2021