

Nomination_DeweyWinburneAward_Bertucci.txt

Nomination for Dewey Winburne Award: Anthony Bertucci

Anthony Bertucci has served 15 years as teacher-coach of the LASA Robotics Team (<http://www.lasarobotics.org>). He has served 25 years as a teacher at the Liberal Arts and Science Academy (LASA) High School (<http://www.lasaonline.org>), since its origins as the Science Academy of Austin at LBJ High School in 1984. As one of the "ancients" at the school, he helped develop the original curriculum for the school's signature "SciTech" class -- an introduction to integrated engineering, math, and science applications that still forms a core part of the Freshman year.

Mr. Bertucci, fondly known as "Bert," continues to be the linchpin of the LASA Robotics Team, but not so much by impressing students with his skills and knowledge as by empowering and enabling students to develop their own skills through hands-on experiences that are both challenging and fun. While Bert commands attention and discipline from students, both in and out of school, he strongly believes in and adheres to the principle that students should take responsibility and form their own leadership. This is evident when you see the LASA Robotics Team in action, because you see the *team* in action. And when you talk to Team members, they know what they are doing and take pride in their work, although they are quick to express their appreciation for having a coach like Mr. Bertucci.

It is important to note that the LASA Robotics Team does much more than just build robots; they program software, manage equipment and logistics, and produce and deliver documentation and presentations in a variety of formats. They produce displays, essays, notebooks, brochures, digital slideshows, websites, 3-D computer models, animations, and videos. Outside of competitions, the Team performs community service, demonstrations, and mentoring to excite other youth in the community about engineering, math, and science. The fact that the LASA students do many of these activities *without* Bert's constant involvement is evidence that he is doing things right.

Many of Bert's former students have gone on to prestigious colleges and successful careers, many of them in engineering. They come back to visit or volunteer in the workshop, and they come out to cheer the Team at competitions. If you look up the LASA H.S. on Wikipedia, you will find specific mentions of LASA Robotics, the SciTech class, and Mr. Bertucci. And if you go to LASA's annual Showcase (a recruiting fair), you will see the Robotics Team prominently positioned to lure in the next generation.

Mr. Bertucci, although semi-retired, continues to coach the Robotics Team and also to work with an organization called VeteranTutors (<http://www.veterantutors.org/>). VeteranTutors is a nonprofit organization that gives free computers to low-income families and trains unemployed veterans for good jobs in the healthcare industry. As part of their training, veterans learn how to acquire and transmit information over the Internet and practice these skills by tutoring at-risk students and their families over the Internet in English fluency, math fluency and computer skills. The goal is to reduce the unemployment rate for veterans while increasing the rate at which students from minority and low-income families go to college or otherwise attain technical careers.

The LASA Robotics Team, LASA High School, and all who value science, math, technology, and engineering owe a great debt of gratitude to Tony Bertucci for so many years of service.