2015 Hall of Fame Inductee

Jay S. Goodman

Class of 1957

Perhaps it was Senator John F. Kennedy’s convocation speech in 1959 during the late Jay Goodman’s undergraduate years at Beloit College or the inspiration gained from his mother who earned a law degree and taught second grade or the quality educators at Delmar-Harvard Elementary, Hanley Junior High and University City High Schools who inspired Goodman to dabble in politics. Whatever the impetus, the impression was made and he flourished as a student, professor, author and political strategist. A prestigious Woodrow Wilson Fellowship allowed him to work on his masters at Stanford University. He earned a Ph.D. from Brown University and a law degree from Suffolk University Law School.

Goodman began his luminous 50-year career at Wheaton College in Norton, MA, where at 26, he became government department chair. As the longest-serving teacher/professor at Wheaton, he has made an indelible impact on thousands of students. While teaching full-time, he immersed himself in politics, helping to elect a mayor, two lieutenant governors, two governors and a Rhode Island junior U.S. senator. He clerked for a federal judge and served on the editorial board of the Rhode Island Bar Journal Association. A prolific writer, he published 27 articles, 17 review essays, co-authored nine books and lectured on politics nationally and abroad.

While at Wheaton, Goodman became one of the most iconic and influential figures in the school’s history. With his recognizable “Einstein-esque” locks of white hair and shuffling gait, an estimated half of all living Wheaton alumni took his Introduction to American Government Class.