



HACIENDA LA PUENTE

UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

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Wilson High Teacher, Coach Honored for Dedication to Education, Community

CITY OF INDUSTRY, CA – Willie Allen Jr., a dedicated educator and coach at Glen A. Wilson High School, was recently honored with a Community Spotlight Award by Assemblymember Lisa Calderon for his lasting contributions to the community.

With 25 years of experience as a math teacher and coach, Allen Jr. has spent his career giving back to the district that shaped him – running the Wilsons Kids Summer Camp for 23 years and serving as athletic director for 15 years.

"I am truly honored and fortunate to receive this award. The work I do is simply part of what we, as educators, are called to do," Allen Jr. said. "This isn't something I focus on for just one month – it's a year-round commitment. All of our teachers contribute to the community in their own unique ways. I'm just one of many."

A proud graduate of the Hacienda La Puente Unified School District, Allen Jr. attended Mesa Robles Middle School (TK-8) as a kindergartener and graduated from Wilson in 1995. He continued his academic and basketball journey at Loyola Marymount University, and upon earning a Bachelor of Arts in sociology, he was invited to return to Wilson as a teacher and basketball coach by his former principal Stu Reeder.

While teaching and coaching were not part of Allen Jr.'s original plan, he discovered a lifelong passion for shaping students' futures once he stepped into the role, and later obtained a Masters of Arts in Education at Whittier College to commit to his career.

"Reeder opened a door for me that I had never considered," Allen Jr. said. "Before I knew it, it was something I was really good at."

He credits his success to the mentorship of the Wilson staff and teachers, many of whom taught and coached him when he was a student. Geometry teacher Tamara Lynn Lin, who taught Allen Jr. when he was a sophomore during her first year of teaching, now works alongside him as a colleague. She attributes much of the success of Wilson's students and sports teams to Allen Jr., including forming a girls' flag football team for the upcoming season.

MORE

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"I am honored to work with Willie. He has played a major role in the growth of our students and sports teams," Lin said. "I'm incredibly proud of the person Willie has become, and I'm happy to have had a small part in that journey."

In addition to teaching and coaching, Allen Jr. started a summer basketball camp in 2002 for students ages five to 13 to help fundraise for the Wilson boys' basketball team. What started with about 30 students has now grown to about 100 each summer, with participants from surrounding school districts. Allen Jr. involves Wilson High School basketball players in the camp to help foster civic responsibility and leadership skills.

"Willie is a foundational leader for so many students in our community, helping them develop essential skills in the classroom and on the sports fields," HLPUSD Superintendent Dr. Alfonso Jiménez said. "He embodies our District's mission of enabling our students to meet the challenges and opportunities of a changing world and instills in our students a mindset that will help them become leaders in their communities."

Throughout Allen Jr.'s career, while he is nurturing students' math and athletic skills to help them advance to the next level, he also emphasizes the importance of community involvement and stepping outside of their comfort zone. He encourages students to help those in need and actively volunteer, from supporting Red Cross initiatives to providing meals for unhoused communities.

Allen Jr. attributes his educational foundation to his family. Both of his parents are retired educators, and his sister remains in the field. Their commitment to education and service inspired him to become a lifelong learner, which encouraged him to stay in education. He also credits HLPUSD for providing him with an excellent education and memorable experiences, which he now strives to provide to his students.

"I've been doing this as a career for the past 25 years, but it's something I've grown up with my entire life," Allen Jr. said. "I wouldn't change a thing. I enjoy this work, and I'm proud to be part of Hacienda La Puente Unified."

PHOTO CAPTIONS

HLPUSD_WILLIEALLENJR1: Willie Allen Jr., a dedicated educator and coach at Glen A. Wilson High School, was recently honored with a Community Spotlight Award by Assemblymember Lisa Calderon for his lasting contributions to the community.

HLPUSD_WILLIEALLENJR2: Allen Jr. has been a Wilson High math teacher and the boys' basketball team coach for 25 years. He has also been running the Wilsons Kids Summer Camp for 23 years and serving as athletic director for 15 years.

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