



Donna was born in Washington D.C., the first daughter of a career military officer in the Air Force. Her family moved to Warner Robins, Georgia, in the summer of 1967. Her father, Col. William A. Crawford, retired from the Air Force in 1969 and the family settled in Macon, Georgia. Donna graduated from Mascoutah Community High School in Illinois in 1966. She then attended the University of Tennessee and received a BA degree in English and minor in French. She married John L. Havrilla in 1970 and they settled in Warner Robins, Georgia. Her sister, Denise Crawford Nearing lives in Stewart, Florida.

Donna has worked in Houston County, Georgia for the past forty-six years. She began her teaching career at Perry Junior High School in Houston County in the fall of 1970 and taught ninth grade English and beginning French. The following year she transferred to Northside Junior High School in Warner Robins, Georgia, where she taught ninth grade English and was English department chairman for four years. In 1975, Donna completed her masters in English Education from the University of Georgia and graduated along with her current ninth grade students to

Northside High School. She has taught English, Technical Theater and Introductory Drama over these past forty-six years. In 1986, she was one of the first teachers to begin the Advanced Placement English program in Houston County. Donna has been English Department Chairman at Northside High School since 1981 with a short respite of four years. She worked with the award winning drama program and the “living legend” Mr. Ray Horne from 1978 until 2001. In addition to the drama, she has sponsored the Beta Club, the Interact Club, region and state literary competitions, and the Thespians at one time or another throughout her career. From 1995 to 2000, she initiated a mentoring program for NHS students which involved the at-risk students. Her mentoring class included seniors who tutored at the respective elementary schools for one hour per day, three days a week. The other two days, the senior students participated in classroom discussions of children’s literature and teaching strategies. Many of these seniors chose teaching as a career following graduation.

Donna also loves to travel, and for close to thirty years sponsored European trips for graduating seniors and teachers. In 1997 she was selected for a teacher exchange to the German state of Saxony and also hosted a German teacher at NHS. For several years following, along with Dr. Kathy Stanley from NHS, Donna accompanied fifteen NHS students and faculty to eastern Germany for a student exchange program hosted by the German state of Saxony. In 2000, Donna decided that the future would hold more teaching, but not at the hectic pace of the past thirty years. She discovered that it is nearly impossible to walk away from a very rewarding and satisfying career completely. Since 2000, Donna has continued to teach at NHS as a part time teacher and remained involved in many of the activities as a sage and wise advisor. The shorter days enabled her to care for her sick and aging mother and father who passed away in 2009 and 2010 respectively. Donna is most grateful for a wonderful career in teaching in Houston County. She was inducted into the Houston County Teacher Hall of Fame in 2013. In 2016, she retired as a classroom teacher, again, after 46 years of teaching. She will always be a Northside Eagle and most definitely looks forward to mentoring new teachers and, of course NHS students, as well as working with the drama department and football booster club. She and her husband John are very grateful for the Northside community, which has been and always will be a part of her family.

What does Northside High School mean to you?

I see Northside High School and “Family” as synonymous. In other words, Northside High School is a safe place, as families should be, where students, office staff, faculty, and administrators focus on our common values and respect our many differences and backgrounds. Like a family, we try to strengthen the individual and the distinctive abilities of each member. We recognize that as a family, all members are loved, valued, and respected as unique, and even when we disagree or act “ugly” as my mom used to say, we are still “family” and we must work together to create connectedness and a successful and optimistic future for all our “family” members. I may be retired now, but Northside High School is, and always will be, my “home away from home.”