

From her birth in Lakewood, through the completion of her career in the Lakewood Schools, Ruth Pangrace came full circle as a member of the Lakewood Community and elevated the educational experience for many Lakewood students along the way. Ruth began her teaching career outside of Lakewood, but met Lakewood teacher, Sean McGuan, while working on her Master's degree in Gifted and Talented Education (GTE). Later, Sean would become her partner in serving students in Lakewood's GTE program. While teaching post-graduate classes and participating in symposiums and workshops at Cleveland State University, Ruth met other educators from Lakewood schools, including the inspiring GTE coordinator, Shirley Zavatsky.

In 2002, Ruth began working as an Intervention Specialist for the Lakewood City Schools where she taught classes of gifted students at Emerson when it was still a middle school. There she became great friends with her dear friend and mentor, Kris King, and collaborated with Sean McGuan, Allison Martzolf and Pam Sheils in GTE at Lincoln and Harding. Outside of the classroom, Ruth coached Academic Challenge teams, Classroom of Champions, Ohio Center for Law-Related Education (OCLRE) Project Citizen, OCLRE Youth for Justice, Middle School Mock Trial and Power of the Pen teams. The Project Citizen, Middle School Mock Trial and Power of the Pen teams all won state championships with Ruth as their coach. In addition, as a two-time breast cancer survivor, Ruth organized Breast Cancer Awareness Pink Days at Harding. She also assisted in Drama Club productions at both Emerson and Harding and organized the annual History Night. Her students went on to compete at Case Western Reserve University with some of them going on to state and national competitions.

Ruth was named a Martha Holden Jennings Scholar in 2004, Harding Middle School Teacher of the Year in 2008, Lakewood City Schools Teacher of the Year in 2014, and won the Martha Holden Jennings Master Teacher Award for the state of Ohio in 2014. Ruth utilized her \$7,500 Martha Holden Jennings Master Teacher award to create the Helping Immigrants and Refugees Obtain Support (HIROS) program in the Lakewood schools. Her seventh and eighth-grade advanced students befriended the refugee students in Lakewood's elementary and middle schools. The students engaged in establishing friendships, tutoring, mentoring, sharing cultural foods and games, and exploring Cleveland together on field trips. Ruth collaborated with English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers from other Lakewood schools, and the non-profit organizations Building Hope in the City, Asia Inc., and Catholic Charities throughout the three-year project.

Since retirement, Ruth continues teaching as a volunteer at the Hope Center for Refugees and Immigrants as well as taking additional English Language Learner (ELL) and Multicultural Learning courses from Laverne and Ashland Universities. At the Cleveland Yacht Club, she began a program modeled on Lakewood's Help to Others (H2O) program to encourage women sailors to engage in community service and support the Hope Center for Refugees through volunteerism and donations. She volunteers with Meals on Wheels, as a Power of the Pen judge, a Destination Imagination coach, and conducts drama workshops.

Ruth's involvement with the Rocky River Community led her to become an actress/educator and later, a board member for Women in History, a group dedicated to education through the dramatic portrayal of notable American women. She currently portrays twelve different women in costume and character, in churches, schools, universities, civic groups, libraries, and Chautauqua Festivals all over Ohio and beyond. In August of 2022, Ruth was honored with the Lutheran High School Association Distinguished Alumni Award for her accomplishments as an educator. Ruth and her husband John reside in Rocky River near their three children and grandchildren.

