



## CHARLES H. MILBY HIGH SCHOOL

I can vaguely recall the 5+ homes I lived in before starting kindergarten. When I was eight, a year or two after my parents divorced, I remember counting around 12 school changes to that point. In addition to coping with divorcing parents, my dad had a tendency to get antsy and move regularly. Add to that the fact that I moved between my parents around five times and you have a very transient kid.

Back then, it all seemed normal. Making all new friends every six months to a year was just how I lived my life. Bouncing between parents was the only way to spend time with both of them. However, I always felt like something was missing. As I grew up I realized that I was missing the same long-term relationships that many people take for granted. In addition, having single parents in both households meant that they needed to work long hours to take care of us. While living with my mom, this meant that my oldest sister, who was in middle school, was often left in charge of my other two sisters and I, one of which was a toddler. In my dad's house, this meant being a latch-key kid with hours every day either alone or hanging out with other kids who were waiting on their parents to come home. This all set the stage to lead me down a road that included alternative school, problems with the police, and ultimately, dropping out of school. At the time, I felt frustrated and just couldn't see what the purpose of this education was. In my world, school did not make sense. There was no noticeable connection between what I was learning and my perception of success. It was not until later that the vast importance of learning to learn became clear.

Once the reality of dropping out began to set in, I realized that I needed a plan. Within months I joined the U.S. Navy. Fortunately, upon joining the Navy, I was required to finish the requirements for my high school diploma. In addition, I signed up for the Montgomery GI Bill which gave me enough money to attend college, something that I had not really considered before.

College was difficult at first. Between missing one and a half years of high school and not really taking it seriously to begin with, I was intellectually behind. This meant remedial classes and hours in tutorials during my first years at University of Houston Downtown. It was much harder than it would have been had I not dropped out. However, I am nothing if not persistent, so I pressed on, eventually transferring to University of Houston Main Campus and earning a bachelor degree in English. After teaching as an English as a Second Language teacher for seven years, I decided to further my education once again by earning a Master of Education at the University of St. Thomas.

It is important to understand that I am not here simply because of what I studied. As an English major, specifically studying Shakespeare or Chaucer didn't necessarily prepare me for most of the jobs that I've done. Having an understanding of calculus didn't help me build a successful business. However, in learning these topics I was forced to stretch myself. Shakespeare helped me step out of my South, Central, North, and East Texas upbringing, allowing me to see worlds beyond my own and open my mind. Calculus helped me to respect the small details around me and to realize that the variables in this world are all interconnected. In other words, the effect we have on each other is very real and should not be ignored because everything we do matters. The bottom line is that my education prepared me for the life I now love.

That is why I am here. That is why I do what I do. I want to let all of the kids I serve know that the time they spend at Milby High School is real. I want them to understand that regardless of what life has thrown at them, they not only can, but must become greater than the sum of their parts. The number one thing that I tell my own kids is, "Your only job in life is to do it better than me. My only job in life is to make that as hard as possible by being the best that I can be."

As you can tell, I love my job and I love our kids. I look forward to the years ahead and watching the students of Milby continue to grow as they have all year. Even more, I look forward to that very special day when I will have the profound honor of standing on a stage with our students as we bring this phase of their lives to a bittersweet, yet, joyful end.

Parents, thank you for entrusting the faculty and staff of Milby High School with the care and education of your young adults. I assure you that I will always respect the awesome responsibility of being Milby's principal.

In your service,



Roy de la Garza