

John P. Cowan



John P. Cowan moved his family to Chickasha in 1964. He began his career with Chickasha Public Schools in the fall of 1964 as a Junior High science teacher. Over the years, he taught Driver's Education and was the teacher and coordinator of the Adult Education program, Advisor of the Vocational Industrial Clubs of American (VICA) which was named the Outstanding Club in the state of Oklahoma many times and the Outstanding Club in the Nation in 1970, 1973 and 1974. He finished his career as Assistant Principal. He retired in 1986.

John Cowan was born in Mangum, Oklahoma on June 28, 1923 to George and Rose Cowan. He graduated from Mangum High School in 1941 and was named All-State Center. Mr. Cowan loved football and played through his college years as a walk on at the University of Oklahoma in 1942. He was a scholarship player for the University of Missouri but, due to a serious knee injury finished his college education and football career at Southwestern State college. He earned his Bachelor of Science and Master's Degree from Southwestern State college.

Mr. Cowan coached football in Oklahoma, Texas, and Colorado. In Rangely, Colorado after teaching Driver's Education, Mr. Cowan came up with the idea for teenagers to police their peers and intervene in the critical early years of learning to drive and establishing good driving habits. The city of Rangely and the Police Department joined forces with the school district and the first Teen Traffic Safety Court was born! This innovative Teen Court gained national notoriety, appearing on front pages of the Denver Post and the Milwaukee Journal in the spring of 1957. John remained the Advisor of this program until he left Rangely in 1962; after which, he took a position with the Colorado State Department of Public Safety, serving on the Colorado Highway Safety Council from 1962-1964.

A former VICA student wrote about Mr. Cowan, "He helped us win the game of life. Win skills that we could sell, win knowledge that we could put to use, and most of all, win an attitude that we'll keep for years and years; An attitude that respects the dignity of work and helps us to be productive, responsible citizens. Through the years of teaching and coaching, a common factor was the driving force—and later the legacy—of John Cowan. John saw every student as an individual full of potential. His goal was to help that student see—and believe—in their potential. He constantly sought to find a niche for that person, whether an awkward student trying to find his way in high school or an immigrant adult trying to learn to read or learn the English language. Mr. Cowan had a very special way, almost a magical way, of helping a student truly believe that he or she could be whatever he or she wanted to be.