

2022 ATHENA Finalist

Mary Lynn Buckner



I moved to DeKalb in the fall of 1982 as a seventeen-year-old NIU freshman majoring in Special Education. It's been 40 years and I have never left DeKalb! In that time, I earned three NIU degrees, married my NIU boyfriend in 1989, raised two sons and worked over thirty years in public education as a special education teacher.

The first ten years of my career, I taught at Hinckley Elementary as a sixth through eighth grade resource teacher. I took a maternal sabbatical in the 90s when my twin sons were born to dedicate myself to being a full-time mom. When my sons started school in 2002, I secured a position at Littlejohn Elementary in DeKalb as a resource special education teacher, where I remain to this day.

I have been involved in teacher union leadership at both school districts and have been an active leader in the DeKalb Teachers' Classroom Association since 2010.

Education is my passion, but I also have other interests as well. I enjoy nature, particularly native plants. I enjoy physical fitness. My sport is Olympic weightlifting, which I practice three days a week. My weightlifting team is a group of like-minded women with an awesome coach. I also enjoy baking and cooking on the weekends.