



English is incredibly impactful for many individuals. This is especially true for our junior high and highschool history teacher, Jim Hiatt. As a child, Hiatt enjoyed spending his free time reading books, anything from non-fiction to poetry. As he grew up, entering highschool, he also became interested in writing as well. Upon graduating highschool, Hiatt chose his major, political science. During his second semester, Hiatt took a literature class, concentrating on 20 classic books. His professor was engaging and the book “The Sound and Fury”, by William Faulkner, lit a spark inside of him, inspiring Hiatt to add an English major to his already very busy schedule, eventually graduating with 50 credit hours with his English major.

Mirroring his college career, Hiatt started off his working career in the political world, working with Senators Nelson, Kerrey and Fischer. Later in life, after filling in as a substitute for a couple months, Hiatt took the job as an English and history teacher at Boyd County Highschool, and has continued to work here for 30 years.

“Literature is the life blood. It's more than entertainment. It's more than amusement, it's a social thing.” Literature and English are so important to society. When asked why books are important, Hiatt responded with, “Picture a building. There are windows. You can look in. But you can also look out. You can reflect on yourself but also reflect on society. The windows are books. Literature can teach all of America, if you just teach about it, and you are willing to listen to what it has to say. We have access to so much information, and we don't use it”, Hiatt explains. Influential books of his life come from all genres and walks of life, including “Farewell to Arms” by Ernest Hemmingway, “Huckleberry Finn” by Mark Twain and “The Waste Land” by T.S. Eliot.

Whether it's reading a past favorite or a new book, discussing literature with students and friends or visiting new libraries in cities he visits (including two Ivy League school libraries), Hiatt enjoys literature and is grateful for the impact it has had on his life.

Interviewer's notes: I had such a pleasure interviewing Jim Hiatt for my media class. His passion for his students and his career is truly incredible, and inspires me to be a better writer. His tidbits of advice and infectious laugh made this interview an amazing experience. My favorite part was when Hiatt was asked what he would consider the most influential book on his life was, he responded with ‘There are so many. Oh man it gets so hard to sort out.’ I honestly have never related to anything more.

-Rachel Matthews