

Chants, Cheers, and Chalkboards



Most teachers spend their weekends catching up on sleep, running errands, or cleaning the house. But Serene Death isn't most people. She can recall a weekend where she accepted a teaching job, a coaching job, and auditioned for the Kansas City Chiefs Cheerleading squad.

"It was unreal," Death recalls laughing. "I'm a major Vikings fan, but Arrowhead Stadium is my second love."

For Death, that whirlwind weekend wasn't a fluke; it was a snapshot of the pace she thrives on and a future in education.

Death received her bachelors degree in Biology and Secondary Education from the University of St. Olaf. She then moved to Kansas City.

"I was a Vikings cheerleader for four years during college," Death says. "I went through a training camp to audition and ended up making it through the long three-week process. After that experience, I wanted to dance for another team and wanted to move somewhere. It helped that I had friends in Kansas City."

Next up for Death was a teaching job at Rosemount. She was there for eight years teaching Biology. She also earned a Master's degree in Differentiated Instruction at Concordia. She also paired that with a second Masters in Cellular Molecular Biology so she could teach College in Schools (CIS) classes.

Along with teaching Anatomy, IB Biology, and AP Biology, Death was a dance coach for the Irish.

"We were always competitive and I truly believe we built a solid foundation for a program," Death says. "It was a change of pace because in Kansas City, when I coached, we were always a State contender."

Death has loved dancing since she was a kid.

"I did everything from lyrical to jazz to hop hop; I have always loved the combination of athleticism and artistry in dance," she says.

Coaching is no different for Deuth. She loves seeing the potential in her dancers that they sometimes don't even notice.

"It is so interesting to coach dance because you can see the athletic side and their ability to express themselves," she says. "It is more than a traditional sport. It is super fun to be apart of and I love seeing them grow and feel success in something outside of the classroom."

This will be Deuth's fourth year leading the Pioneer dance team.

"I came to Hill in 2018 and always knew that I wanted to get a dance squad together," Deuth explains. "We have grown so much. We will be having a varsity and a middle school team this year."

Deuth's hard work was recognized this year by having the Hill-Murray student body nominate her for the Teacher of Excellence award.

"I think my students appreciate someone who pushes them, she says. "My seniors are so reflective, and once they realize my classes will benefit them in the future, they lock in and take pride in everything they do."

Deuth was set on doing Biochemistry research when she was in college. However, when she took an internship and experienced what it's like to work in a lab... she decided to change course.

"It was very solitary, and I didn't get to have a lot of interactions with people," she explains. "I wanted to do something more personal and move around more. I was coaching and tutoring at the time, and that's when my mom suggested that I become a teacher. It was the best decision for me ultimately. I love teaching."

Currently, Deuth is still teaching Jazz dance at Larkin Dance Studio and will have two middle school kids attending Hill-Murray next year.

"Changing over to a private school was the best decision I ever made," Deuth says. "The community and the families at Hill-Murray make it worthwhile."