

## LIVING HISTORY

Mr. Smith was my ninth-grade history teacher, but he didn't just teach history, he lived it.

He would act out each new topic, complete with costumes, and give a full dramatic recounting of a speech, battle, or declaration.

He knew if he merely recited dates and names, the important real-life experiences might be lost on us. We'd run to his class to see the show (and because if we arrived mid-performance, we'd be pulled on stage to become a Roman soldier or a minuteman).

I was a decent student, but my history grades were always a bit better than "decent." When I took his exams, I wouldn't be straining to remember facts but actually reliving the event in my head. Sometimes, Mr. Smith would even wear the costume from that lesson on exam day!

Later in high school, I would see Mr. Smith walking the halls, wearing his Roman soldier's helmet or George Washington wig. And sometimes up in math class or over in English, I'd hear him yelling, "Friends, Romans, countrymen!" or "We the people!"

I had a chance to thank him recently for his talent and energy. I told him that when I see period costumes on TV, I still think of him on stage, reminding me why a certain moment in history was so important.

Chris Conti



*I still think of him*

THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED TO TEACHERS:

The dedicated, creative, selfless people who shape the future, one lesson at a time. The stories collected here—all true—are proof that students, even those who seem to want to be anywhere but the classroom, will one day look back and realize how teachers have helped shape their lives for the better.





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