



January 2022 Vol. 43, Issue 1

Thank you, Jan Lanier, for all that you have done for English as a Second Language in the state of Tennessee.

This special issue of the newsletter is dedicated to Jan Lanier to honor all that she has done for the state of TN and ESL!



Editor's note: The *Message from the State* will return in our next issue. Meanwhile, here is an inspiring article about our State Representative.

A Tribute to Jan Lanier

Jason Groppe
Clarksville-Montgomery County Schools

From a boardroom high in the Andrew Jackson Tower, the view over the Bicentennial Mall and the Capitol is spectacular, but not nearly as fascinating as the person I had come to interview. I was first introduced to Jan Lanier about ten years ago; she and my mother worked in the same office at the Tennessee Department of Education. Little did I know that one day I would transition to teaching ESL and later be elected to serve two consecutive terms working alongside her on the TNTESOL board. Those who know Jan can tell you that while she is a humble and altruistic person who eagerly and patiently takes time to help anyone in need, she is also tenacious, not pulling any punches - a formidable presence when the well-being of our immigrant and ESL children is at stake.



I consider Jan somewhat of a mentor, and it has been an honor to have worked with her these past six years. Below I've included some portions of our interview to shed light on her persona in a more intimate way.

Jan Lanier, Tennessee's Director of EL and Migrant Programs started life as Frances Janette Davis. Her twin sister, Beatte Jeanne, died at birth leaving Jan to grow up as an only child. Born and raised in New Salem (Possum Trot), near Summertown in Lawrence County, she was raised in a tightly-knit, loving and supportive family.

Jason: Which family members had the most influence on you?

Jan: My grandmother instilled a lot of confidence and independence in me. Mother loved me unbelievably and supported me in everything, always. Daddy, who served in the military and retired when I was about to graduate high school, led me to believe I could do whatever I wanted to do - not bound by gender. My grandfather always said a man (or a woman) was only as good as

his (or her) word. Growing up, my dream was to live in the city and go to work every day like my Aunt Mary Ann who got to wear hats and gloves as a legal secretary.

Jason: What past-times or activities did you enjoy most growing up?

Jan: I loved reading and math. Reading especially took me anywhere I wanted to go. I had a curiosity of the world and people, [and] a curiosity for languages which led to teaching high school ESL and refugees.

Jason: How did you meet your husband?

Jan: Tom and I met the first day of my second year at Belmont where we were in Speech class together, and we had our first date on September 20th, 1974. We married in 1977 and have two children, Lawrence and Elizabeth, both single, but we do have two grand-kitties.

Jason: What accomplishments, experiences or honors have meant the most to you?

Jan: The President's Award from TNESOL. That organization has meant so much to me professionally. I remember the TNESOL gavel was always getting misplaced, turning up occasionally from year to year. When I received the award, there was that gavel attached to the plaque.

The TNESOL President's Award was for service 2004-2006. The president for 2004-05 quit in the fall of that year unofficially and officially in the winter. So, I served for 2 years. I'm so glad that I had the opportunity to get to know so many before coming to the state.

Jason: What life experience was the most difficult?

Jan: The first was watching my Daddy go to Vietnam and watching the news. It was hard for me to understand. The second was when I had just picked up my son Lawrence from the daycare and a pickup truck hit us head on. The impact shattered my left femur. I was about ten weeks pregnant with Elizabeth at the time. The doctors thought I might not walk well if I ever came out of the wheelchair. After quite a few surgeries and therapy I was able to walk again, but my daughter Elizabeth was able to walk alone about a month before I did.

Jason: How have you dealt with difficulties such as this?

Jan: Prayers, tears of joy and sadness, and leaning on those who love me got me through.

Jason: What is your philosophy in life and what advice would you give our ESL teachers?

Jan: Live without regrets and do unto others as you would have them do unto you. For our teachers, find a way to love every child that you serve. They need that from you and you need the reciprocation from them.

Jason: What is your typical day like at the TDOE Office?

Jan: No such animal. I read some, write a lot, answer many emails, plan trainings, network with other state directors, monitor, and provide technical assistance to teachers across the state.

Jason: What is the greatest change you've seen in ESL in Tennessee over the years, and what goals do you have for the future of ESL across the state?

Jan: I like that ELs are less invisible and more on the map with strategic educational goals. I'm hopeful that our nation realizes that however these children came here, they deserve the freedom to grow and excel the same as others. ELs are resilient; we need to instill that in all our children.



Jason: What things remain on your bucket list that you intend to accomplish?

Jan: Too busy to make a bucket list, or too optimistic!

Jason: How would you like to be remembered by friends, family and colleagues?

Jan: I hope they would say that I'm fair and try to be nice to everyone. I want them to know that I loved them and truly cared.

Jason: Lastly, if you could go back and change one thing in your life, what would it be, if anything?

Jan: I don't know. I have lots of days of, "If I had..." but whatever I did got me here with a solid husband of almost 40 years, a son and daughter that I love more than life, and a job that I look forward to going to every day. I enjoy my work family, my faith, my greyhound, my TNTESOL colleagues, my CCCSO and WIDA colleagues. Life has been good to a lonely little girl from Possum Trot!



Jan has, in some form or fashion, taught and directed ESL and migrant programs since 1979 in Middle Tennessee. She has served as a member of the WIDA Technology Committee, as President of TNTESOL, Chair and Co-Chair of the 1987 and 2004 Southeast TESOL Conferences respectively. Presently she serves as the state chair on the WIDA National EL Policy Sub-committee and ESL Research sub-committee, the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), EL State Collaborative for Assessment and Student Standards (EL SCASS), and Ad Hoc TNTESOL Executive Board. She has been actively presenting at TNTESOL, TESOL, SETESOL, and WIDA conferences since 1980.

Jan,

Your service of the organization, the board, and more importantly teachers across the state is unparalleled, You have helped us transition from an afterthought to a recognized part of the educational puzzle in TN. We will miss your wisdom and counsel. Good bless you on your new journey.

Thank you for being a mentor too to so many of us!

Christine Tennyson

Presentation from TNTESOL Conference October 2021

“ THANK YOU JAN FOR ALL OF YOUR HARD WORK THAT YOU HAVE DONE FOR ESL EDUCATORS AND STUDENTS IN THE STATE OF TENNESSEE! MAY YOU BE BLESSED AS YOU ENTER A NEW CHAPTER!

”

Caroline Sparrow, ESL Teacher
Williamson County Schools

“ JAN, THANK-YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE FOR ALL OF THESE YEARS! YOUR IMPACT ON EDUCATION AND ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE WILL LAST FOREVER. WE LOVE YOU AND APPRECIATE YOUR LEADERSHIP AND GUIDANCE IN THE STATE OF TENNESSEE AND IN OUR SCHOOLS. THANK YOU FOR MAKING LEARNING A FUN, PERSONAL EXPERIENCE, AND FOR ALWAYS BEING THERE FOR US. YOUR GUIDANCE AND DIRECTION WILL NEVER BE FORGOTTEN AND FOREVER REMAIN A PIECE OF OUR PUZZLE.

”

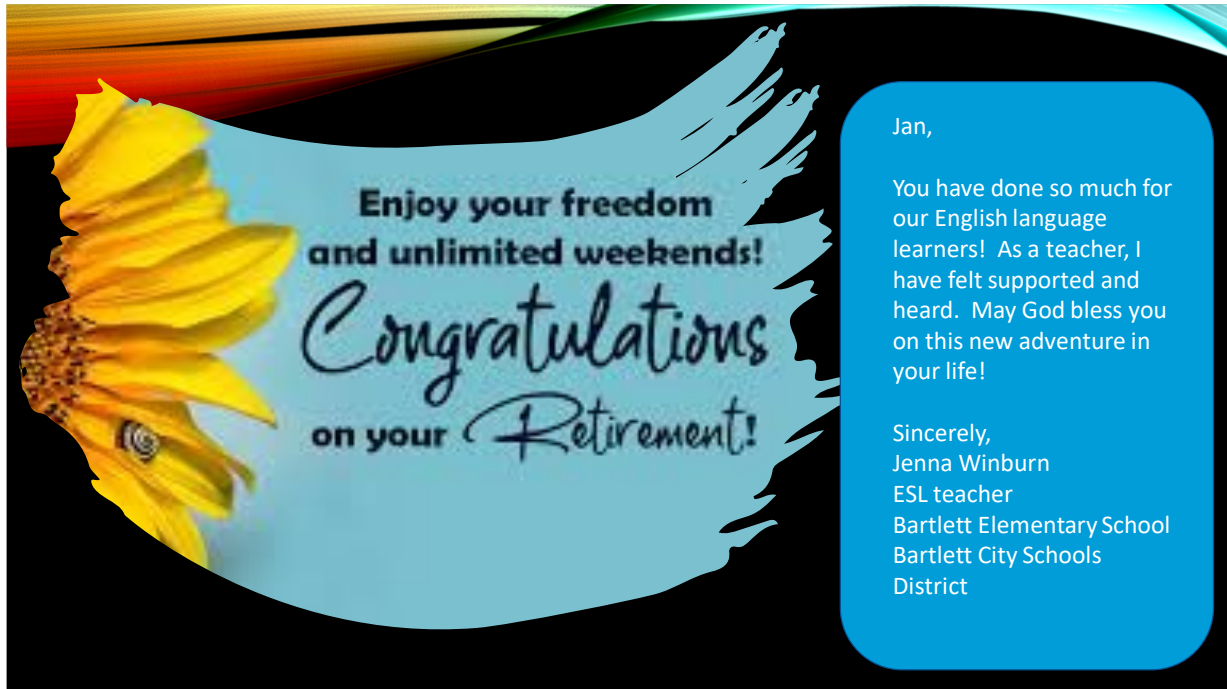


Jo Thacker
Wilson County Schools/ESL

“ BARTLETT CITY SCHOOLS WISHES JAN LANIER ALL THE BEST IN HER NEXT CHAPTER! JAN HAS BEEN A CONTINUAL FACE OF THE ESL PROGRAM FOR TEACHERS, DIRECTORS, AND INSTRUCTIONAL SUPERVISORS. OUR GREATEST MEMORY OF JAN COMES FROM TATESOL MEETINGS. HER LOVE OF THE EL STUDENT AND PERSONAL TEACHING EXPERIENCE WAS CONVEYED IN EVERY POLICY CHANGE. PERSONALLY, AS AN INSTRUCTIONAL SUPERVISOR JAN WAS BUT A PHONE CALL AWAY WITH EPLAN AND RATIOS THAT WERE ANSWERED WITH CALM AND ASSURANCE THAT ALL WOULD BE WELL. HIT SUBMIT!! ”

BCS, ESL EDUCATORS, AND KRISTY FORD ARE GRATEFUL FOR HER DILIGENT PRESENCE IN SUPPORT OF TENNESSEE! SHE WILL BE GREATLY MISSED.

“ EARLY IN MY ESL CAREER, JAN CAME TO SPEAK TO OUR DISTRICT'S ESL TEACHERS. IT WAS AT MY SCHOOL, SO I HOSTED HER FOR THE DAY. I AM A PERSON WHO DOES NOT LIKE MEETINGS, BUT I STILL REMEMBER THAT DAY. SHE HAD SUCH KNOWLEDGE ABOUT ESL. I WAS TRULY ENTHRALLED, AND I COULD HAVE CONTINUED LISTENING FOR A LONG TIME. I CANNOT SAY THAT ABOUT ANY OTHER MEETING THAT I HAVE ATTENDED. ”



Jan,

You have done so much for our English language learners! As a teacher, I have felt supported and heard. May God bless you on this new adventure in your life!

Sincerely,
Jenna Winburn
ESL teacher
Bartlett Elementary School
Bartlett City Schools
District

“ JAN, I WOULD LIKE TO SAY "THANK YOU" FOR EVERYTHING YOU HAVE DONE FOR ALL OF OUR STUDENTS. YOU HAVE BEEN A TREMENDOUS HELP TO ME THROUGH MY JOURNEY OF THE ESL WORLD. YOUR WEALTH OF KNOWLEDGE HAS BEEN AN ASSET FOR TENNESSEE. I WISH YOU WELL AS YOU BEGIN THIS NEW CHAPTER IN YOUR LIFE. MAY YOUR JOYS BE EXPONENTIAL AND YOU GET YOUR WELL DESERVED REST. YOU WILL BE MISSED! THANK YOU JAN. ”

Cathy Pope
Sequatchie County

“ CONGRATULATIONS ON YOUR RETIREMENT! WE HAVE BEEN SO BLESSED TO HAVE YOU AS OUR FEARLESS LEADER. YOU WILL BE GREATLY MISSED, BUT WE ARE HAPPY YOU GET TO ENJOY THIS NEW CHAPTER IN YOUR LIFE. THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR YOUR GUIDANCE, LEADERSHIP, AND FOR SUPPORTING OUR STUDENTS AND TEACHERS. IT HAS BEEN AN HONOR TO WORK WITH YOU. ”

*Kelly Morris
Lexington City School System*

“ JAN IS THE EPITOME OF A SUCCESSFUL LEADER. SHE MODELS DEDICATION, PERSEVERANCE, AND ADVOCACY IN A WAY THAT MAKES US ALL FEEL ENCOURAGED AND EMPOWERED. JAN HAS A STYLE OF GRACE, A WEALTH OF KNOWLEDGE, AND A VERY APPROACHABLE NATURE. IT HAS BEEN MY UTMOST PLEASURE TO LEARN FROM HER AND TO GET TO KNOW HER BETTER THROUGH MY YEARS OF SERVING ON THE TNESOL BOARD. I WISH HER ALL THE BEST BECAUSE SHE IS SO TRULY DESERVING. YOU WILL BE GREATLY MISSED, JAN! ”

----- Angela Rood, Dyersburg City Schools



“ JAN,
WE WISH YOU ALL THE BEST IN YOUR UPCOMING RETIREMENT!
YOU HAVE BEEN A FRIEND AS WELL AS A COLLEAGUE TO SO MANY OF US.
YOUR WISDOM AND GUIDANCE WILL TRULY BE MISSED.
MAY YOU HAVE MANY DAYS OF SLEEPING IN, READING BOOKS (FOR
ENJOYMENT!), AND ENJOYING TIME WITH FAMILY AND FRIENDS.

”

Debra Frantz

“
THE MNPS EL PROGRAM WOULD NOT BE WHERE IT
IS TODAY WITHOUT JAN LANIER. SHE WAS AN
ADVOCATE FOR OUR PROGRAM AND OUR
STUDENTS. JAN, WE WILL MISS YOU SO MUCH!

”

-Molly Hedgewood

“ I THANK JAN LANIER FOR BEING AN ADVOCATE
FOR OUR STUDENTS AND FOR US.

”

Nancy Oberst
Cocke County

“ JAN, YOU ARE MY FRIEND AND MENTOR. YOU HAVE
MADE A TREMENDOUS DIFFERENCE FOR ELLS
ACROSS THE STATE . I LOVE YOU AND WILL MISS YOU
DEARLY. TAKE CARE, MY DEAR LAWRENCE COUNTY
FRIEND.

”

Rachel Counce



“ JAN, YOU ARE MY FRIEND AND MENTOR. YOU HAVE MADE A TREMENDOUS DIFFERENCE FOR ELLS ACROSS THE STATE . I LOVE YOU AND WILL MISS YOU DEARLY. TAKE CARE, MY DEAR LAWRENCE COUNTY FRIEND.

”

Rachel Counce

“ JAN, THANK YOU FOR ALL THE WORK YOU'VE DONE OVER THE YEARS TO SUPPORT ESL, ESL TEACHERS, AND EVERYONE CONNECTED TO ESL. YOU WILL BE GREATLY MISSED! WISHING YOU THE BEST,

”

Hannah Gribble



TNTESOL,
Tennessee Teachers to Speakers of Other Languages
is an affiliate of TESOL International Association and SETESOL
(Southeast TESOL)

Why become a member of TNTESOL?

TNTESOL Newsletter

TNTESOL Journal

Networking and collaboration with ESL peers across the state

Access to "Members Only" website pages and forum for

WIDA Standards and Lesson Plans

TNTESOL Advocacy Representative in Washington, DC

Discounts on conferences

Jobs postings

TNTESOL is YOUR organization -- the place for TN teachers of ESL guided by teachers of ESL!

Be active! Be a voice! Be a member of TNTESOL today!!

Annual membership dues are just \$15.00!

www.tntesol.org

The topic of the upcoming issue of the TNTESOL newsletter will be **TEACHING THE STANDARDS**. Please share activities that you use in your classroom along with the standard that it meets to Dr. Tammy Harosky, newsletter editor by 2-1-2022. Entries can be emailed to trharosky@outlook.com
Thanks for sharing!

