

*Gary Kulik of Mount Sinai High School, Harvard Club
“Distinguished Teacher of 2017”*



Gary Kulik, teacher and coach for the last 30 years at Mount Sinai High School has been named a “Distinguished Teacher of 2017” by the Harvard Club of Long Island.

“This award honors teachers who transform lives,” explained Dr. Judith Esterquest, Harvard Club of Long Island Chair of the Distinguished Teacher Selection Committee. “Devoted teachers like Gary Kulik offer Long Island students deep expertise, extraordinary talents, and countless hours of attention. By capturing the minds and imaginations of our children and preparing them for challenges that were unknown even a few decades ago, these teachers shape the future of our country.”

Mr. Kulik will be honored at the Harvard Club of Long Island’s annual University Relations Luncheon on April 30, along with 11 other teachers from across Long Island. Following the award ceremony, Professor Annette Gordon-Reed, who holds chairs in Legal History at Harvard Law School and in History at Harvard College, will lecture on “The Hamilton Image in the American Mind.” Gordon-Reed has won numerous awards, including the MacArthur Foundation (“Genius”) Award and the 2009 Pulitzer Prize in History for *The Hemingses of Monticello: An American Family*.

The first teacher from the district to be honored with this award, Mr. Kulik, has been teaching calculus classes at Mount Sinai High School for the past twenty six years. He taught in the middle school for a few years before that. A

graduate of Stony Brook University with a BS in applied math, he enjoys coaching the high school and middle school math teams.

Mr. Kulik did his graduate work at Stony Brook, earning a Master's Degree in Coaching and Athletics. He is known for having coached the middle school football team since joining the district, and for coaching the basketball team for fifteen years. Whether on academics or on the field, he is always there to coach his students. He speculates he has written over one thousand letters of recommendation for his students.

Mr Kulik has a son who is a land surveyor specializing in laser scanning and a daughter who is a high school biology teacher. He was an actuary for a short while before starting his teaching career.

"Mr Kulik is a beloved figure throughout Mt. Sinai; his room is full even when he is not teaching" said Patrick Hanaj a Mt. Sinai High School alum who is expected to graduate from Harvard College in 2020.

"He consistently has the most alumni visit him each year," added Mr. Hanaj, "because Kulik forms lifelong connections to his students through programs like the 10-Year Letter, in which he personally mails letters to alumni from their 12th grade selves."

When Superintendent of Schools Gordan Brosdal learned of this award, he described Mr. Kulik as "taking great pride in his work and the Mt. Sinai School District," then adding, "he believes the role of the teacher is the single greatest factor on maximizing student achievement so Gary Kulik consistently establishes a culture of respect and trust in his classroom, while he maintains high expectations for all of his students"

"Gary's classroom is engaging and exciting," Superintendent Brosdal continued, "because he empowers his students to develop the ability to 'think about their thinking' and to learn independently. I enjoy visiting his classroom to watch him work his magic.

Mount Sinai's High School Principal, Robert Grable, calls Mr. Kulik "a consummate professional. He plans and facilitates instructional designs that reflect a confidence in his students' learning abilities. His students are active participants in the process, thus motivated to assume ownership of their learning. Whether it be to receive extra help or simply to chat about life, Mr. Kulik is available for his students."

At the ceremony on April 30, the Harvard Club of Long Island will announce the Distinguished Teacher of 2017 who will also receive a scholarship for a "Harvard experience" at the Harvard University campus in Cambridge, Mass. Past winners of the scholarships have enhanced their teaching by sampling the resources available to Harvard students: meeting with faculty; visiting research

laboratories, rare book archives, and specialty museums; and enjoying visual and performance art. Mr. Kulik is the first teacher to be eligible for this award from the Mount Sinai School District. The scholarships are funded by contributions from Harvard alumni living on Long Island.

This year's 12 Distinguished Teacher Award winners were nominated by current Harvard undergraduates and then selected by Harvard Club of Long Island board members. This year's award winners teach economics, English, history, math, physics, and science research. The winners teach in the Baldwin, Farmingdale, Herricks, Lynbrook, Manhasset, Mt Sinai, Sayville, Sewanhaka, Smithtown, and Syosset school districts.

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For more information, please contact: Michael Voltz (mvoltz@verizon.net)

The University Relations Luncheon on April 30 is open to the public, although Harvard Club of Long Island members and their guests have priority for the limited seating — cost is \$60 per person for the public.

Please send the publication date of anything you print and a link to the article online if available. This helps with fundraising for next year's scholarships. Thank you!