

As Parent, Teacher, Principal



Monika Rodrigues in class together with her primary school students at the German International School.

My association with the German International School Washington DC started in August 1995 as the parent of a new student when our family moved from Barbados to the US and our daughter Anna enrolled in the 4th grade at the Elementary School. Although she had some German language skills from her pre-school in Brazil, her knowledge of German was limited and compounded by coming from five years of schooling in a British educational environment. I do credit her kind and capable teachers and wonderful classmates at the GISW for a smooth, fast, and successful transition to a different curriculum, for receiving excellent subject matter instruction and personal development advice, and much encouragement in the pursuit of a STEM career.

After passing her *Abitur* in 2005, Anna studied at the *Technische Universität* in Vienna, attained a Doctorate Degree in Medical Physics, and now holds both academic and clinical appointments in Medical Physics at the Duke University Medical Center Department of Radiation Oncology, North Carolina.

Being an educator myself, I started to work at GISW as a substitute and part-time teacher in 1997. A big surprise was waiting for me at the annual opening conference of the school in 1998 when I was called into the office of the head of school. The two questions put to me were: "Could I possibly start the NEXT DAY as a second grade class teacher and would my husband be able to iron his shirts by himself?" — well, considering that my husband was already fully trained in that particular activity even before we met, I did not have to think twice and never regretted my immediate acceptance of the offer. Since then I continuously work at the school until retirement.

School life is not always easy, that's for sure, but I can truly say that every day I went to work in anticipation of what the new day would bring, to happily interact with students, parents and



A student thanks Monika Rodrigues for her wonderful work as a teacher and principal.

colleagues, to contribute to the school management, and to face the many challenges and rewards of a teaching profession.

Eventually, I ended up being appointed Principal of the Elementary School and, when I finally retired in June 2019 after twenty-three years, it was, on the one hand, with a heavy heart that I left the school after so many years, but, on the other hand, it offered the opportunity and the immense joy to be able to move to North Carolina to be close to my daughter and son-in-law while watching our lovely granddaughter Mara Louise grow up. That decision I will never regret!

Being part of the school history for more than one-third of its existence, I am hereby honored, on the occasion of this 60th Birthday milestone, to congratulate all current and past teachers, heads of school, principals, employees, students, and parents.

Happy Birthday dear GISW and many returns!

Monika Rodrigues
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DSW/GISW: 1995-2019
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