

Woodie Flowers Award Submission

John Quincy Adams defines a leader as someone whose actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more, and become more; from their inception, the RoboRaiders have been fortunate enough to work with a mentor who seamlessly adheres to this ideal. In Carmine Rizzo's ten-year relationship with our team, the RoboRaiders have experienced immeasurable growth and achievement as a direct result of our leader's selfless efforts.

Despite a tedious one-hour commute from his home and a career as a principle engineer at Johnson & Johnson Consumer Companies, Carmine Rizzo never fails to attend a meeting or team event, working over 1500 hours on team-related projects, annually; it is his personal philosophy that any activity the students are expected to complete should also be executed by those directing them. Additionally, Carmine contributes an effective teaching philosophy for the betterment of Team 75; he believes strongly in the potential each student possesses in their various concentrations, so instead of taking over student projects when they are unsure as to how something is done, Carmine teaches the concepts necessary for achievement, urging each student to reach their final destination by their own means. This approach creates an atmosphere conducive to the creation of student leaders by encouraging them to operate independently of adult volunteers and to develop their own point of view and stand by it. Correspondingly, when decisions made by student leaders or concepts concerning the robot are being solidified, Carmine always maintains an open channel of communication, never refusing to lend an ear to suggestion.

For female team members specifically, Carmine has made clear his assessment that their performance on the team is just as valued and important as that of their male counterparts. Because actions offer a far more reliable demonstration than the spoken word, Carmine introduced the WISE (Women in Science and Engineering) program to our team two years ago, for its commitment to raising the number of women in the fields of engineering struck him as a worthwhile endeavor. After its initiation, Carmine's work has built WISE into a program that offers young women from high schools in the

surrounding area the unparalleled opportunity to tour the Johnson & Johnson Consumer Products Worldwide and to experience a day in the life of a female professional who has succeeded in the science and engineering fields. Through this undertaking Carmine has demonstrated an interest not only in the wellbeing of the female members on the RoboRaiders, but he has also proven his determination in putting into action the vision that dwells at very core of FIRST.

In the second week of the 2008 robotics season, misfortune befell our team when Carmine's mother passed away; because our team has become is a close-knit family, we all felt the devastating blow of Carmine's loss. Our team's deepest condolences were offered to our mentor during this emotionally taxing period as he made arrangements for his mother's funeral in Florida; however, instead of taking off time from work, as would be expected in such a situation, Carmine stayed true to his dedicated nature and during the long car rides to and from Florida, he developed and shared AutoCAD drawings with our design sub team. Carmine is a mentor, a co-worker, a cheerleader, a confidante, and a teacher; most importantly however, Carmine is a friend. Although it is recognized that other mentors from other teams around the world are great leaders, in the opinion of the members of Team 75, Carmine Rizzo is the epitome of perfection, and is thus worthy of the honor of the Woodie Flowers Award.