

James Burke

ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE TEACHER, CHAPEL HILL HIGH SCHOOL

James Burke is known as a Renaissance man to many of his peers because of the accomplishments he's racked up before turning 40.

In high school, he was offered his first leadership role as executive officer of his JORTC unit. He used that experience to apply for a supervisory role at his first job when he was 18.

After earning his master's degree in accounting and finance, he began teaching at West Georgia Technical College where he became the youngest director of instruction.

At WGTC, just like at his first job, his peers were much older than Burke, including many who were 15 to 30 years his senior.

"I really have never understood people who look at individuals based on age, race, religion, etc.," Burke said. "I focus more on the ability of the individual. I believe we have so many younger professionals who would like an opportunity to lead, but have been told they are too young to take on such responsibilities."

Burke is now an environmental science teacher at Chapel Hill High School in Douglas County.

As an educator, Burke said Google Classroom and Google Suite "have revolutionized the way teachers can reach every student."

With his background in accounting and finance, he said Microsoft Excel is also another favorite tech tool.

Burke learned early in his life some of the traits he would use to find success. His parents taught him and his two siblings the importance of showing up to work everyday, treating others with respect, and volunteering to complete tasks others found unfavorable.

Burke has also served in the U.S. Navy Reserves and has been active in the Carrollton



Lions Club where he served as treasurer.

He has also organized groups of students and educators to participate in various civic activities.

He said the opportunities he's had led to him meeting U.S. Assistant Secretary of Education Johan Uvin, former Georgia Gov. Nathan Deal and former Lt. Gov. Casey Cagle and a host of state and local leaders.

Burke is a graduate of the Carroll County Chamber of Commerce Leadership Academy and is currently pursuing his doctorate in education.

He is a member of Ephesus Baptist Church in Villa Rica and has been knighted by the Catholic Church as a third-degree Knight of Columbus.

"I have committed my life to serving others," he said.