



## No ordinary path for Monroe

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PIQUA — Unconventional and interesting are certainly two words that describe Piqua High School math teacher Heather Monroe. From singing in high school musicals like *Funny Girl* and *My Fair Lady* to at-

tending the motorcycle rally in Sturgis, S.D., Monroe has never taken the path of usual and ordinary.

Monroe graduated from Troy High school in 1991. She sang in the choir and the musicals, worked on the school newspaper, served with Astra a community service club, and cheered as a Matt Maid for the wrestling

team. And, she worked part-time at McDonald's.

"I thought about being a journalist," Monroe said. "I started at Sinclair Community College with that as a goal." She studied at Sinclair for two and a half years and worked at Meijer's in Troy, but eventually, had to leave

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MIKE ULLERY/STAFF PHOTO

Heather Monroe teaches in her Piqua High School classroom last week.

## Path

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Sinclair to work full-time.

It was during this time that Monroe changed her career plans. "Chris Davis, one of my high school teachers at Troy, always told me to do what I wanted to do, a career that was right for me," Monroe said. "My cousin Ty Welker is a special education teacher for Troy schools, and I saw what he did, and I wanted to do that." Another influence on Monroe was Jay Via who worked with special needs adults at Riverside School. "He was always so satisfied and fulfilled by his career choice that I wanted to feel that way, too," she said.

Monroe returned to college and enrolled at Wright State University to major in special education. In 1999, she earned a bachelor's degree. Later, she received a master's degree in educational leadership from WSU.

Her first job as an intervention specialist was at

Graham High School in the fall of 1999. For two years, she taught math, social studies, science, and job skills to grades 9-12 students who had Individualized Education Plans. In 2001, Monroe was hired by Piqua City Schools to be an intervention specialist and teach math and language arts to the fourth, fifth, and sixth grade IEP students at Wilder Intermediate School. "My husband and I lived in Piqua, so this was a good move," she said.

At Wilder, Monroe worked with the Safety Patrol and helped start a student leadership program with Beth Sullenberger that turned into the K Kids.

After 10 years at Wilder, Monroe switched to the high school last school year. "It is interesting because some of the students I had at Wilder I have now at the high school," she said. "It is nice to see how they have grown up and matured. But, they still

have the same needs, and they still want compliments and a hug."

Monroe teaches Math 9 to the freshmen, Life Skills Math to the juniors and seniors, and co-teaches Integrated Math I with Craig Lindsey. A favorite project for the Life Skills students is buying a car of their choice and, then, figuring out all the money involved in the purchase, the insurance, the fees, and the loan and payments. They expand the scope of that project and research a possible career and look into what they could expect to earn and figure a life budget for their expenses. "They quickly realize what skills they are going to use when they are adults on their own," she said.

"I love teaching," said Monroe. "I have found my calling. I can't imagine doing anything else." Journalism to Sinclair to Meijer's to education to Wright State may not

have been the quickest or easiest route, but it has landed Monroe right where she wants to be.

Away from the classroom, Monroe enjoys reading fiction and, of course, riding her Harley Davidson Dyna Low Rider. She and her husband Jeremy, a Title I math coach for Huber Heights schools, have been married 13 years. Step-daughter Hayley is a student at Edison Community College, majoring in education. Daughter Anna is seven years old and in the second grade at High Street School. Heather and Jeremy who has his own Harley like to ride the country roads of the northern Miami Valley.

When some of the staff at PHS dressed up in different outfits for Halloween Wednesday, Monroe wore her biker clothes. "It wasn't a costume for me," she said. "All I needed was my Harley and some open road."