

Delaware Charter Community Mourns the Passing of The Charter School of Wilmington Founding President, Ron Russo

For Immediate Release

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It is with deep sadness that we mourn the passing of Ron Russo, a visionary leader whose contributions to education in Delaware will never be forgotten. Ron, the “OG” of Delaware charter schools, was a true advocate for the flexibility that charter schools offer, always reminding us of the original mission to give students the best possible opportunities. His commitment to educational reform and student success left a permanent mark on our community.

Ron’s leadership journey began at St. Mark’s High School, where he served as assistant principal and later as principal, shaping the lives of many students. After leaving St. Mark’s, Ron went on to become the Founding President of The Charter School of Wilmington, a role he held with pride until his retirement in 2009. Even after stepping down from his role, Ron continued to fight for the educational landscape he believed in—one that prioritized flexibility and student-centered decision-making.

His legacy will live on in the work all 24 charter schools in the state of Delaware and the Delaware Charter Schools Network do for the students we serve. Ron was an advocate for what was best for children, and his belief in the power of flexibility to improve educational outcomes guided our path forward. His passing leaves a void, but his impact on Delaware’s educational system will be felt for generations to come.

“Ron was a key pioneer in Delaware’s education reform efforts, and for twenty-five years he remained deeply committed to the charter school movement. His trailblazing efforts not only paved the way for charter schools, but also significantly advanced all educational initiatives promoting autonomy, accountability, and choice.”

– Greg Meece, Founder, Head of School, Newark Charter School

Founding Administrator with Ron, The Charter School of Wilmington

Former Board Chair, DCSN Governing Board

“It is with deep sadness that Ron passed, my heart goes out to his family and loved ones. Ron was one of the founders of the charter school movement for Delaware. Ron understood what children in

Delaware needed to thrive in the future. His insight helped children grow to what they could be. We will always remember his wisdom and work for children. May God Bless him and his family."

– Chuck Taylor, Founder, Head of School, Providence Creek Academy

Former Board Chair, DCSN Governing Board

"Delaware has lost one of the founding engineers of the charter school movement in our state. Ron was deeply committed to educational reform and tirelessly emphasized the need for flexibility, innovation, and accountability to drive student success."

– Ed Emmett, Head of School, Positive Outcomes Charter School

Current Board Chair, Delaware Charter Schools Network

"Our hearts go out to his family and loved ones during this difficult time. The world is a quieter and less bright place without Ron, but we are grateful for his life well-lived and the profound difference he made in our community."

– Kendall Massett, Executive Director, Delaware Charter Schools Network

With deepest sympathy and gratitude,

The Delaware Charter Schools Network