



**Robert W. O'Brien**  
**History Teacher**  
**1954-1992**

*"I hated U.S. History the first semester with Mr. O'Brien. I could not do an outline the way he wanted it done, I could not do a crossword puzzle with history terms and I had no idea how to interpret his cartoons or understand quotes from some historical figure. But, by the end of the year I thought Mr. O'Brien was the best teacher I have ever had. I still believe that."*

*- Quote from a member of the Class of 1962*

Robert "Bob" O'Brien taught at Archbishop Williams for 38 years, changing a countless number of lives along the way. In addition to teaching, he served as moderator of the debate team. From 1970-1977, he managed the graduation ceremony organizing the student line-ups and running the practice sessions.

After graduating from Cambridge High & Latin School in 1943, Mr. O'Brien was awarded a full four-year scholarship to M.I.T. He completed his freshman year before he was inducted into the U.S. Army. He had always been interested in military affairs, and after his service in the Army the interest expanded into military history and theory. He returned to college and earned a bachelor of arts in history from the College of the Holy Cross in 1953 and a master of arts degree in history from Boston College in 1954. He is currently working on a long-range project, translating the many books on "small war" by a Hessian who fought for the British in the American Revolution.

When the Academic Hall of Fame was first introduced, several emails and calls from alumni stated that Mr. O'Brien had to be among the first inducted. One alumnus noted, "Mr. O'Brien stands out as a teacher who not only taught subject matter, but also taught us how to be better students."

Upon his retirement, the school established the Robert O'Brien Award, which is presented annually to the graduating senior who has maintained the highest four-year average in history while exhibiting a capacity for scholarship, critical thinking, and analytical writing.

Mr. O'Brien was awarded the Outstanding Teacher Award from the Harvard Club of Boston in 1993. He is a member of the Society for Military History and the Boston Map Society.

Although he officially retired from teaching at AWHHS in 1992, Mr. O'Brien has remained actively involved with the school, attending many social events and reunions. He has been married to his wife, Martha, for 54 years. They live in Newton.