

All people require a leader and a role model while growing up. This is especially the case for young students and teenagers maturing into adults. For some, this significant influence is a parent, athlete, or other famous person, but it is most impressive and meaningful when the guide for a student is their teacher or mentor. Mr. Kelso is that role model for FIRST participants around the country, of all ages. The admiration and respect students feel for David Kelso also resonates through other mentors involved in Science and Technology. Andy Baker, well-respected FIRST mentor of team 45, recently posted a statement on the Chief Delphi forum concerning Mr. Kelso, in which he said, "For he is the hero of many FIRSTers, myself included[...]when I grow up, I wanna be like Dave." David J. Kelso is a science teacher at Manchester Central High School. His hands on, exciting approach to science and technology has been displayed in the classroom for 30 years. Although Mr. Kelso's teaching style eliminated the typical classroom atmosphere, he still wanted more. In order to raise the bar of a quality educational experience, this leader got involved in FIRST and continues to cause C.H.A.O.S. eleven years later. This was trying at times considering the constant search for funding.

Justin Tresvik, former member of team 147 and current employee at Autodesk, says a person has to have certain qualities to run a FIRST team, "You need someone who kids can look up to, respect, call a friend[...]You need someone not just to lead the team, but to inspire the team, a Dave Kelso." Here David Kelso's extraordinary teaching skills are portrayed through the inclusion of the term friend. As an instructor and friend, as mentioned above, his inspiration and support reach far beyond the bounds of his own team. Andy Grady, Team 126, adds, "I have learned a lot from him and consider him to be one of my biggest influences[...]"

Not limiting his resources to his team, Kelso has volunteered at events from FIRST camp and the rookie workshop to the Championship Event. He also assisted in the designing of the EDUbot learning modules. His daughter, Kristen Kelso, mentor to team 1307, notes, "At the FLL tournament, I was presented with the Young Adult Coach/ Mentor Award. I attribute my success as a mentor to my father. His enthusiasm for science and technology are his footsteps which I strive to follow." Not going unnoticed, Mr. Kelso was honored as the eighth Unsung FIRST hero (UFH). The Chief Delphi website describes its UFHers as people that make FIRST what it is. The site states, "they exude gracious professionalism, a great mental spirit, and the fortitude that makes us all proud to be involved."

David Kelso's unsurpassed commitment and dedication are the driving forces behind team C.H.A.O.S., however it is the charisma and altruism that he has instilled in each of its members that has kept the C.H.A.O.S. spirit alive. Adam Laferriere, a sophomore on C.H.A.O.S., agrees by saying, "I can easily see how a leader like Mr. K would be hard to replace[...]. When he leaves he will take a part of the team with him."