Dr. Demond Means ('94)

Dr. Demond A. Means, the current Superintendent of the Mequon-Thiensville School District, is proud that Concordia University Wisconsin is part of his story. A Milwaukee native, former member of the LCMS parish Mission of Christ and educated by the Milwaukee Public Schools system, Means was presented with a choice between being recruited to play football at a state college or Concordia. He knew that both places would allow him opportunities, but he chose to make Concordia the beginning of his college story because he knew the university would allow him to play football and continue to build on the religious foundation his parents inspired in him.

And the transition, he said, “was seamless.”

This transition to Concordia connected him with many people who would inspire the next steps in his life. In fact, his first education class was taught by a member of his future organization, Assistant Principal of Homestead High School Don Rennicke. Then-professor Rev. Dr. Patrick Ferry and Dr. James Juergensen also taught Means, whom he cites as being influential in him staying and completing his work.

His passion going into Concordia was social studies, and as he completed classes and connected with instructors, he said that it continued to click for him. Growing and advancing in his program spurred Means to quit football in order to focus on his studies, because, as he noted, he had a “higher likelihood of going professional in education than going professional in football.”

Means accomplished his goal of becoming a professional educator. He graduated from Concordia in May 1994, which paved the way for future education and eventually his current position as the Superintendent of the Mequon-Thiensville School District. Becoming a superintendent was not a surprise, however, and actually relates to his time at Concordia. In his first education class Means remembers: “I told my professor that I wanted to be a superintendent. I was completely candid that was my goal.” At the same time, he credits his first education class with helping him to focus and determine what he needed to do to reach that point.

In addition to his position as superintendent of what the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction ranks as one of the best K-12 school districts in the state of Wisconsin, Dr. Means also established the “Closing the Achievement Gap Task Force,” which seeks to, in his own words, “learn how to effectively implement system-wide change in order to close all achievement gaps between students.”

Concordia remains part of Means’ story as he works with Concordia on part of this initiative.
The university’s School of Education has worked with educators and school districts to establish the Closing the Achievement Gap Consortium, which provides resources to member schools on how to reach students of all backgrounds.

“Life comes full circle,” Means said. “Even years later I am still connected with Concordia and working with what I’m passionate about.”