

# EARN YOUR DESK

A True Story<sup>1</sup>

Back in September of 2005, on the first day of school, Martha Cothren, a social studies teacher at Robinson High School in Little Rock, Arkansas, did something not to be forgotten.

On the first day of school, with permission of the school superintendent, the principal and the building supervisor, she took all of the desks out of the classroom.

The kids came into first period, and there were no desks. They looked around and asked, “Ms. Cothren, where are our desks?”

She said, “You can’t have a desk until you tell me how you earn them.”

They said, “Well, maybe it’s our grades.”

“No,” she said.

“Maybe it’s our behavior.”

And she told them, “No, it’s not even your behavior.”

And so they came and went in the first period, still no desks in the classroom. Second period, same thing, third period too.

By early afternoon television news crews had gathered in Ms. Cothren’s class to find out about this crazy teacher who had taken all the desks out of the classroom.

The last period of the day, Martha Cothren gathered her class. They were sitting on the floor around the sides of the room.

She said, “Throughout the day, no one has really understood how you earn the desks that ordinarily are in this classroom. Now I’m going to tell you.”

Martha Cothren went over to the door of her classroom and opened it.

When she did, 27 U.S. military veterans, wearing their uniforms, walked into that classroom. Each one was carrying a school desk.

They placed the school desks in rows, and then they stood along the wall. By the time they had finished placing those desks, those kids — for the first time I think perhaps in their lives — understood how they earned those desks.

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<sup>1</sup> Urban Legends < <http://www.snopes.com/glurge/nodesks.asp> > confirms this story is true.

Martha said, “You don’t have to earn those desks. These guys did it for you. They put them out there for you, but it’s up to you to sit here responsibly to learn, to be good students and good citizens — because they paid a price for you to have that desk. Now, don’t ever forget it.”

Sometimes we forget that the freedoms that we have are not because of celebrities. The freedoms are ours because of ordinary people who did extraordinary things, who loved this country more than life itself, and who not only earned a school desk for a kid at the Robinson High School in Little Rock, but who earned a seat for you and me to enjoy this great land we call home. They did that so we could enjoy this wonderful nation that we better love enough to protect and preserve with the kind of conservative, solid values and principles that made us a great nation.

“We live in the Land of the Free because it is the Home of the Brave.”

Please remember our troops! Visit <http://AmericaSupportsYou.mil> to find ways to reassure service members that you care and appreciate them.