

On Tuesday night, you'll see – Tim Walz's story is our story

What to expect at the vice presidential debate.

By DOUG VOSE

Since the whirlwind of our high school social studies teacher accepting the Democratic Party's nomination for vice president a few weeks ago, it has been a profound experience to compare "Walz stories" with fellow Mankato West graduates over the past few weeks.

Football players sharing belly laughs about Tim Walz putting them into their first varsity football game. Jacob Reitan's moving testimonial about the governor having served, when he was a teacher, as Mankato West's first Gay-Straight Alliance faculty adviser. Various students' memories of Walz's influence on helping them process emotions after 9/11.

As provincial Minnesotans – Mankatoans! – it's hard not to view Kamala Harris' running mate through the "one of us" lens simply because we've sat in his classrooms, heard his encouragement in locker rooms and bumped into him at the local grocery store.

On Tuesday night when we watch the vice presidential debate, my fellow Scarlets and I will be making room for Americans to join us with the conviction that Walz is indeed one of us. Not as Mankato West Scarlets, Mankatoans or Minnesotans, but as typical Americans who wake up in the morning with the stresses of the day starting to grow, a to-do list forming in our minds.

Especially in recent days, the Harris/Walz campaign shifting its message toward the center of the political spectrum where most of us – although certainly not the loudest of us – actually are. I was struck by the governor speaking to a group of college-aged young men that made me feel like I was transported back to a Mankato West class-

WHERE TO WATCH

This election season's vice presidential debate, hosted by CBS News, airs at 8 p.m. Central time on Tuesday, Oct. 1.

room in the early aughts:

"Talk to your friends," Walz said. "Some of them are going to say 'I'm just not that into politics.' Tell 'em it's too damn bad – politics is into you."

When we watch on Tuesday, expect Walz to reach through the television screen and challenge us all to consider our civic duty to make our government a fair reflection of that everyday American privilege of pursuing happiness.

Of course, on Tuesday night expect the political outsider point of view – one that worked so well for Trump/Pence in 2016 – to come dressed as a folksy Minnesotan with world-class eyebrows.

And of course, on Tuesday night expect the typical partisan political barbs and gotcha one-liners between Gov. Walz and the Republican vice presidential candidate, U.S. Sen. JD Vance.

But more than anything, expect Walz to clarify that his ticket's platform is not built around transactional politics. This ticket is about everyday people. People like he was before his community pushed him into public life to fight for them.

He knows, because his story is our story.

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