

School Janitor Goes Back To School, Becomes Principal



Joseph "Gabe" Sonnier used to clean up after everyone at Port Barre Elementary in Louisiana. But now he's the principal there!

The journey to his promotion began in 1985, when Port Barre Elementary's school principal pulled Sonnier aside one day at school and said something to him.

"He said, 'I'd rather see you grading papers than picking them up,'" Sonnier said.

Sonnier had dropped out of University in 1979. His mother, a housekeeper, was struggling to support his four siblings and pay for his university education. So Sonnier dropped out and started working to help his mother support the family.

At the age of 39, Sonnier decided to go back to school. In 2008, he went from janitor to teacher at Port Barre Elementary. He later earned a master's degree in education through Arkansas State University. In time, he became the school principal.

"Don't let your situation now define what you're going to become later," Sonnier said. "I always tell my students it's not where you start, it's how you finish."

Do you agree with the thing that he always says?