



at&t

NORTH CAROLINA

TEACHER OF THE YEAR 2009

Recognition and Awards Ceremony, May 5
Renaissance North Hills, Raleigh, NC

PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF NORTH CAROLINA

State Board of Education | Department of Public Instruction

SPECIAL THANKS

AT&T

On behalf of the State Board of Education, the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, the 2009-2010 Teacher of the Year Team, and the thousands of teachers across North Carolina, our most sincere appreciation goes to AT&T for its sponsorship of this most prestigious event. Through its sponsorship and support, the teaching profession is honored and recognized.

VALONDA CALLOWAY came to WRAL-TV in the fall of 2001 as the Durham Bureau reporter. She has reported on every shift at WRAL, including the 2:30 am shift. Valonda was promoted to weekend morning anchor after a couple of years. Valonda worked as the weekday morning anchor from 2005 to January 2009. She is currently the weekday noon anchor. Before coming to WRAL, Valonda was an anchor and reporter at WNCT-TV in Greenville, N.C. Valonda began her career in 1994 as a writer and reporter at the Voice of America radio in Washington, D.C. Valonda holds a Bachelor of Arts in Mass Communications from Winston-Salem State University, Winston-Salem, N.C., where she graduated cum laude. Valonda enjoys telling stories that make a positive difference in the lives of viewers.

DAVID HEID has worked with numerous Grammy and Tony Award winners and appeared in such prestigious venues as Lincoln Center and The Sydney Towne Hall. He is currently on the accompanying and piano faculty at Duke University.



Public Schools of North Carolina
State Board of Education | Department of Public Instruction



In compliance with federal law NC Public Schools administers all state-operated educational programs, employment activities and admissions without discrimination because of race, religion, national or ethnic origin, color, age, military service, disability, or gender, except where exemption is appropriate and allowed by law.

Inquiries or complaints regarding discrimination issues should be directed to:

Dr. Rebecca Garland, Chief Academic Officer :: Academic Services and Instructional Support

6368 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, NC 27699-6368 :: Telephone: (919) 807-3200 :: Fax: (919) 807-4065

Visit us on the Web :: www.ncpublicschools.org

TEACHER OF THE YEAR AWARDS CEREMONY MAY 5, 2009

GREETINGS

Valonda Calloway

Anchor / Reporter

WRAL TV

INVOCATION

Janice Raper

Rowan Salisbury Schools

DINNER

INTRODUCTION OF DISTINGUISHED GUESTS

Bernard Waugh

Kannapolis City Schools

REMARKS

Dr. William C. Harrison

Chairman and Chief Executive Officer

State Board of Education

INTRODUCTION OF SPECIAL SPEAKER

Paige Elliott

Wake County Schools

REMARKS

Cynthia Marshall

President, AT&T – North Carolina

INTRODUCTION OF CINDI RIGSBEE

Trisha Muse

Montgomery County Schools

REFLECTIONS

Cindi Riggsbee

AT&T 2008-09 North Carolina Teacher of the Year

2009 National Teacher of the Year Finalist

Orange County Schools

RECOGNITION OF THE REGIONAL AND STATE SELECTION COMMITTEES

Danny Holloman

North Carolina Department of Public Instruction

REMARKS/ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE AT&T 2009-10 NORTH CAROLINA TEACHER OF THE YEAR

Dr. June Atkinson

Superintendent, Public Schools of North Carolina

ACCEPTANCE REMARKS

AT&T 2009-2010 North Carolina Teacher of the Year

SPECIAL PRESENTATION

Cynthia Marshall

AT&T – North Carolina

CLOSING REMARKS

Valonda Calloway

ABOUT THE PROGRAM

For more than 50 years our nation has honored teachers with the National Teacher of the Year Program. The National Teacher of the Year Program, sponsored by the ING Foundation, is a project of the Council of Chief State School Officers. Since 1970, North Carolina has participated in this program recognizing outstanding teachers.

In accordance with national guidelines, North Carolina chooses a candidate who is “dedicated and highly skilled, a candidate proven capable of inspiring students of all backgrounds and abilities to learn.” Because the Teacher of the Year will be asked to travel, speak on behalf of education and demonstrate master teaching skills, the candidate must be poised, articulate, and energetic in order to meet the demanding responsibilities.

The program recognizes teachers at the school, local, regional and statewide levels. Individuals are chosen to represent their school as Teacher of the Year, then advance to competition at the local school system level. Once that selection has been made, LEA Teachers of the Year and representatives of the public Charter Schools vie for the regional Teacher of the Year in the eight regions and Charter Schools of the state. Using a process including a portfolio, interviews, a formal speech, and other activities, the statewide Teacher of the year is chosen from among the eight regional winners and Charter School Teacher of the Year by a selection committee consisting of professional educators and community leaders. The regional winners, along with the state Teacher of the Year, comprise the AT&T North Carolina Teacher of the Year Team and work collaboratively on issues critical to education in North Carolina.

The North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, along with its corporate sponsor, AT&T, administers the program. The State Teacher of the Year receives a personal automobile, a one-time cash award of \$7,500, a national conference trip, the opportunity to travel abroad through an endowment at the North Carolina Center for International Understanding and a technology package valued at over \$14,000 from the SmarterKids Foundation. He/she is given one year’s leave from the classroom to serve as an ambassador for education across the state and is North Carolina’s nominee for the National Teacher of the Year competition. The regional winners receive one-time cash awards of \$5,000, and a national conference trip. In addition, they receive professional leave from the classroom to provide services to enhance the profession of teaching.

In the 39 years of the program in North Carolina, three State Teachers of the Year have become National winners. Four have become National Finalists and one has been inducted into the National Teachers’ Hall of Fame.

Thirteen North Carolina Teachers of the Year have taught at the elementary school level, seven at the middle or junior high school level and nineteen at the high school level.

FOREWORD

WE WELCOME ALL who come together this evening to honor nine of North Carolina's most outstanding teachers. These honorees exemplify excellence in education and leadership in our public schools. No higher honor can befall a teacher than to be recognized for outstanding achievements by one's peers. These outstanding teachers represent all those educators who diligently and passionately light the fire within the souls of North Carolina's prekindergarten-12th grade children; those who work to make tomorrow a better place by firmly educating the children of today. As "Teachers of the Year", they serve as ambassadors representing all the educators who dedicate their energies and passion to the enrichment of young people's minds and spirits.

WE THANK EACH OF YOU for your presence this evening and your demonstration of support for the teaching profession. We also thank those directly involved in the selection process from the individual school systems and charter schools to the state level. A special thanks goes to **Cynthia Marshall** and **AT&T** for their sponsorship of the North Carolina Teacher of the Year program. Because of their support, we are able to recognize outstanding teachers and the teaching profession.

IF I COULD TEACH YOU, TEACHER

If I could teach you, teacher,
I'd teach you how much more
you have accomplished
than you think you have.

I'd show you the seeds
you planted years ago
that are now coming into bloom.

I'd reveal to you the young minds
that have expanded under your care,
the hearts that are serving others
because they had you as a role model.

If I could teach you, teacher,
I'd show you the positive effect
you have had on me and my life.

Your homework is
to know your value to the world,
to acknowledge it, to believe it.

Thank you, teacher.

By Joanna Fuchs

STATE SELECTION COMMITTEE

JAMES BELL

NC Teacher of the Year, 2007-2008
Consultant
North Carolina Virtual Public School

DR. DEBRA MORRIS

2008 Wachovia Principal of the Year
A.L. Brown High School
Kannapolis City Schools

DIANA BEASLEY

NC Teacher of the Year, 2006-2007
Director, Teacher Education Recruitment
Appalachian State University

JANE MITCHELL

Senior Vice President
Wachovia Bank

DR. DAVID HOOD

Coordinator, MSA Program
Assistant Professor of Education
Elizabeth City State University

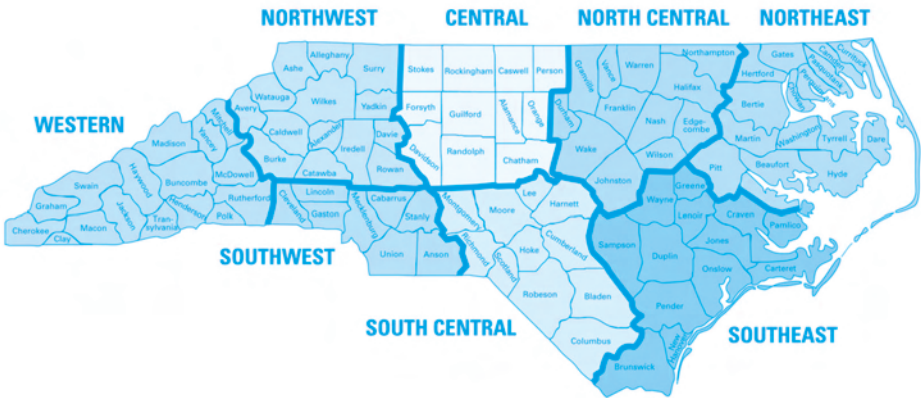
DR. ALISA MCLEAN

Program Director
Principals Executive Program
UNC Center for School Leadership Development

KATHY TAFT

State Board of Education

TEACHER OF THE YEAR REGIONAL MAP



2008-09 TEACHER OF THE YEAR TEAM



CINDI RIGSBEE

AT&T 2008-2009 North Carolina Teacher of the Year
2009 National Teacher of the Year Finalist
Piedmont-Triad/Central Region Teacher of the Year
Orange County Schools



SONYA RINEHART

Northeast Region
Teacher of the Year
Edenton-Chowan Schools



BERNARD WAUGH

Southwest Region
Teacher of the Year
Kannapolis City Schools



RUTH ANN PARKER

Southeast Region
Teacher of the Year
Clinton City Schools



JANICE RAPER

Northwest Region
Teacher of the Year
Rowan-Salisbury Schools



PAIGE ELLIOTT

North Central Region
Teacher of the Year
Wake County Schools



RENÉE PEOPLES

West Region
Teacher of the Year
Swain County Schools



TRISHA MUSE

Sandhills/South Central Region
Teacher of the Year
Montgomery County Schools



FREIDA BAKER

Charter Schools Teacher of the Year
East Wake Academy
Zebulon, NC

GINA BEAMAN NORTHEAST REGION (REGION I)



ASSIGNMENT

Grade 4
Creekside Elementary School
Pitt County Schools

EXPERIENCE

21 years, 4 in current position
Teacher, Pitt County Schools, North Carolina

EDUCATION

East Carolina University, MAED/Elementary Education
East Carolina University, BS/Elementary Education

RECOGNITIONS/AWARDS

Pitt County Educational Foundation Grant, 2008-2009
East Carolina University's Educators Hall of Fame, 2008
Pitt County Schools Teacher of the Year, 2008-2009
Creekside Elementary School Teacher of the Year, 2008-2009
National Board Certification Renewal, 2007
National Board Certification, 1998

PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIPS

National Education Association
North Carolina Association of Educators
Pitt County Association of Educators
Alpha Delta Kappa International Honorary Sorority for Women Educators
Ex-officio board member of the Pitt County Educational Foundation
Creekside Elementary PTA
A.G. Cox Middle School PTA
South Central High School PTA

I fully recognize that faith, love, integrity, and value have molded and shaped almost every decision I have ever made, including the one to become a teacher. Upon my enrollment in East Carolina University, I declared my major in elementary education. In hindsight, I can clearly see that the hand of God was involved. For how was I to know that MY classroom would become such a needed nest, a safe haven, a place of faith, love, integrity, and value for third- and fourth-graders of Pitt County. I truly believe, even though I did not fully recognize it at the time, the Lord called me to be a teacher.

What do I consider my greatest contributions and accomplishments as a teacher? One of my strengths is the ability to create a warm, welcoming classroom environment that not only fosters learning but also conveys the message that ALL students are loved and valued. I believe my gift in this area stems from who I am. To clarify, I believe that “what I am” is sometimes more important than “what I teach.” I ran across a quote by Eugene Bertin that left a lasting impression upon me. He once said, “Teaching is leaving a vestige of one’s self in the development of another. And surely the student is a bank where you can deposit your most precious treasures.” Within my classroom, I continuously strive to make plentiful daily deposits.

When I obtained my national board certification in November 1998, I vowed to honor and value the distinction of being an NBCT by refusing to become stagnant or complacent and committing to become a “true” master teacher. The desire I had at that time is still burning today as I continuously strive to extend my professional and pedagogical skills. I am quite certain that my students of 2009 are receiving a higher quality of education than each class preceding them. The knowledge that I truly improve as a teacher IS the motivating factor that drives me on my journey each year. Having the character traits of both a perfectionist and a competitor, I am compelled to “out do” or “out perform” the teacher I was the previous year.

Since my first year in the classroom, I have changed as an educator. The past twenty years have made me wiser, stronger, and much more effective in the classroom. With this renewed strength, I find myself emerging as a leader within the educational community. Although I don’t usually enjoy being the center of attention, I do believe I have a professional duty to share my pedagogical knowledge and love for teaching with peers and potential teachers. Now that I’m no longer the new kid on the block, it’s extremely important that I fashion myself as the best possible role model for my peers and as a spokesperson for my profession.

NICOLE MURRAY

SOUTHEAST REGION (REGION II)



ASSIGNMENT

Grades 9-10, Science
James Kenan School of Engineering
Duplin County Schools

EXPERIENCE

11 years, 2 in present position
Teacher, Duplin County Schools, North Carolina
Teacher, Pender County Schools, North Carolina

EDUCATION

North Carolina State University, BS/Science Education
North Carolina State University, BA/Chemistry

RECOGNITION/AWARDS

Duplin County Schools Teacher of the Year, 2008-2009
James Kenan School of Engineering Teacher of the Year, 2008-2009
National Board Certification, 2006
Pender County Schools Teacher of the Year, 2005-2006
Heide Trask High School Teacher of the Year, 2005-2006
Pender High School Teacher of the Year, 1999-2000
Pender High School Sallie Mae First Class Teacher Honoree, 1997

PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIPS

North Carolina Science Teachers Association
Kenan Fellows Program

My love for science began when I was a high school student, but I never aspired to become a teacher until an experience in college touched my heart and changed my goals. As a textile chemistry major, I was asked to adapt freshman chemistry labs to meet the needs of a unique student. I found immense personal satisfaction in watching him succeed in an environment that challenged him greatly. I realized then that I wanted a career that would allow me to use my knowledge of science to teach rather than work in an industrial setting.

I began teaching in 1997 and have never regretted the decision. The first years were filled with laughter, tears, and growth as I adjusted to each group of students and the other responsibilities teaching brought. Each time a challenge arose, my immediate desire to walk away was erased by the encouraging words of a colleague or the appreciative tone in a student's voice. Feelings of fulfillment would strengthen me to face another day with eager anticipation.

When I reflect upon my career, my students are foremost in my mind. I may not be teaching a class of future scientists, but I am guiding the future leaders of our increasingly diverse world. I strive to make my students more adept at thinking and problem solving so they are better equipped to make decisions as adults. Most will not remember the intricacies of a lab or the equation for photosynthesis ten years from now, but they will remember the problem solving skills they learned in my class. When I watch a diverse team of students function as a cohesive unit with no regard for individual differences, I know they will carry these attitudes into their adult lives.

I am passionate about the subject I teach; I enjoy the challenges of working with students and watching them discover science; and I love the young people with whom I am entrusted. I take great pride in the accomplishments of my students. When students get excited because their tower held the most weight before collapsing or they solved a difficult problem, I share their joy. There is no greater reward than having a student tell me, "Thanks for not giving up on me." That reminds me that I have made an impression on my students, and they trust me to be there.

My teaching style revolves around the fact that my students are individuals, young people trying to learn difficult concepts while struggling with personal issues. I have to do everything in my power to inspire these precious young people. I tell my students, "Once you're mine, you're always mine." They know I believe in them while they are in my class and long after they have moved on. I know my students experience greater growth because of the personal investment I make in them. Without commitment to students, there can be no trust in the learning environment. Without trust in the student-teacher relationship, there will be no meaningful learning.

MATTHEW BRISTOW-SMITH NORTH CENTRAL REGION (REGION III)



ASSIGNMENT

Grades 9-12, English Language Arts
Tarboro High School
Edgecombe County Public Schools

EXPERIENCE

12 years, 12 in current position
Teacher, Edgecombe County Public Schools

EDUCATION

Appalachian State University, BS/English Secondary Education

RECOGNITION/AWARDS

Edgecombe County Public Schools Teacher of the Year, 2008-2009
Tarboro High School Teacher of the Year, 2008-2009
National Board Certification, 2001
N.C. Character Educator of the Year, Kenan Ethics Program, Duke University, 1999
North Carolina Teaching Fellows, 1990

PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIPS

National Education Association
North Carolina Association of Educators
North Carolina English Teachers Association
School Improvement Team, Tarboro High School

Master teachers realize that we are all the sum total of our relationships. We understand our debt to those who came before us, to those who shaped us along our way, and to those with whom we interact each day. Master teachers also embrace our responsibility to pay it forward, to pay off our debt to the past by positively shaping the future of those around us.

As I grew up in Kernersville, my teachers were some of the most positive influences in my life, and school was a place of unconditional acceptance, challenge, and sometimes refuge. My fondest memories include teachers like Doris Tuttle, my fourth-grade teacher, who expected self-discipline, not just compliance, from her students; Mike Buckner, my high school soccer coach, whose uncompromisingly high expectations motivated me to be better than I was; and Mr. Rob Slater, my 10th-grade English teacher, who taught me the relationship between thinking and writing.

Teachers like these profoundly shaped my worldview. They taught me that, at its best, public school can be a place where we find ourselves: our talents, our ambitions, and our true natures. In eleventh grade, I experienced an epiphany that clarified my destiny as a teacher: teaching was a way of making a positive mark upon our world. After 4 years as a Teaching Fellow at Appalachian State University, I earned a license to teach English.

In 1997, I enthusiastically signed on with Tarboro High School (THS), but my first few years as a teacher were a struggle. I kept my head above water, but other than solid classroom management and decent student rapport, I did not take the teaching world by storm as I had planned. The constant support of my principal and the exemplary teaching of my peers motivated me to reflect upon my teaching practice. In addition, my wife April travelled a parallel path with me as a beginning teacher at THS, and she was my constant mentor and coach in those first years. Without April, I would have certainly succumbed to the personal disappointment, burnout, and stress of my first few years in our trying profession.

Twelve years later, I have prevailed. I continue to look for inspiration from my teaching colleagues who inspire me to live up to the expectations they set for great teaching. They motivate me to take a global view of school improvement, to set a high mark for student engagement and feedback, to relate learning to our moral development, and to insure the academic rigor that moves a school from good to great. They also provide for me a moral compass always pointing in the right direction which sustains me in the long haul. I also look to my daughter Sydney as the most important professional development experience of my life. Sydney's energy, curiosity, and passion for life have reminded me that schools and teachers have incredible power to nourish or starve the intellectual curiosity of kids.

Indeed, I am proud as a regional Teacher of the Year to be the sum of my relationships, past and present. I would be remiss not to acknowledge my students, who have contributed in their own unique way to my identity as a teacher. They push me to remember my roots, to be my best self, and to keep the saw sharp. Their successes and failures form the fabric of my professional life, and I remain ever conscious of the profound impact that teachers can have upon young lives.

MARTHA ANDERSON SANDHILLS/SOUTH CENTRAL REGION (REGION IV)



ASSIGNMENT

Grade 4
Washington Street Elementary School
Richmond County Schools

EXPERIENCE

28 years, 4 in current position
Teacher, Richmond County Schools, North Carolina
Teacher, Buncombe County Schools, North Carolina
Teacher, Vance County Schools, North Carolina
Teacher, Franklinton City Schools, North Carolina

EDUCATION

Appalachian State University, BS/Elementary Education

RECOGNITION/AWARDS

Richmond County Schools Teacher of the Year, 2008-2009
Washington Street Elementary School Teacher of the Year, 2007-2008
Who's Who Among America's Teachers, 2004-2005
National Board Certification, 2003
Developing Future Leaders/ Principals' Executive Program, 2001-2002
Teachers' Executive Institute/ Professional Management Education, 1994-1995
Outstanding Young Educator Award- Vance County Schools, 1994-1995
Outstanding Classroom Teaching Award- Franklinton City Schools, 1986-1987
Honor Student Teacher Designation- Appalachian State University, 1981

PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIPS

National Education Association
North Carolina Association of Educators
Richmond County Schools Education Association
PTO

Twenty-eight years ago I walked into my third grade classroom, excited, enthusiastic, and apprehensive because of the responsibility I faced for educating 27 children for the next 180 days. At that moment, my life took a direction that would lead me on a wonderful journey full of successes, surprises, and even a few tears. This journey defines who I am as a teacher.

As I began my journey, I was unaware of the impact I would have on my children, but by the end of that first year, I knew educating young minds was not my only responsibility. I learned that I was much more to the children than a mere instructor. I discovered that I would wear a multitude of hats from mother, nurse, and psychologist to diplomat, lawyer, and mentor. My personal pedagogy was formed: children need to be loved, nurtured and educated, in that order and at every grade level, to be successful, productive individuals. This remains the framework for how I approach each child, and it guides my desire to create a family atmosphere in the classroom where students are empowered to take responsibility for their own learning.

I know the exact moment when I knew I would become a teacher. In the 9th grade I had aspirations of becoming either a nurse or a teacher. I signed up as a candy striper at our local hospital. I worked as many hours as I could, earning a cap covered in stars. I admired the nurses and doctors' dedication to the care of others. When I became a senior, I registered for a class entitled TAPS (Teacher Assistant Program). I worked for one year at a local elementary school in two first grade classrooms, and I loved it. Because of that opportunity, I knew I wanted to be a teacher. I had always enjoyed school, and I had always had the utmost respect for my teachers. I came to realize the influence they, along with my parents, had on my life, and my goal to become a teacher was forged. I have never doubted for one day that my purpose is to be an advocate for children and the teaching profession.

During my career, I have had the pleasure of working with, and being mentored by, some of the most effective and accomplished teachers and administrators in our state. I have gleaned much by observing, listening, and sharing with them. It is my hope that I have inspired, encouraged, and motivated my colleagues, as well as my students, to strive for their personal bests in the classroom because together we impact the future like no other profession.

Dr. Anthony P. Whitman wrote, "All the darkness of the world cannot extinguish the light of one single candle, held by one caring teacher, bringing hope to one small child." I am proud to say that I am a teacher because I believe in the power of education.



PHILLIP LITTLE

PIEDMONT-TRIAD/CENTRAL REGION (REGION V)



ASSIGNMENT

Grades 9-12, Social Studies
Northwood High School
Chatham County Schools

EXPERIENCE

11 years, 11 in current position
Teacher, Chatham County Schools, North Carolina

EDUCATION

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, MEd/ Secondary Social Studies
Appalachian State University, BS/ History, Summa Cum Laude

RECOGNITIONS/AWARDS

Chatham County Schools Teacher of the Year, 2008-2009
Northwood High School Teacher of the Year, 2008-2009
National Board Certification, 2003
Outstanding Academic Achievement Award, Appalachian State University, 1995
Eagle Scout, Troop 336, North Wilkesboro, NC, 1982

PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIPS

National Education Association
North Carolina Association of Educators
Chatham County Association of Educators
SACS Representative

I never thought I wanted to be a teacher. My parents were life-long teachers and every night they worried about too many things: classroom supplies, parental indifference, and children; every night they worried about somebody else's kids. I went on to college, not knowing what I wanted to be, but I knew I sure didn't want to be a teacher. In the army I low-crawled around the barracks with the rest of my company at 3:00 a.m. singing "Mickey Mouse" and I still didn't want to be a teacher. I worked in factories, an emergency room and attended law school, and through it all there was no way I was going to teach. But things changed when my daughter was ready to be born; I needed a job. The next thing I knew I was teaching freshman physical science.

That's when things started to click. My life experiences blended together to form a unique style of teaching that combined a blue-collar work ethic with knowing the opportunities that college opens up. I could reach students because I knew what it was like to work third shift for minimum wage, to do CPR on a dying patient, and to argue about legal culpability. Then my parents' nightly conversations came back to me, and I realized that the things they worried about needed worrying about. I remembered my mom talking about home visits to kindergartener's houses that had dirt floors. I remembered my dad pointing out the names of students he had taught on the long, black wall of the Vietnam War memorial. As I pondered these things I realized that I really wanted to be a good teacher.

Since then, my greatest contributions can be seen in the accomplishments of my students. They can be seen in Bethany and Whitney, who announced during our Military History class that they wanted to major in history, and they did. They can be seen in Travis, a high school dropout his sophomore year who told me that he still remembered the study strategies I taught him that first year and that he had used them to get his GED. They can be seen in the first student I ever coached at the state wrestling championships; Jeremy is now an assistant principal and he has less hair than I do. But my favorite story is about Tonya. I taught her my first full year in a class that to this day remains my greatest challenge. When I saw her working as a teller at the local bank for the first time, she yelled across the room, "Mr. Little!" Right there in front of my daughter and everyone else she talked about how much she had enjoyed that class from eight years before and how I was her favorite teacher. Then she leaned in real close and whispered, "I still remember all those study strategies you taught us on the first day and I still use them... because we have to take tests here too!"

JESSICA GARNER SOUTHWEST REGION (REGION VI)



ASSIGNMENT

Grades 9-12, Spanish
Porter Ridge High School
Union County Public Schools

EXPERIENCE

11 years, 4 in current position
Teacher, Union County Public Schools, North Carolina
Teacher, MSD Pike Township, Indiana
Teacher, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, North Carolina
Teacher, Shenandoah County Schools, Virginia

EDUCATION

Indiana Wesleyan University, MEd/Curriculum and Instruction
James Madison University, BA/Modern Foreign Languages

RECOGNITIONS/AWARDS

Union County Public Schools Teacher of the Year, 2008-2009
Porter Ridge High School Teacher of the Year, 2007-2008
Indian Trail Town Council Recognition, 2009

PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIPS

Foreign Language Association of North Carolina
American Association of Teachers of Spanish and Portuguese

My teaching career began when, as a small child in my bedroom, I taught my stuffed animals. The only dream I have ever had is to teach. In high school I knew I wanted to be a teacher, but I was not sure what subject I wanted to teach. My high school Spanish teacher, Mrs. Graves, helped me make this decision when she encouraged me to apply to the Virginia Governor's School for Spanish. I didn't think I could get in, but she believed in me and knew that I could. After a month of immersion, I returned fluent and in love with all things Spanish.

Entering my freshman year at James Madison University, I was focused on teaching so I took education courses early. After studying abroad in Spain during my sophomore year, my love of Spanish was stronger than ever, and I returned to James Madison to finish my coursework and do my student teaching. I was hired as a Spanish teacher before having the opportunity to be a student teacher, and I soon learned that teaching without this prerequisite was definitely a "trial by fire." In eleven short years, I have taught every grade between fourth and twelfth, and I have taught Spanish in urban, rural, and suburban areas. While my first few years in the classroom were very difficult, I believe that my varied experiences brought me to this point in my career.

These experiences have shaped my philosophy of teaching. I believe one contribution I make is building relationships with my students. I believe that I am a teacher in order to change students' lives, not just to teach them Spanish. I am thrilled when my students are able to communicate in Spanish, but my biggest goal is to develop each individual child. I plan tirelessly. After each lesson, I reflect and make changes to better my instructional methods. I have been able to affect my students by bringing varied teaching methods to the classroom which allow the students to learn at their level. The difference may range from my questioning techniques to my lesson presentation, but each student is given the opportunity to experience success. My goal in instruction is to engage all learners, regardless of their initial ability, and to make them feel safe and confident in my classroom while challenging them to exceed their own expectations. I frequently tell my students that every day is a new day. I believe in my students even when they do not believe in themselves. By fostering a culture of creativity in my classroom and a safe environment where students feel accepted and loved, I am able to push students to stretch beyond what they think is possible.

Aristotle said, "All who have meditated on the art of governing mankind have been convinced that the fate of empires depends on the education of youth." This quote underscores the importance of education in our society. It is imperative for those in my profession as well as the general public to understand the implications involved with education. It affects every aspect of our society – economics, culture, innovation, and international relations. It is our duty as educators to undertake the great responsibility of unlocking the potential that lies within our students' minds while at the same time empowering them as citizens. I feel privileged to have this responsibility as a teacher.

ROBERT P. TURNER NORTHWEST REGION (REGION VII)



ASSIGNMENT

Grade 6, Math and Science
Grandview Middle School
Hickory Public Schools

EXPERIENCE

24 years, 4 in current position
Teacher, Hickory Public Schools, North Carolina
Teacher, Polk County Schools, Florida

EDUCATION

University of South Florida, Masters in Educational Leadership
Philadelphia Biblical University, BS/Education
Montreat Anderson College, AS/General Education
West Central Texas University, Army Correspondence Program

RECOGNITION/AWARDS

Hickory Public Schools Teacher of the Year, 2008-2009
Grandview Middle School Teacher of the Year, 2008-2009
Rochelle School of the Arts Teacher of the Year, 2004-2005
St Joseph School Teacher of the Year, 1996, 1997, 2000, 2001
National Science and Engineer Fair Judges Recognition, 2000-2005
US Paratrooper Jump Master Award, 1994
US Army Soldier of the Month, 1992
Broward County Coach of the Year, 1989

PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIPS

Leadership Team Hickory Public Schools
Drop Out Prevention Task Force
Board of Directors Camp Joy Ministries
Board of Directors Mountainview Recreational Center
Board of Directors AAU and YBOA, Carolina Express Basketball
State Teachers Association
National Science Fair Committee
SACS Accreditation Committee Chairperson
Association of Christian Schools International

My greatest teacher and the biggest influence is my mother. Mrs. Jefferson “walked the walk” and “talked the talk.” She raised eleven children, ten girls and one boy, without help or support from anyone. She was my cheerleader, confidant, friend and biggest fan. One of the many reasons I chose to teach, stems from her influence on my life. She believed that everyone had a right to learn and that it was up to her to provide me the tools to become a positive, contributing member of society. My mother helped me discover my strengths and my areas of interest which set the foundation for my later success.

It was in middle school that I encountered my second great teacher. While most students were busy being popular and eagerly attempting to climb the social ladder, I was busy hiding from the world. Introverted and severely shy, I found going to school and bearing cruel teasing and taunting was more of a nightmare than an adventure. Nothing is as sad as a child who believes he no longer deserves the right to dream or wonder. Then it happened: I met Mr. Montgomery on “Back to School” night, 1975. He gave the usual introduction and a long list of expectations. I remember the nervous feeling I had in my stomach as I looked around the room at the other students and parents. My mom reassured me that it would be my best year ever. Mr. Montgomery sat in his wheelchair near the exit door of the classroom, shaking hands with each parent and child as they departed the meeting. Mom ushered me toward the door and introduced me to my new teacher. He firmly shook my hand, looked me in the eyes, and calmly stated that he was looking forward to having me in class! The message I heard was, “I am interested in you as a person.”

I enjoyed every moment in Mr. Montgomery’s class. Materials, supplies and equipment were always ready at the start of each lesson. His classes started quickly. We were expected to use any available time for learning...and to always do our best. He was always willing to adjust the classroom environment to support learning. He taught the whole child. Relevant examples were used to help students more fully understand lesson concepts. Students were allowed to share. Like Mr. Montgomery, I wanted my classroom to be a safe environment for my students to share and learn. I strive to understand how my students learn and to adjust to their needs. I try to provide students who traditionally struggle in school a positive and personal relationship with their teacher.

What makes a good teacher a great teacher? It is one who is willing to do whatever it takes to understand how students learn and to engage students in the learning process. It is taking advantage of the teachable moments and using the real world as the classroom. As the camp director for Camp Joy Ministries for the past three summers, coaching our girl’s basketball team, the community college men’s basketball team, and a travel basketball team, I have found new opportunities to teach. These venues are merely extensions of my classroom.

JO PETERSON GIBBS WESTERN REGION (REGION VIII)



ASSIGNMENT

Grades 6-8, Academically and Intellectually Gifted
Asheville Middle School
Asheville City Schools

EXPERIENCE

12.5 years experience, 5 in current position
Grade 7 English Language Arts/Socials Studies Teacher, Asheville City Schools
Middle Grades, N.C. Certified Trainer of Writing, Asheville City Schools

EDUCATION

Blue Ridge Community College & Mars Hill College, post graduate-AIG Certification
University of North Carolina at Asheville, BA/History

RECOGNITIONS/AWARDS

Asheville City Schools' Teacher of the Year, 2008-2009
Asheville Middle School Teacher of the Year, 2008-2009
National Board Certification, 2001
Asheville City Schools' Student Achievement Task Force Outstanding
Teacher Award, August, 2001, 2000
North Carolina Teaching Fellows, 1991

PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIPS

North Carolina Association for the Gifted and Talented
North Carolina Council of the Teachers of Mathematics
Professional Educators of North Carolina
Alpha Phi International Women's Fraternity

I am embarrassed to admit that I did not know that I would become a teacher. I wanted to be a lawyer, an architect, a nurse, a mommy, and even a photo journalist that traveled to war-torn areas, but my conscious mind did not recognize teaching as a possibility. Exasperating were the voices of many educators who unfortunately told me, “You are too smart to go into teaching.” I accepted a N.C. Teaching Fellows scholarship, not to become a teacher, but because it was the only way that I could figure out how to pay for college. It was not until the end of my time as a student teacher that I realized that I loved what I was doing.

Others, however, were not at all surprised. My mother remembers that as a kindergartener I would spend afternoons teaching, assigning paperwork, and giving grades to the neighborhood children. My sixth grade math and science teacher, Carol Byrd, said she knew it the day I helped her “hem” up another students’ hand-me-down jeans with duct tape; it was my idea to fold the pant legs on the underside so that other students wouldn’t notice.

Teaching was inside of me even when I did not know that it was there, but how had this happened? Good teachers are learners who enthusiastically share what they have learned with others and who are equally as excited to learn what others are willing to share. I attribute this love for learning to the experiential activities that my mother allowed me to have each day as a child. When I wanted to imagine life as a pig, she got out the hose, made a mud puddle, and let me roll around and oink. When I wondered about the stars, she pulled out an encyclopedia to highlight the names of constellations, and followed up with a night time observation session in the backyard. When my grandmother sent me a copy of *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow* and I wanted to hear it read, my mother did not balk at letting my seven year old mind embrace its rigorous vocabulary although it took many, many nights for us to wade through it. It was not until I found on a fellow educator’s calendar this quote from Maria Montessori that I realized how important this foundation had been for me, “Never help a child with a task at which he feels he can succeed.” It was shortly thereafter I began a mission to coach our middle school students into realizing their leadership potential. Students became the ones to make field trip arrangements, to solicit donations for a spaghetti supper, and to plan a 5K charity race. Our job as educators is to create the opportunities for leadership and education that will make our students competent twenty-first century visionaries. Students are capable of great things. If we push them to soar, but prepare to catch them when they fall, we have empowered them to become tomorrow’s leaders today.



ASSIGNMENT

Grade 6, Language Arts and Social Studies
ArtSpace Charter School
Swannanoa, NC

EXPERIENCE

8 years, 6 in current position
Teacher, West McDowell Junior High
Teacher, ArtSpace Charter School

EDUCATION

Milligan College, BA/Humanities
Mars Hill College, Teacher Certification

RECOGNITIONS/AWARDS

Teacher of the Year, ArtSpace Charter School, 2008-2009
“John Hall Day” City of Asheville, NC (Dec. 19, 2008)

My life as an educator didn't begin in college, summer internships, or even in young adulthood. Instead, I began teaching as a middle-aged theatre professional struggling to maintain an acting company and a single-parent family. I cast about looking for professions which I could enter laterally, utilize the skills I possessed as an actor/director, and which would afford me more time with my young daughter. Teaching seemed the answer. This is where my life as an educator began. But oh, the journey I have taken!

When I first began teaching (ninth grade English), all I had going for me was a love of literature, a commanding stage presence and a 40 year-old's knowledge of what it meant to be a professional. Using my background in drama, I strove to engage those teenagers in great literature and encourage their own writing skills. It was a challenge.

I really began to grow as a teacher when I took the sixth grade teaching position at ArtSpace Charter School. Great expectations were placed upon me, and great freedom was given as well. It was one of the most frightening and exciting times of my life! At ArtSpace I began my transformation as an educator. I began to look beyond simple teaching facts, dates and grammatical rules and started to focus also on motivating and inspiring the young people in my classroom.

One of my main goals is to communicate a vision of learning to my students. When we begin the preparation for our annual Shakespeare plays, I strive to instill in the student the vision of who we are as a class/cast, and who we *could be*. I convince them they are capable of great things, that they are actually *larger* than they can even possibly imagine, and that – through the wonderful words of Shakespeare – they will make an impact on our audiences which will never leave them. I also attempt to communicate a sense of importance, not of myself, but of the work we do in class. The novels we read, the history we learn, the art we create *mean something*. When the kids have embraced this idea, it shows in their eyes and in their work, and it is *golden*.

My vision of an effective educator is one who integrates “real world” experience into academics, one who challenges students with provocative questions and high expectations, one who clearly communicates a vision about our world – how it is, was, and *could be*. A teacher who can provide these things to students is like broccoli to an undernourished child. That is the vision I have for myself as an educator.

I started out this “teacher” journey as one person, and over time became another. Through daily interaction with my students and fellow teachers, I have indeed undergone a “dramatic” transformation. Looking back, I marvel at the change!

DR. WILLIAM C. HARRISON

STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION CHAIRMAN AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER



Dr. Harrison is the first person to serve as both State Board of Education Chairman and as Chief Executive Officer of the Board, a position created by Gov. Bev Perdue to consolidate authority and accountability for public schools in North Carolina. He was appointed to the Board by Perdue to fill an At-Large Board position. A native of Pennsylvania, Dr. Harrison has served North Carolina public schools in a variety of ways throughout his career. In addition to more than 11 years as Superintendent in Cumberland County, he also has served as Superintendent in Orange County and in Hoke County. He has also served as an Assistant Superintendent in Brunswick County Schools and as a principal and teacher. Dr. Harrison is an adjunct assistant professor at North Carolina State University. His experience includes serving on numerous state commissions, most recently as Co-Chair of the Education Lottery Oversight Committee and as Vice-Chair of the Military Child Education Coalition. Dr. Harrison holds a bachelor's degree in Intermediate Education from Methodist College – Fayetteville, a master's degree in Educational Administration and an Education Specialist degree in Education Administration from East Carolina University, and a doctorate in Education Administration from Vanderbilt University.

DR. JUNE ST. CLAIR ATKINSON

STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

June St. Clair Atkinson has served as the North Carolina State Superintendent of Public Instruction since August 2005 and re-elected in 2008. Dr. Atkinson is the first woman elected to the post of State Superintendent. She oversees more than 1.4 million students in over 2,300 public schools.



As State Superintendent, Dr. Atkinson heads the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, an agency which she served for nearly 30 years as a chief consultant and director in the areas of business education, career and technical education, and instructional services. A former business education teacher, Dr. Atkinson has been involved in instruction and curriculum development throughout her career. Improving instructional quality and student learning, creating environments that enable teachers' and students' success, and ensuring that education is modern and relevant are key priorities for Dr. Atkinson.

Dr. Atkinson has received numerous awards and held many professional offices. Her most recent honors are the Women of Achievement Award from the General Federation of Women's Club, the Distinguished Alumna Award from the North Carolina State University College of Education, the Inclusive Leadership Award from the North Carolina Association of Educators, the Friends of Education Award from the North Carolina Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development, and Education Educator Hall of Fame Award from East Carolina University.

She is the past president of the National Business Education Association, the Southern Regional Education Board's High Schools that Work, and the National Association of State Directors of Career and Technical Education. In addition to her many honors, she has been published in numerous magazines and professional organization yearbooks as well as authoring two books related to technology and making presentations to business and other educational groups in 43 states and throughout North Carolina.

Dr. Atkinson grew up in rural Bedford County, Va., where she attended public schools and graduated from Staunton River High School, Moneta, Va., in 1966. She received a B.S. in Business Education from Radford University in 1969, an M.S. in Vocational and Technical Education from Virginia Tech in 1974, and a Doctorate in Educational Leadership and Policy from North Carolina State University in 1996. After graduating from Radford, Dr. Atkinson taught high school in Roanoke, Va., and Charlotte, N.C. In Charlotte, Dr. Atkinson's teaching assignments required that she work with business people to find meaningful employment for her students. Seeing that her students were prepared for both further education and work became her passion.

Contact information: <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/organization/superintendent/>

NC TEACHERS OF THE YEAR 1970-2008

2008	CINDI RIGSBEE, Orange County Schools, Reading, middle school, "NATIONAL FINALIST"	1988	MERV SESSOMS, Haywood County Schools, English, high school
2007	JAMES BELL, Edenton-Chowan Public Schools, Language Arts, 8th grade	1987	CYNTHIA B. ZEGER-OSTHERHUS, Salisbury City Schools, (Rowan Co.), Mathematics, high school
2006	DIANA BEASLEY, Hickory City Schools, Biology, high school	1986	DONNA H. OLIVER, Burlington City Schools, (Alamance Co.), Science, high school, "NATIONAL WINNER"
2005	WENDY MILLER, Craven County Schools, grades K-2	1985	PAMELA F. BREWER, Person County Schools, English/Journalism, high school
2004	LIZBETH ALFARO, Catawba County Schools, ESL, grades K-6	1984	PHILLIP R. DAIL, Wake County Schools, Science, high school
2003	ALLISON ORMOND, Rockingham County Schools, Language Arts/Social Studies, 7th grade	1983	JEAN PAUL POWELL, Clinton City Schools, (Sampson Co.), English, 12th grade
2002	MELISSA BARTLETT, Iredell-Statesville Schools, English, high school, "NATIONAL FINALIST"	1982	JAMES JEROME WILLIAMS, Burke County Schools, Music, high school
2001	CARMEN WILSON, Ashe County Schools, Mathematics, high school	1981	PENELOPE SUE SMITH, Asheboro City Schools, (Randolph Co.), Humanities, high school
2000	LAURA BILBRO-BERRY, Beaufort County Schools, 2nd grade	1980	LINDA LEE, Burlington City Schools, (Alamance Co.), English, high school
1999	KIMBERLY H. HUGHES, Wake County Schools, Kindergarten	1979	JO ANN PAYNE NORRIS, Wake County Schools, 1st grade
1998	REBECCA O. HOYLE, Onslow County Schools, Music, grades K-5	1978	RUTH P. WATKINS, Richmond County Schools, Social Studies, high school
1997	JULIAN L. COGGINS, JR., Cabarrus County Schools, Science, high school	1977	TED SCOTT HENSON, Vance County Schools, Language Arts/Social Studies, 5th grade
1996	RICHARD SCOTT GRIFFIN, Gaston County Schools, 5th grade	1976	RUBY MURCHISON, Fayetteville City Schools, (Cumberland Co.), Language Arts/Social Studies, 7th grade, "NATIONAL WINNER"
1995	VERNESTINE KENT TAYLOR, Wilson County Schools, Mathematics, high school	1975	HERMAN L. FORBES, High Point City Schools, (Guilford Co.), 6th grade
1994	SANDRA C. WELLS, Asheville City Schools, (Buncombe Co.), Team Teacher, 1st and 4th grades	1974	FRANCES A. KISER, Cleveland County Schools, English, high school
1993	SARAH M. PRATT, McDowell County Schools, English/Social Studies, high school, "NATIONAL HALL OF FAME WINNER"	1973	SARAH E. SPIVEY, Raleigh City Schools, (Wake Co.), 4th-5th grade, "NATIONAL FINALIST"
1992	DIXIE F. ABERNATHY, Gaston County Schools, Science, junior high school	1972	JAMES M. "JAY" ROGERS, Durham City Schools, (Durham Co.), American History/Black Studies, high school, "NATIONAL WINNER"
1991	ANNIE PEGRAM, Durham City Schools, (Durham Co.), 1st grade	1971	GENELLA ALLISON, Hickory City Schools, (Catawba Co.), English/Journalism, high school
1990	LOUIS GOTLIEB, Granville County Schools, Science, high school	1970	JOHN MCFADDEN, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, 6th grade, "NATIONAL FINALIST"
1989	SANDRA DAVIS ROGERS, Rowan County Schools, 1st-3rd grades		