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NORTH CAROLINA

TEACHER OF THE YEAR 2008

Recognition and Awards Ceremony, April 29
Brier Creek Country Club, Raleigh, North Carolina

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 2008-2009 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.

LAURA DELAUNEY graduated Magna Cum Laude from the University of Richmond with a BA in Music and went on to receive a Master of Arts in Teaching from UNC-Chapel Hill. She has been teaching at Durham School of the Arts for four years where she is the Director of Choral Music. She is a member of the NC Music Educators Association and consistently brings students to state level Honor Choirs at the middle and high school level. In addition to directing choirs, Mrs. DelauneY enjoys singing in Cantari, a Chapel Hill chamber choir, and teaching private piano lessons.

THE SMALL ENSEMBLES WORKSHOP was created at Durham School of the Arts to provide advanced high school students with an opportunity to explore a larger variety of music and experience working in small groups and teaching each other. The students were selected based on their vocal skills and ability to work independently. They perform frequently for school events and provide entertainment for local organizations. The students share a strong passion for music and many plan to go on to college to major in Music and Musical Theater.

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.

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State Board of Education | Department of Public Instruction



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TEACHER OF THE YEAR AWARDS CEREMONY APRIL 29, 2008

“GIVE MY REGARDS TO BROADWAY”

words/music by George M. Cohan, arr. Betty Owens

Durham School of the Arts Small Ensemble

Laura Delauney

Director, Durham Public Schools

GREETINGS

Shannon Vickery

Executive Producer for Content, UNC-TV

Host, North Carolina NOW

“WHILE JOYFUL SPRINGTIME LASTETH”

words and music by Henry Youll

Durham School of the Arts Small Ensemble

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Sherrard Pearce

Iredell-Statesville Schools

“THE STAR-SPANGLED BANNER”

words and music by Francis Scott Key

Durham School of the Arts Small Ensemble

INVOCATION

Jerome Hughes

Asheville City Schools

DINNER

INTRODUCTION OF DISTINGUISHED GUESTS

Sonya Kiser

Johnston County Schools

REMARKS

The Honorable Howard N. Lee

Chairman, State Board of Education

INTRODUCTION OF SPECIAL SPEAKER

Shawn Watlington

Guilford County Schools

REMARKS

Debra Morris

2008 Wachovia Principal of the Year

Kannapolis City Schools

INTRODUCTION OF SPECIAL SPEAKER

Beth Howard

Onslow County Schools

REMARKS

Cynthia Marshall

President, AT&T – North Carolina

INTRODUCTION OF JAMES BELL

Denise Andrews

Gaston County Schools

REFLECTIONS

James Bell

2007-08 North Carolina Teacher of the Year

Edenton-Chowan Public Schools

RECOGNITION OF THE REGIONAL AND STATE SELECTION COMMITTEES

Danny Holloman

North Carolina Department of Public Instruction

INTRODUCTION OF STATE SUPERINTENDENT

Bridget Johnson

Moore County Schools

REMARKS/ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE 2008-2009 NORTH CAROLINA TEACHER OF THE YEAR

June Atkinson

Superintendent, Public Schools of North Carolina

ACCEPTANCE REMARKS

2008-2009 North Carolina Teacher of the Year

SPECIAL PRESENTATION

Cynthia Marshall

AT&T – North Carolina

CLOSING REMARKS

Shannon Vickery

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 accord 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 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, an engraved plaque, 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 engraved plaques, 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 38 years of the program in North Carolina, three State Teachers of the Year have become National winners. Three 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, six 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, John McKinney** 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.

TO TEACH is to touch the lives of many and to help us learn life's lessons.

But to teach well is to make a difference in all the lives you touch. To teach is to be a parent, nurse, friend, and confidant; To be a supporter, a leader, and a motivator.

But to teach well is to be all of these things, yet not lose sight of who you are.

You share a part of yourself with all whose lives you have touched.

TO TEACH is to be tender, loving, strong, and giving to all who rely upon you; to encourage and praise. But to teach well is to believe in what and whom you teach.

A teacher comes to master these many jobs throughout the years. But those who teach well recognize that there will always be more to learn in life's journey, and they never hesitate to strive to learn it.

Donna Bulgar

STATE SELECTION COMMITTEE

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

BARBARA ARMSTRONG
Director, Human Resources
Thomasville City Schools

ZOE LOCKLEAR
Dean, School of Education
University of North Carolina-Pembroke

CRAIG HILL
2007 Wachovia Principal of the Year
Assistant Superintendent
Wilson County Schools

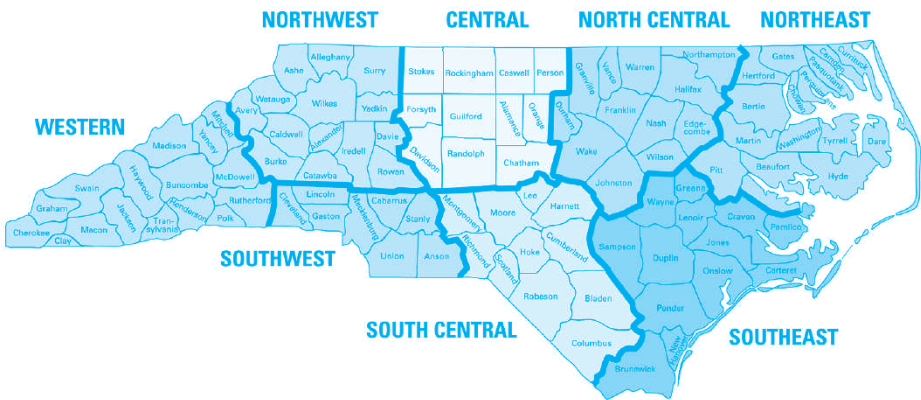
ANNE FRANKLIN
Civic and Community Leader
Raleigh

LINDA HUBBARD
Assistant to the Provost
Director, Center for Teaching and Learning
St. Augustine's College

HARRY STARNES
Director, Principal Fellows Program
Associate Director, North Carolina Model Teacher
Education Consortium

LINNEA MINNEMA
National Heritage Academies

TEACHER OF THE YEAR REGIONAL MAP



2007-08 TEACHER OF THE YEAR TEAM



JAMES BELL
2007-2008 North Carolina
Teacher of the Year
Northeast Region
Teacher of the Year
Edenton-Chowan Public Schools



SHAWN WATLINGTON
Piedmont-Triad/Central Region
Teacher of the Year
Guilford County Schools



BETH HOWARD
Southeast Region
Teacher of the Year
Onslow County Schools



DENISE ANDREWS
Southwest Region
Teacher of the Year
Gaston County Schools



SONYA KISER
North Central Region
Teacher of the Year
Johnston County Schools



SHERRARD PEARCE
Northwest Region
Teacher of the Year
Iredell-Statesville Schools



BRIDGET JOHNSON
Sandhills/South Central Region
Teacher of the Year
Moore County Schools



JEROME HUGHES
West Region
Teacher of the Year
Asheville City Schools



SONYA RINEHART

NORTHEAST REGION (REGION I)



ASSIGNMENT

Grades 9-12 Social Studies, DREAM Team supervisor
AIG/High Flyer Coordinator
John A. Holmes High School
Edenton-Chowan Public Schools

EXPERIENCE:

13 years; 12 in current position
Teacher, Edenton-Chowan Public Schools, North Carolina
Teacher, Elizabeth City/Pasquotank County Schools, North Carolina
Interim Teacher, Chowan Middle School, North Carolina

EDUCATION:

North Carolina State University, BA/Social Studies

RECOGNITIONS/AWARDS:

Edenton-Chowan Schools Teacher of the Year, 2007-2008
John A. Holmes Teacher of the Year, 2007-2008
National Board Certification: Secondary Social Studies, 2007
Who's Who Among American High School Teachers Nomination, 2003-2006
Northeast Albemarle Coach of the Year, 2001-2002
Business and Professional Women Young Careerist Award (State), 2000-2001
Business and Professional Women Young Careerist Award (Chowan County), 2000-2001
Edenton-Chowan School System Teacher of the Year, 2000-2001
John A. Holmes Teacher of the Year, 2000-2001

PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIPS:

National Education Association
North Carolina Association of Educators
North Carolina Council for Social Sciences
National Geographic Alliance
Associate member of the National Association of Secondary School Principals
North Carolina High School Network
North Carolina State University Alumni Association
Alpha Phi Sorority

Born and raised the middle child of a commercial fisherman and farmer in rural northeast North Carolina, I quickly grasped the meaning of a strong work ethic and the value of education. Although my affinity for talking, avid reading, and dramatization led me to believe I was destined for the big city and bright lights, the teachers in our small community-centered schools, molded me like clay, planting seeds for a talent I would discover later. Upon reflection, two teachers ignited a passion for biology and history while having a vested interest in building a meaningful relationship with me as a person. My studies at NC State University as a Biological Science major came to a screeching halt after I discovered my true niche in Social Studies and secondary education. I received a BA in Social Studies, spent the next few months traveling the east coast on a quest to “find myself,” and then landed right back in the same rural community that as a child I was so eager to escape. I served as an interim Exceptional Children’s Teacher for the fall semester then gained a permanent position teaching seventh grade social studies that spring. The following year I was hired to teach social studies at John A. Holmes High School where the classroom became my stage as I continued to educate tomorrow’s leaders.

As an educator, my philosophy is to invest in the person, not just the student, thus developing relationships beyond the curriculum walls. Through my actions, I remind students and staff that “nothing great was ever achieved without enthusiasm,” as I often skip down the halls, break into song across campus, and open up my life to students as someone who cares about who they will become in life. Through establishing rigorous standards and providing the environment for an equitable education, students become accountable for their studies as they achieve levels of success they did not realize they could attain. I push all students to persevere with a smile and to believe in their abilities, as they call my house for instruction or I meet them for breakfast the morning of a big test. I form positive relationships with students instilling character, confidence, and integrity as vital tools to carry into other classes, their collegiate studies, and the work force. Today’s students will face a rapidly changing, technologically competitive workplace for which we must provide them the educational foundation to compete successfully. To properly prepare these students, I encourage the support of mentors, coaches, and community volunteers to give each child motivation for success. As their ‘cheerleader,’ I encourage students to pursue a vision of excellence and to experience life outside of our rural community with the realization they can compete and be successful in the world around them.

Through teaching, I continually strive to meet each day with the purpose of molding students into civic-minded citizens prepared to make the world a better place for posterity. My spotlight and stage is not Broadway, but my classroom, where I perform for students every day guiding them on their paths. Pope John XXIII said, “Do not walk through time without leaving worthy evidence of your passage.” Through my career, my mark will be seen in the footprints of the students I will continue to teach. I hope my students take a piece of me with them as they leave their legacies in the world.

RUTH ANN PARKER

SOUTHEAST REGION (REGION II)



ASSIGNMENT

Grades 9-12, Science
Clinton High School
Clinton City Schools

EXPERIENCE

6 years, 6 in current position
Teacher, Clinton City Schools, North Carolina

EDUCATION

Fayetteville State University, MAEd/Biology (in progress)
North Carolina State University, BS/Science Education

RECOGNITION/AWARDS

Clinton City Schools Teacher of the Year, 2007-2008
Clinton High School Teacher of the Year, 2007-2008
NCCAT – Jean Powell Honor Scholarship Recipient, 2007-2008
National Board Certification, 2007
Michael Jordan Fundamental Scholarship Recipient, 2003

PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIPS

Professional Educators of North Carolina
North Carolina Science Teachers Association
Alpha Delta Kappa Educational Sorority
District Parent Teacher Student Organization

If you were able to peer into the slumber-filled mind of my childhood, you would learn that my dreams consisted of nature's wonders. I was never considered the stereo-typical daughter with a room filled with princesses and fairy tales. Instead, my room was decorated in critters and dinosaurs. I would long for summer break when I could spend the majority of each day outdoors. I have always had the childhood dream of exploring the living world around me and getting my hands dirty while doing it.

However, I have not always desired to be an educator. Yes, science was my career choice, but I discovered late in college that I had other talents. It was not until the summer of my senior year that my passion for "nature's critters" was superceded by my love for mankind – especially youth. I spent that summer in the tiny island nation of Malta as a Christian missionary tutoring youth in the field of science. It was there that I discovered the gifts that I have for teaching and positively encouraging others. When I returned to the university in the fall, I changed my major to Secondary Science Education and I have never regretted the change.

With all of society's negative talk about teenagers today, some of my friends and family wonder why and how I am still in the education field. The first answer is a "faith" answer. My religious devotion has guided me into this profession and has kept me strong. Secondly, there are roles that I have assumed in my profession that have reinforced my desire to continue teaching. One role is that of a "filter." I consistently filter out the negatives and share the positives – habits, attitudes, and values that were instilled in me by both of my parents (retired NC public school educators). My positive attitude toward life and learning is one contribution I share with the education profession. However, I believe that my greatest contribution is the respect and dignity I hold for all students.

As an educator, I have developed a philosophy that guides my practice. I believe that all students have the ability to learn and the right to develop that ability. All students are worthy and must be given unconditional regard while being encompassed in a learning environment that promotes dignity and respect for diversity. In all instances I must hold high expectations for every student. But above this, I hold even higher expectations for myself. I strive to have a plan and a purpose for everything I do in my classroom as well as my personal life. If things don't work out the way I had envisioned, I reflect on what I could have done differently and adjust my plans accordingly.

My beliefs aid in the accomplishment of my ultimate goal which is to prepare my students to be life-long learners and contributing, upright citizens. I want my students to learn to take advantage of all of the opportunities before them. It is my job to provide them with the tools they will need. Like W.B. Yeats, I believe, "Education is not the filling of a bucket, but the lighting of a fire."

PAIGE ELLIOTT NORTH CENTRAL REGION (REGION III)

NORTH CENTRAL



ASSIGNMENT

Grades 9-12, English and Paideia English
Fuquay-Varina High School
Wake County Public Schools

EXPERIENCE

11 years, 11 in current position
Teacher, Wake County Public Schools, North Carolina
5 years Co-Instructor, Capital Area Writing Project, North Carolina State University

EDUCATION

North Carolina State University, MEd
North Carolina State University, BA/English

RECOGNITION/AWARDS

Wake County Public Schools Teacher of the Year, 2007-2008
Fuquay-Varina High School Teacher of the Year, 2006-2007, 2001-2002
Fuquay-Varina Women's Club Woman of Vision, Courage, and Pioneering, 2008
Town of Fuquay-Varina Board of Commissioners Recognition, 2008
Fuquay-Varina Area Chamber of Commerce Excellence in Education, 2008, 2002
Wake County Public Schools Institute for Teacher Leaders, Graduate 2007
National Board Certification, 2004
Tyco Electronics Wake County Educator of the Year, 2002

MEMBERSHIPS

National Education Association
North Carolina Association of Educators
National Council of Teachers of English
North Carolina English Teacher's Association
Wake Education Partnership, Board of Directors
PTSA

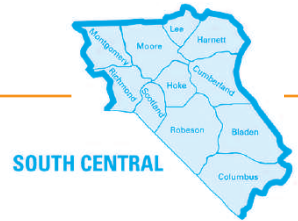
When I am asked when and what determined my decision to become a teacher, I often feel overwhelmed. How could I possibly choose one moment, one person, or one event that made me become a teacher? As many teachers explain, I was “called” to the profession. Granted, I was not lying in bed one night when a beam of light filtered through my window and washed my face while a voice inside of me said, “You are to become a teacher.” I wasn’t the child who propped up all of her dolls in an imaginary classroom and conducted lessons or who was driven by a family of educators. As a matter of fact, I was the first in my immediate family to go to college. It wasn’t teaching that guided me; it was learning. I was the child who was always asking, “Why?” “How?” and “What if?”

I have a genuine desire to empower learners with understanding. Poet Kahlil Gibran once wrote on teaching, “If he [teacher] is indeed wise he does not bid you enter the house of his wisdom, but rather leads you to the threshold of your own mind.” Being an outstanding educator is recognizing that teaching is not solely about teaching subject matter and skills to students; it is about guiding students to the knowledge that they already possess. It is about teaching students to become learners. Because I value the art of learning and understand that nothing exists in isolation, I have developed the skills and strategies that make learning meaningful to my students.

With each lesson and each day, I strive to make our experiences significant to students’ lives. They often feel overwhelmed or desensitized by the material and their efforts. Analogies and discussion are ways I make the fog clear. When we’re reading *To Kill a Mockingbird*, I have them imagine, for instance, a large rock with a jewel in the center. If I take a hammer and chisel and hit the rock, what will happen? Very little – perhaps only a small chip. What if I hit it again? Again – very little. However, over the course time, the rock is shattered and the gem revealed. Now, say that rock is the Civil Rights Movement and the center is Equal Rights. Did everyone give up when the law did not change the day after Rosa Parks’ actions or after the Greensboro Lunch Counter Sit-in? And now let’s say the center of the rock represents your life-goals. I show that through what may seem a series of failures can come success. It is through discussions like these I make our topics relate to their lives. I give the lessons purpose and significance. I facilitate their exploration of meaning.

The wonderful part of teaching is that leading exploration and understanding for students creates meaning for me, too. It is with great sincerity that I say I have the best career in the world. There is no doubt I am doing what I need to be doing. Teaching is not just what I do; it’s who I am.

TRISHA MUSE SANDHILLS/SOUTH CENTRAL REGION (REGION IV)



ASSIGNMENT

Grade 4
Page Street Elementary School
Montgomery County Schools

EXPERIENCE

4 years, 4 in current position
Teacher, Montgomery County Schools, North Carolina

EDUCATION

Appalachian State University, MA/Curriculum and Instruction Specialist
Appalachian State University, BS/Elementary Education

RECOGNITION/AWARDS

Montgomery County Schools Teacher of the Year, 2007-2008
Page Street Elementary School Teacher of the Year, 2007-2008
Walmart Teacher of the Year, Montgomery County, 2007-2008
Honor Student Teacher, Appalachian State University, May 2003
North Carolina Teaching Fellow, 1999

MEMBERSHIPS

National Education Association
North Carolina Association of Educators
Phi Delta Kappa International Professional Association of Educators
Superintendent Professional Advisory Council, Montgomery County

“They may forget what you said, but they will never forget how you made them feel.” Carl Buechner’s quote allows all of us to reflect upon educational journeys and remember the teachers who had an impact on our lives. I am indebted to the numerous teachers who have shaped me into the individual I am today. Those teachers are the reason I teach; they inspired me to be a great teacher.

My parents are convinced I was destined to become an educator because of the many hours of playing school with my younger sister and because I announced in kindergarten that I wanted to be a teacher when I “grew up.” My love for learning made it ideal to follow this path. My decision to enter the education field was strongly influenced by my father, a high school chemistry teacher. I had the opportunity to watch my father positively influence the lives of many young adults with his caring personality and unique sense of humor. He was treated with the utmost respect from his students because he found pride in truly knowing and respecting them.

My journey toward a career in education began during my junior year of high school when I volunteered to teach kindergarten at my church’s Vacation Bible School. The children never ceased to amaze me with their eagerness to learn and their outgoing personalities. At that point, it became obvious to me that I should pursue a career which would surround me with children. Later in the year, I enrolled in a Teacher Cadet class offered at my high school which afforded me time in local elementary classrooms. Yet another stepping stone toward my career in education was receiving the NC Teaching Fellows Scholarship. I am forever grateful for the Teaching Fellows program for providing me with life changing experiences that continue to enhance my teaching.

My classroom is a democratic environment where I share control of the learning atmosphere with my students. My class embraces multiculturalism, and we thrive on the greatness of diversity. My students are encouraged to work to their fullest potential as I instill confidence for them to succeed. I make conscientious efforts to support my students outside the classroom by attending events in which they are involved. This makes a crucial difference in their academic attitudes because it establishes a connection with students and parents that I would not usually have inside the school building.

Each year becomes another story to share as each individual student impacts my life in a different way. Even though I am still in the beginning years of my career, I have become an expert on my students. As teachers, we spend a majority of our lives influencing others. What we get in return is the personal satisfaction of touching tomorrow. A teacher’s final products cannot hang on a wall or be published in a book, but our true rewards come from the children we teach.

**ASSIGNMENT**

Grades 6-8 Reading
Gravelly Hill Middle School
Orange County Schools

EXPERIENCE

21 years, 2 in current position
Teacher, Orange County Schools, North Carolina
Teacher, Durham County Schools, North Carolina
Teacher, Vance County Schools, North Carolina
Teacher, Guilford County Schools, North Carolina

EDUCATION

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, MEd/K-12 Literacy
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, BA/English Education

RECOGNITIONS/AWARDS

Hometown Hero - WCHL Village Pride Award, 2008
Orange County Educational Foundation Grant, 2007-2008
Orange County Schools Teacher of the Year, 2007-2008
Gravelly Hill Middle School Teacher of the Year, 2007-2008
Gravelly Hill Middle School Employee of the Month, October/December 2006
Terry Sanford Award for Creativity and Innovation in Teaching/Finalist, 2005
Superintendent's Staff Appreciation Award, Durham Public Schools, 2005
National Board Certified Teacher, 2004
Nike, Inc. Jordan Fundamentals Grant, 2004
Who's Who among America's Teachers, 1998, 2002
Central Regional Teacher of the Year, 1998
Durham Public Schools Teacher of the Year, 1997
Brogden Middle School Teacher of the Year, 1996-1997
Chewning Middle School Teacher of the Year, 1993-1994

MEMBERSHIPS

National Education Association
North Carolina Association of Educators
Orange County Association of Educators
Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development
International Reading Association
North Carolina Reading Association
Teacher Leaders Network/Center for Teaching Quality

Maggie Elizabeth Kennedy rode in a mule drawn wagon at the end of the nineteenth century to travel from the Sandhills of North Carolina to a school for teachers in Columbia, South Carolina. Years later, while in her early nineties, she often told me the story of “The Little Match Girl” as I lay beside her, scared breathless for the little girl who would not survive the cold. Still, I listened, spellbound, to the sound of storytelling by a little lady from the country who had taught so many in her long life. It would have been altogether fitting for me to want to follow in the footsteps of my great grandmother and become a teacher. However, I had no desire to be an educator...I wanted to be a Dallas Cowboy cheerleader.

Nonetheless, other forces prevailed in my life and led me to this honorable profession. First, I always loved school. School was my link to a world far away from my modest beginnings. A book could take me anywhere. (I really believed I was Harriet the Spy!) As I progressed through middle and high school, my cheerleader dream persevered, but it was then that I began to notice I had a love for something else – my English classes. I remember thinking, “How exciting! A forty page term paper on Robert Frost!” while all of my classmates were grumbling and whining. I chose English as my college major without a clue as to what I would do with it. At that time, my university offered only two options for an English major: become an editor or become a teacher. All of a sudden, it was clear – I would be a teacher. And although I wasn’t sure I had the courage for a job that could impact so many, as I think back over twenty-one years and almost 2,000 children, I realize I made the right decision. And Great Granny Maggie would be proud.

One theme has woven itself through all those years: the relationship is the foundation for all that happens in a school building. The straight A student who hangs at my elbow gets the same amount of affection and attention as the one who has shut down, tired of being unsuccessful at every turn. My goals are to encourage and to inspire, using any means necessary to develop a relationship and reach the learner. And once that relationship is established, anything is possible. In my classroom, nonreaders begin to feel how captivating words on a page can be.

I’m surprised now when I think back to my beginnings in education and how absolutely terrified I was. But understanding lies in a conversation I had with one of my students, Joseph, who looked at me on the last day of school not too long ago:

“You,” he said. “You gave me the courage to read.”

No, Joseph, it was you. You gave me the courage to teach.



ASSIGNMENT

Grade 6, Mathematics and Social Studies
Kannapolis Intermediate School
Kannapolis City Schools

EXPERIENCE

15 years, 6 in current position
Teacher, Kannapolis City Schools, North Carolina
Teacher, Elizabeth Hanford Dole Elementary School, North Carolina
Teacher, Little Valley Central School, Little Valley, NY
Teacher, Levant Christian School, Falconer, NY

EDUCATION

State University of New York at Fredonia, MEd/Elementary Curriculum and Instruction
Houghton College, BS/Augmented History, Minors/Secondary Education and Sociology

RECOGNITIONS/AWARDS

Southwest Regional Teacher of the Year, 2007-2008
Kannapolis City Schools Teacher of the Year, 2007-2008
Kannapolis Intermediate School Teacher of the Year, 2007-2008
Biltmore Who's Who for Executives and Professionals, 2007-2008
Who's Who Among American Teachers, 2004-2007
National Honor Roll's Outstanding American Teacher, 2006
National Board Certification, 2004

PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIPS

National Board of Professional Certified Teachers
North Carolina Association of Educators
New York State Teachers Union

There are times in life when drastic circumstances change our course or even career choices. I always believed I would be a dairy farmer when I grew up, but in May of my junior year in high school, one of those drastic circumstances altered my course. I was involved in a farm accident that nearly ended my life and left me unable to work on the farm. I ended up spending that summer working at a camp, and it was there I felt a very strong call to become a teacher.

When I began teaching, I had the faulty belief that all I had to do was enter the classroom, teach the students about history, and they would learn. After a very short time, I was failing badly, and I knew it. The students did not find history to be exhilarating, and they carried so many burdens with them it was nearly impossible for them to care about what was going on in class.

About this time I began to see my own past in my students. I lived through some very rocky moments in my childhood, and I began identifying with my students on a level that went way beyond history. My students became individuals who needed help with life. Seeing my students as complete individuals has motivated me to be a better teacher, make better lessons, be a more effective mentor, and even inspire others around me to be greater.

I have been very fortunate to work with some great educators who have helped me become a master teacher. I learned how to use history and my position as a teacher to make a difference with my students. Above everything else, I want to help my students succeed at life so I use history as a mode to teach kids how to overcome disappointment, hatred, racism, sexism, heartache, and other major roadblocks they face.

My faith also plays an extremely important role in my teaching. It is what makes me view every student as a precious individual who is much more than a name or number. It is what makes it impossible for me to give up on a student. It is what makes me have a vested interest in my students' futures, and it provides the basis for my approach to my students. I believe the greatest gift I can give to those who enter my class is the knowledge that they are valuable, and they are loved. If I can get the students to truly believe that, nothing they face in life will be too much for them to handle.

I have an awesome responsibility to the people of my community. I must be absolutely the best teacher I can be for parents who trust me with the education of their children, for students who sit in my class needing an education and a loving mentor, and for my peers who need me to be a leader and example. While this is a daunting task, it is one I relish.

JANICE RAPER NORTHWEST REGION (REGION VII)

NORTHWEST



ASSIGNMENT

Grades 4 and 5, Academically Gifted Reading and Mathematics

Grade 3, Academically Gifted Enrichment

Grades K-2, Academically Gifted Consultant; Bright Ideas Classroom Facilitator

Hurley Elementary School

Rowan-Salisbury Schools

EXPERIENCE:

31 years; 19 in current position

Teacher, Rowan-Salisbury Schools, North Carolina

Teacher, Burlington City Schools, North Carolina

Teacher, Rowan County Schools, North Carolina

EDUCATION:

Catawba College, post graduate – AIG certification

University of North Carolina at Charlotte, BA/Psychology & Elementary Education

RECOGNITION/AWARDS:

Phillip J. Kirk, Jr. Honored Educator Scholar, 2008

North Carolina Northwest Regional Teacher of the Year, 2007-08

Rowan-Salisbury Schools, Teacher of the Year, 2007-08

Hurley Elementary School Teacher of the Year, 2007-08

Rowan-Salisbury Academically Gifted Teacher of the Year, 1991/1995

North Carolina Association for Gifted and Talented Teacher of the Year, 1991

Rowan County Mathematics Teacher of the Year, 1986

Enochville Elementary Teacher of the Year, 1975

PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIPS:

National Education Association

North Carolina Association of Educators

National Association for Gifted Children

North Carolina Association for the Gifted and Talented

One statement I can truly make is that I always wanted to be a teacher. As far back as I can remember, my sights were set on the classroom. I spent my free time playing school. I made my poor sister sit by a large blackboard that I received for Christmas and learn everything that I could teach her.

I was raised in Salisbury, North Carolina and was educated in a state school system. I was extremely lucky to have many wonderful and dedicated teachers that made a lasting impression on me. I set my goal to become, not just an ordinary elementary school teacher, but to be one of the best! I was a very shy young lady in my younger days so I sometimes struggled in school. I am thankful that no one during my educational years told me that I could not achieve my goal.

I began teaching in a very small rural school in Rowan County in the early 70's. I immediately decided to try new and innovative ideas in my classroom. I also realized very quickly that my students needed more than just lessons in reading, math, social studies, and science. For five years, I attended youth football games and provided extra activities that these children had never experienced. I took them to college football games and campuses, baseball games, field trips to museums and the state capital, and even had a girls' only slumber party at my house. These children needed to have life experiences! As a result, I became very close to this small, mill working community. It was hard to say good-bye and move with my husband to a new town and experience.

I left a very needy school community and entered a school world of having anything that I needed or could possibly want. But, I noticed, even though these children had all they needed and more, they were still children longing for a teacher who cared and who loved them. For three years, I enjoyed a different teaching environment. I learned what life was like to have more than one electrical outlet that was NOT located under the classroom sink.

Then, I decided to give to my own family what I had given to other children for the past eight years – I stayed home to be a mother. I was blessed with two beautiful daughters. After five years and a move back home to Salisbury, I resumed my teaching career. Shortly upon returning, I was offered a chance to teach the academically gifted and realized my true calling.

Thirty-one years of teaching and I am not ready to quit! My husband of 38 years, a retired educator himself, has encouraged me to continue my teaching. I still enjoy getting up each day and look forward to challenging my students to become 21st century thinkers and doers. I want to be remembered as a teacher that cared for others and shared her knowledge.

RENÉE PEOPLES WESTERN REGION (REGION VIII)



ASSIGNMENT

Grade 4, Math/Language Arts
K-5 County Math Coach
Swain County Schools

EXPERIENCE

17 years experience, 7 in current position
Teacher, Swain County Schools, North Carolina
K-5 Math Coach, Swain County Schools, North Carolina
Teacher, Jackson County Schools, North Carolina
Director, Child Development Center, Maryland
Instructor, Community College, Maryland
Teacher, Baltimore County Schools, Maryland
Teacher, Charleston County Schools, South Carolina

EDUCATION

Southern Seminary, Kentucky, MA
University of Florida, Gainesville, BA/Early Childhood and Elementary Education

RECOGNITIONS/AWARDS

Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching Nominee, 2008
Swain County Schools Teacher of the Year, 2007-2008
West Elementary School Teacher of the Year, 2007-2008
NCCTM Outstanding Elementary School Mathematics Teacher, 2007
Distinguished Teacher Award, NC Distinguished Teachers Forum, 2005
NBCT, 2003

PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIPS

National Council of Teachers of Mathematics
North Carolina Council of Teachers of Mathematics
National Association of Educators
North Carolina Association of Educators
Swain County Association of Educators

A teacher is not what I became, it is who I am. My students are loved, and because of that love, they are eager to learn. I want my students to experience the best life has to offer so I show them how to follow directions by making crafts, how to appreciate other cultures by going on field trips to see Cherokee life, or by going to a classical music concert or a play. I model respect, manners, compassion, and perseverance every day. I go to their performances and games and show them how to make pop-up cards. All these happen while I am helping them discover how to learn. I constantly interact with my students and meet their needs. When my students have a need for anything, I beg, borrow or write a grant to get whatever it takes to meet the challenges.

I love teaching because every day I get to watch students learning. As a 20-year-old teacher in my first classroom, I fell in love with the beauty of first graders learning to read. In 28 years, that has not dimmed. Now a fourth grade teacher, I make sure all the children I teach conceptually learn and thoroughly understand every subject. Because my fourth graders had trouble remembering data words, I wrote songs to help them. They are still singing them! Due to constantly evaluating current research-based practices and seeking to be a better teacher, I never teach the same lesson twice. My students conduct research, focus on what is important, synthesize information and teach each other. I know I am doing something right when they imitate my games and methods. By engaging and empowering students, I guide them to become lifelong learners. Teaching is not a job or occupation to me. It is the delight of my heart, the love of my soul, my ministry, and my life!

Every day in the classroom, my students teach me more than I teach them. By being willing to learn from them, I can instruct them even better the next time. Because my class is a collaborative learning community, we make sure every child succeeds. The success they achieve in school is an inoculation against dropping out. It paves the way for success in work and all of life. I believe growth is as important for the highest achieving student as it is for the lowest achievers. Every student who comes to my class learns. I won't have it any other way because I know that every child can grow and learn.

By teaching, I can touch the future of children, my community, our state and this country. Every day I experience the look on their faces when they believe in themselves, when they realize that math is important and they understand it, when they discuss a book they were surprised to enjoy. When students come back to tell me "Thank you, you made a difference," or "You taught me what I needed to succeed," I remember why I am a teacher.

FREIDA BAKER CHARTER SCHOOLS



ASSIGNMENT

Grade 8, Language Arts
East Wake Academy Charter School

EXPERIENCE

35 years, 3 in current position
East Wake Academy Charter School, North Carolina
Teacher, Wake County Schools, North Carolina
Educational Consultant, Private Consultant
Department of Health and Human Services, Staff Development Team
Department of Health and Human Services, Assistance Team member for residential schools
Teacher, Eastern NC School for the Deaf
Sign Language Instructor, Nash Community College

EDUCATION

Barton College, BS/Deaf Education
Mount Olive College, AS

RECOGNITION

North Carolina's First Charter School Teacher of the Year, 2007-08
East Wake Academy Teacher of the Year, 2007-08
Eastern NC School for the Deaf Employee of the Year, 1991 -1992
Served two years on the State Employees' Credit Union Advisory Board

PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIPS

National Council of Teachers of English
PAL (Partners in Academic Learning)

Growing up in a small rural town, I found reading was my only escape to worlds I could only imagine. I played school with my sister and my dolls. I lived for Mondays and the opportunity to go to school and become a sponge absorbing history and literature. Knowing that I struggled with math, I enlisted my best friend to tutor me. Education was important to me early on and has shaped my life and career.

“You’ve been accepted to the fall semester at Mount Olive Junior College.” I can still remember where I was standing in the post office when I read these words. It was a bittersweet moment. I had been accepted to college, but I now faced the dreaded task of telling my mother. She was a single mother in the 60’s raising her “two little girls.” My mother expected me to graduate from high school and get a job. It was what people who had no money did. She had worked hard all of her life and was, indeed, the consummate role model for dedication and perseverance. Yet, I knew somewhere deep inside of me there was a better life through education. I applied for loans and with the help of my grandmother, completed my dream. My mother became my best supporter and cheerleader. She was so proud of my accomplishments.

Thirty-five years later, I still share my story with every student who walks through my door. I love to see the glimmer of hope in the eyes of students who don’t see the possibility of a college education because of hardships. I tell them that dreams can become reality with hard work, self-motivation, and confidence. I not only instruct my students on the Standard Course of Study but also give them daily life lessons to make passage through their school years easier. Above all, I convey these messages with a smile and a sense of humor.

Educational environments have afforded me chances to enhance my own knowledge and have helped me keep up with students of the 21st century. As a teacher, I must continue to seek new ideas for my ever-changing classroom. In this, I am a role model for other teachers as well as for my students. Because I am a life-long learner, I strive to instill the need for perpetual learning in all I meet.

Teaching renews me daily. Every morning as I arrive at school, I know that today will be different from every other day. As I walk to the building, the challenges that await me fill me with anticipation and excitement. I look forward to whatever lessons are to be taught or learned. I am a teacher from my head to my toes!

I AM A TEACHER

Howard N. Lee | Chairman, State Board of Education | 2007

I AM CHALLENGED to carry on the tradition of those who were teachers through the centuries: Aristotle, Plato, Booker T. Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Daniel Webster, Susan B. Anthony and Mary McLeod Bethune. I excite my students by asking probing questions and by encouraging them to explore new vistas and share new ideas. I champion the principles of education and am the torch that lights candles of knowledge.

I AM A TEACHER.

I AM A FIELD GENERAL fighting battles to combat enemies of education such as ignorance, apathy, fear, prejudice, peer pressure and conformity. My combat weapons are intelligence, curiosity, individuality, creativity, faith, love and the creation of a yearning for knowledge.

I AM A TEACHER.

I AM DIFFERENT PEOPLE: an actor, a doctor, a coach, a friend, a psychologist, a lawyer, but most of all I am hope for a better tomorrow. I demand excellence while pushing my students to reach perfection. I work to avoid making mistakes, because my mistakes are released into the world and could become a plague on society.

I AM A TEACHER.

I AM POWERFUL ENOUGH to breathe determination into the minds of my students. I plant seeds for new ideas which I nourish and fertilize with love, truth, curiosity and creativity so they may grow into trees of knowledge and impact the lives of generations yet unborn.

I AM A TEACHER.

I AM A MINER who digs deep into the minds of my students and discovers a mother lode of talent embedded among the rocks of self-doubt, lack of confidence, confusion and fear. I do not seek material riches, yet I enjoy great wealth. My value is based on the satisfaction that I have made a difference in the lives of my students.

I AM A TEACHER.

I AM A ROLE MODEL for my students. My vision must be so clear that my students can stand beside me and see it for themselves, and even better they can create their own visions. I help my students understand that being educated is not just remembering facts, but mastering how to think and learn even when the facts are long forgotten. Inspiring and educating my students is like lighting a fire, not just filling a bucket.

I AM A TEACHER.

I spend my days shaping the future through the lives of my students. I am a symbol of education, the true hope for a better tomorrow and a contributor to eternity. I am so blessed, and so lucky and so proud because

I AM A TEACHER.

NC TEACHERS OF THE YEAR 1970-2007

1970	JOHN MCFADDEN, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, 6th grade, "NATIONAL FINALIST"	1989	SANDRA DAVIS ROGERS, Rowan County Schools, 1st-3rd grades
1971	GENELLA ALLISON, Hickory City Schools, (Catawba Co.), English/Journalism, high school	1990	LOUIS GOTLIEB, Granville County Schools, Science, 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
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
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"
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
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
1977	TED SCOTT HENSON, Vance County Schools, Language Arts/Social Studies, 5th grade	1996	RICHARD SCOTT GRIFFIN, Gaston County Schools, 5th grade
1978	RUTH P. WATKINS, Richmond County Schools, Social Studies, high school	1997	JULIAN L. COGGINS, JR., Cabarrus County Schools, Science, high school
1979	JO ANN PAYNE NORRIS, Wake County Schools, 1st grade	1998	REBECCA O. HOYLE, Onslow County Schools, Music, grades K-5
1980	LINDA LEE, Burlington City Schools, (Alamance Co.), English, high school	1999	KIMBERLY H. HUGHES, Wake County Schools, Kindergarten
1981	PENELOPE SUE SMITH, Asheboro City Schools, (Randolph Co.), Humanities, high school	2000	LAURA BILBRO-BERRY, Beaufort County Schools, 2nd grade
1982	JAMES JEROME WILLIAMS, Burke County Schools, Music, high school	2001	CARMEN WILSON, Ashe County Schools, Mathematics, high school
1983	JEAN PAUL POWELL, Clinton City Schools, (Sampson Co.), English, 12th grade	2002	MELISSA BARTLETT, Iredell-Statesville Schools, English, high school, "NATIONAL FINALIST"
1984	PHILLIP R. DAIL, Wake County Schools, Science, high school	2003	ALLISON ORMOND, Rockingham County Schools, Language Arts/Social Studies, 7th grade
1985	PAMELA F. BREWER, Person County Schools, English/Journalism, high school	2004	LIZBETH ALFARO, Catawba County Schools, ESL, grades K-6
1986	DONNA H. OLIVER, Burlington City Schools, (Alamance Co.), Science, high school, "NATIONAL WINNER"	2005	WENDY MILLER, Craven County Schools, grades K-2
1987	CYNTHIA B. ZEGER-OSTHERHUS, Salisbury City Schools, (Rowan Co.), Mathematics, high school	2006	DIANA BEASLEY, Hickory City Schools, Biology, high school
1988	MERV SESSOMS, Haywood County Schools, English, high school	2007	JAMES BELL, Edenton-Chowan Public Schools, Language Arts, 8th grade