



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 22, 2007

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

Julie Johnson Thompson
Office: 683-4786 Cell: (501) 580-6508
Email: julie.thompson@arkansas.gov

ROGERS TEACHER WINS MILKEN NATIONAL EDUCATOR AWARD

ROGERS – When Margaret Lockhart attended the school-wide assembly at 11 a.m. Monday morning at Lingle Middle School, she thought the entire faculty and student body had turned out to see Arkansas Education Commissioner Dr. Ken James on his first stop in a tour of the state's schools. As it turned out, the assembly was for her.

Lockhart is a winner of a 2007 Milken Family Foundation National Educator Award, which includes an unrestricted financial prize of \$25,000. Up to 100 educators across the country are being recognized for their outstanding work with the awards at surprise ceremonies this fall.

In addition to Dr. James, Governor Mike Beebe and Dr. Gary Stark, senior vice president of program development with the National Institute for Excellence in Teaching, helped present the surprise award.

"The Milken National Educator Award is one of the finest recognitions available to teachers," Dr. James said. "In addition to the sizable cash award, the professional opportunities that come with this recognition are both valuable and exciting."

In addition to today's surprise event, all Milken National Educators will be spotlighted at a national gala and awards ceremony in the spring. National Educator Award winners also become members of the Milken Educator Network, a coalition of educators who provide expert resources and serve as partners to network members and policymakers as they help cultivate and expand innovative programs in their classrooms, schools and districts.

Milken Family Foundation Chairman and Co-founder Lowell Milken created these awards in 1985 to recognize, celebrate and attract the highest caliber school professionals. Since the program's inception, more than \$54 million in cash prizes have been awarded to 2,100-plus educators. In Arkansas, the Foundation has awarded \$1.5 million to 60 recipients since the program began.

"Excellence must not be the exception in our schools, but rather the norm," Lowell Milken has said.

Lockhart is an example of that excellence, Stark said today.

Lockhart, an English teacher and chairwoman of the English Department at Lingle Elementary School, has also served as the school's literacy coach. She was named Rogers' Middle School Teacher of the Year in 2005 and received her National Board Certification in 2004.

In nominating her, Mark Sparks, deputy superintendent with the Rogers School District, said of Ms. Lockhart: "Simply put, Ms. Lockhart is the best teacher I have had the pleasure to know. I say this because not only do her students achieve, but she helps them do so with the greatest of dignity."

--ADE--

The Arkansas Department of Education strives to ensure that all children in the state have access to a quality education by providing educators, administrators and staff with leadership, resources and training.