

NEWSRELEASE

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For Immediate Release

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Columbia Fund for Academic Excellence Awards

Columbia, MO—At 6:00 p.m. on Thursday, April 16, seven Columbia Public Schools educators will be recognized as this year's Columbia Fund for Academic Excellence honorees.

The honorees will be recognized at the annual Columbia Fund for Academic Excellence banquet, to be held at the Peachtree Conference Center, Columbia. Kurt Schaefer, state representative, will bring remarks to the recipients and guests in attendance.

Since its inception in the 1979-80 school year, the Columbia Fund for Academic Excellence has served to recognize more than 200 educators in the Columbia Public Schools. Each year, educators are selected from nominations submitted by parents and peers as outstanding educators. This year's honorees and their respective categories are:

**Outstanding Elementary Educator,
Grades Pre-K-2**

Jo Steitz
Ridgeway Elementary School

**Outstanding Elementary Educator,
Grades 3-5**

Dan Keenoy
Derby Ridge Elementary School

Outstanding Middle/Junior High Educator

Helen Cope Porter
Oakland Junior High School

Outstanding Senior High Educator

Dee Wasman
Hickman High School

Outstanding Educator in a Specialized Area

Arnulfo Peat
Smithton Middle School

Outstanding Beginning Teacher

Chris Hysong
West Junior High School

Outstanding Administrator

Linda Quinley
Business Services

Honorees receive a \$1,200 cash award and an engraved silver tray.

The fund began through the work of Ray and Jeanne Lewis, with an initial contribution and extensive fundraising efforts. The late Mr. Lewis was a local attorney and former Board of Education member. Mrs. Lewis is a former teacher and actively serves our community in a number of ways.

The fund has come to exemplify excellence in not only our schools, but in our community as well. Thanks to the contributions and support from individuals, businesses, and organizations each year in the school district, Columbia's best are recognized for their contributions to young people.