



MEDIA RELEASE

STATE OF TENNESSEE
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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Tennessee Names 2012 Teacher of Year

Nashville – Knox County high school teacher Byron A. Booker was named Tennessee Teacher of the Year Thursday night during the annual Teacher of the Year banquet. Jennifer Magnusson and Ann Johnson are the grand division winners from Middle and West Tennessee respectively.

“Teachers are the most important school-based factor in boosting student achievement,” said Education Commissioner Kevin Huffman. “Teaching is a tough job, and one that requires great commitment. I want to congratulate Mr. Booker, Ms. Magnusson and Ms. Johnson on the example of high-quality teaching they’ve set for our state.”

Mr. Booker has spent the last five of his seven years in education teaching English as a Second Language at Knox Central High School. Mr. Booker is known not only for his excellence inside the classroom, but his compassion and hard work in his community. He develops strong relationships with his students, and teaches them about life as he teaches them English. One of his supervisors called him “a dynamo of advocacy for his international students.”

“It is so important that we take the time to recognize our best teachers,” said Barry Olhausen, executive director of instructional leadership for the state department of education. “We have much to learn from them, and so do our students.”

Ms. Magnusson has nearly 20 years of teaching experience, 15 of them in Tennessee. She currently teaches first grade at Pleasant Hill Elementary in Cumberland County. Parents and principals describe her as energetic, kind and knowledgeable. “Mrs. Magnusson works magic in her room,” one parent said.

For 16 years, Ms. Johnson has taught agriculture to students at Munford High School in Tipton County. Her passion is service leadership, and her colleagues praise her as a conscientious professional and tireless worker. “Every student wants to be in Ms. Johnson’s class,” her principal said. “...If ‘Tennessee Teacher of the Year’ were in a dictionary, there should be a picture of Ann Johnson.”

Tennessee’s Teacher of the Year award program and banquet are sponsored by the Niswonger Foundation, a Greenville-based organization that provides student scholarships and resources for school systems in Tennessee. Each of the finalists receives a cash award courtesy of the foundation. For more information about the Niswonger Foundation, visit <http://www.niswongerfoundation.org/>.

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