



Milken Family Foundation

Milken Educator Awards

#TeachForTheStars



Ana Higuera
2009 California
Milken Educator

Since 1987, two million students have experienced that special day when media and VIPs came to their school to *honor a teacher*.

A Message from Lowell Milken

Chairman and Co-Founder, Milken Family Foundation

Three decades of work in business and philanthropy have reaffirmed time and again my belief that education is the most vital means of securing the future for our nation and our youth. Effective education equips each new generation with the knowledge and skills to make sound and independent judgments, as well as proceed to the next stage in learning and life. Education prepares us to defend, question, understand and participate in our democratic government. And when it comes to achieving prosperity in a challenging global economy, only educated individuals can achieve the productivity and flexibility that are essential in this age of the knowledge worker.

Yes, a sound education provides the opportunities to realize one's potential, which is why the future belongs to the educated.

However, education can achieve these goals only when it is part of a rigorous experience driven by talented teachers. Research, as well as personal experience, confirms that teachers are by far the most important school-related factor affecting student achievement. This truth motivated our creation of the Milken Educator Awards, which are dedicated to recognizing the essential contribution that effective teachers make to society.



“Across our nation, talented teachers pave the way for millions of students, laying the foundation for our national security and sustaining our future as a democracy.”

That education is the most important of all professions is a message the public should hear and understand. Through the very public recognition of the Milken Educator Awards, this message reaches entire communities, policymakers at every level, students who may be inspired to enter the profession, and perhaps most important, our nation's K-12 educators themselves.

Lowell Milken

Recognizing the Nobility of Teaching

The Milken Educator Awards provide public recognition and individual financial rewards of \$25,000 to elementary and secondary teachers, principals and specialists who are furthering excellence in education. Recipients are heralded in early- to mid-career for what they have achieved and for the promise of what they will accomplish. The Awards alternate each year between elementary and secondary educators.

Since first presented in 1987 to a dozen California educators, the Milken Educator Awards is now the nation's preeminent teacher recognition program, having honored more than 2,600 educators from coast to coast with over \$65 million in unrestricted cash awards.



“This is not a lifetime achievement award. This is an award to encourage you to spend your lifetime helping others achieve their aspirations. As you grow in the profession, you may move into leadership, become a superintendent, a college professor or a school board member, but remember that you have a great responsibility to the field of education.”

Rachel Willis
2010 Georgia Milken Educator

Celebrating, Elevating and Activating Outstanding Teachers

Changing the Way America Views the Education Profession

Unlike most teacher recognition programs, the Milken Educator Awards has no formal nomination or application process. Each participating state department of education appoints an independent blue ribbon committee to review candidates, who are sourced through a confidential selection process, and to recommend candidates for final approval by the Foundation.

The surprise announcements are made during all-school assemblies filled with cheering students, respected colleagues, an entourage of distinguished officials, the media—and a stunned new Milken Educator. In a moment's time, these unsung heroes gain a significant financial prize and experience the unfamiliar but well-deserved acclaim and acknowledgment they rightly merit.

Media multiplies the message of the pivotal role that talented teachers play in student achievement. Last year's Awards generated headline news from coast to coast with more than 1,400 articles heralding the inspiration and contributions of these newly discovered role models in education.



Sarah Berndt
2013 Wisconsin Milken Educator



“The honor
transforms your life.”

Daphne Whittington
2007 Illinois Milken Educator

“The Milken Family Foundation has found a special place in my heart because they really stay focused on their mission, which is to encourage educators and to improve education in the greatest democracy on the face of the earth. We thank the Milken Family Foundation because they give hope and inspiration to teachers all over the country.”



Mary Landrieu
U.S. Senator, Louisiana

Goals

Outstanding educators who continue to learn are essential to the fostering of student growth, the improvement of schools and the enhancement of the education profession. Hence, the goals of the Milken Educator Awards are:

- To honor and reward outstanding K-12 educators for the quality of their teaching, their professional leadership, their engagement with families and the community, and their potential for even greater contributions to the healthy development of children.
- To focus public attention on the importance of excellent educators.
- To encourage able, caring and creative people to choose the challenge, service and adventure of teaching as a career.
- To create national and state networks that:
 - Foster the active professional development and career enhancement of Milken Educators and other professionals.
 - Encourage Milken Educators to help shape the educational policies that influence their classrooms and schools.
 - Connect Milken Educators with the educational improvement efforts of state and federal education agencies, universities, educators, corporate partners and others.
- To engage corporate and foundation partners in assisting Milken Educators and in supporting policies that advance education.



Dr. Jane Foley
Senior Vice President,
Milken Educator Awards,
1994 Indiana Milken Educator

Enriching and Expanding Opportunities

“Milken Educators point to their Award as a pivotal professional milestone. They understand that encompassed in this recognition is the responsibility to grow as a leader in and beyond the school level. Encouraged and supported, these outstanding educators discover a renewed passion and purpose as they stretch their professional practices and policy influence to even higher levels.

“As a 1994 recipient from Indiana, I know firsthand the value I placed on colleagues I met first in my Indiana network and then across the country. To this day, these interactions continue to recharge my batteries and remind me of the importance of our work and why we chose to be educators—to be the catalyst and guide that helps all students reach their potential.”

Selection Criteria

The criteria for the selection of outstanding elementary and secondary teachers, principals and specialists as Milken Educators include all of the following:

- Exceptional educational talent as evidenced by effective instructional practices and student learning results in the classroom and school;
- Exemplary educational accomplishments beyond the classroom that provide models of excellence for the profession;
- Individuals whose contributions to education are largely unheralded yet worthy of the spotlight;
- Early- to mid-career educators who offer strong long-range potential for professional and policy leadership; and
- Engaging and inspiring presence that motivates and impacts students, colleagues and the community.



“Across America, excellent teachers help millions of children find the best in themselves every day. They give to their students and to our country by guiding young people toward healthy and successful lives. I want to thank the Milken Family Foundation for giving teachers the encouragement and the support they need. And I’d like to thank the honorees for encouraging teachers through your own great example.”

Laura Bush
Former First Lady of the United States
and Honorary Milken Educator



The Future Belongs to the Educated

“Nothing assures the success of a nation more than education; and nothing assures the quality of education more than dedicated classroom teachers instilling a love of learning and a sense of wonder in their students.”

Michael Milken
Co-Founder, Milken Family Foundation

“The Milken Family Foundation has brought opportunity knocking on my doorstep. Opportunity to make a difference.

From newspaper and television interviews, to speaking, writing and consulting opportunities, I’ve seen my circle of influence expand enormously and rapidly. I feel like my ability to create positive change in education has reached a tipping point that will only continue to expand.”

Mark Ingerson
2005 Virginia Milken Educator



Milken Educator Network

Fostering Effective Leadership and Education Reform

The visibility and reputation of a Milken Educator Award results in unlimited opportunities for educators to improve education at local, state and national levels. New recipients join the Milken Educator Network, a group of more than 2,600 distinguished professionals whose expertise serves as a valuable resource to fellow educators, legislators, school boards and others shaping the future of education.

The Milken Educator Network fosters effective leadership and education reform through its state and national engagement. Network meetings, discussion forums and online experiences promote collegiality and enhance communication among education stakeholders.



“As a Milken Educator, it is important to use your newfound attention to positively impact the profession. Many people will contact you to ask your opinion on various issues. You can provide the clear rationale for change in the profession and be a visible example to those around you.”

Kirk Brown
1999 California Milken Educator

State Networks

Across the country, Milken Educators confer, collaborate and contribute.



Celebrate

Hawaii Milken Educators

Aloha State Award recipients from years past travel from the outer islands to take part in the surprise notifications. Their collective support sheds light on the professional possibilities awaiting the newest members of the Milken Educator family. They also stage an annual event to honor their new recipient and present mini-grants to early career teachers.

Activate

Rhode Island

Milken Educators

Appointed by the Rhode Island Commissioner of Education, Michael Lobdell (RI '11) and Yanaiza Gallant (RI '12) serve on Educators in Action, a cabinet of educators who meet regularly and advise the Commissioner on policies that affect Rhode Island teachers and administrators. Topics addressed include transition to the Common Core State Standards, and use of dual language, technology, fine arts, civics, science, as well as English language arts and mathematics.



Elevate

Virginia Teachers of Promise

In 2001, the Virginia Milken Educator Network, inspired by the Milken Educator Awards, established three goals: to celebrate the teaching profession in Virginia, to elevate the status of the teaching profession, and to activate educators and educators-to-be in their state. Three years later they launched the Teachers of Promise Institute (www.teachersofpromise.com), which hosts an annual Teachers of Promise Institute featuring professional development, as well as an awards ceremony, to motivate talented teachers-in-training as they start their teaching careers. To date, almost 2,000 future teachers from the state's 37 schools of education have been named Virginia Teachers of Promise.



“We are identifying and honoring the next generation of great teachers, helping to advance their understanding of what teaching and learning really are.”

Wade Whitehead
2000 Virginia Milken Educator

Milken Educators as Ambassadors for Excellence

The Milken Educator Award is an ongoing relationship that provides recipients with additional resources and connects them in powerful networks. A dictionary defines “ambassador” as a high-ranking diplomat who represents a nation, but the word is also used to describe those without national appointment who represent their profession at the highest level. As a result of their honor, Milken Educators realize that the Award is a national appointment that provides a platform to advocate for students and the teaching profession.



**Shannon Garrison (CA '08)
and Dr. Hector Ibarra (IA '93)**

are two of the three educators on the National Assessment Governing Board that sets policy for the National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP), known as “the nation’s report card.”



**Mark Johnson
(NE '04)**

is President-Elect of the Nebraska Association of Elementary School Principals.



**Tamika Jordan
(AR '10)**

was selected to create web lessons for LearnZillion about the Common Core.



**Angela McLean
(MT '07)**

was appointed as Lieutenant Governor of Montana by her governor.



**Nancy Norman
(AK '94)**

was appointed to the Education Commission for the States by her governor.



Ambassadors in Action

The U.S. Department of Education annually names a select cadre of outstanding professionals to the yearlong Teaching Ambassador Fellowship position. Fellows, including Milken Educator Dexter Chaney II, gain an understanding of federal programs and policies while contributing their own expertise at national and regional levels.

“As a 2010 Milken Educator Award recipient, I was charged with the responsibility to be an agent for change in education. I take this opportunity seriously. The ability to remain in a school and still influence the lives of children and educators across our great country is a dream of mine. The Teaching Ambassador Fellowship allows me to fulfill this dream. In a society where many of our children are living our worst nightmares daily, I look forward to working together to create better lives for them and help them to dream.”

Dexter Chaney II
2010 Illinois Milken Educator
U.S. Department of Education Teaching Ambassador Fellow

Lowell Milken Center FOR *Unsung Heroes*



The Lowell Milken Center for Unsung Heroes (LMC) is an international nonprofit educational leader that discovers, develops and communicates the stories of Unsung Heroes who have made a profound and positive impact on the course of history. Through a unique project-based learning approach, LMC works with students and educators across diverse academic disciplines to develop history projects that highlight role models who demonstrate courage, compassion and respect. By championing Unsung Heroes, students, educators and communities discover their own power and responsibility to effect positive change in the world.

Now in its seventh year, the Lowell Milken Center for Unsung Heroes has reached over 1,000,000 students and 7,320 schools in all 50 states, with growing global reach.



“We believe that young people can reach over walls of bias that adults can never hope to, changing lives and inspiring others to repair the world.”

Norm Conard
1992 Kansas Milken Educator
LMC Executive Director

Unsung Heroes Projects

Catholic social worker Irena Sendler saved 2,500 Jewish children from the Warsaw Ghetto during World War II. Little Rock Central High School senior Kendall Reinhardt faced bullies and beatings for being kind to the nine African Americans who integrated his school at the height of the Civil Rights Movement. Unsung Heroes like these demonstrated extraordinary courage and compassion without seeking credit for it. They changed the world and influenced our lives, but their names are often not found in history books. Their stories deserve to be celebrated.

Unsung Heroes projects provide an interactive discovery process that cultivates critical-thinking, problem-solving and leadership skills among students while teaching respect and understanding. After conducting primary research and interviews to discover Unsung Heroes, students share these inspiring stories through student-driven plays, documentaries, websites and museum exhibits. Ultimately, Unsung Heroes projects help create lasting change in attitudes and behaviors within classrooms, schools and communities across the U.S. and throughout the world.

“Education strengthens our engagement with others through the lessons of history which, let us never forget, are the vital connections to a secure future.”

Lowell Milken
Founder



“My time as an LMC Fellow was the pivotal experience that changed the course of my career. Never before was I told that my teaching could change the world and that what I did as an educator matters. Now, I approach every day knowing that I can repair the world.”

Andrew Beiter
2010 LMC Fellow

Lowell Milken Center Fellows

The LMC Fellowship unites top educators from the U.S. and around the world for a prestigious, merit-based professional development program that strengthens their ability to teach a unique and exciting discovery process rooted in project-based learning. During a week in Fort Scott, Kansas, LMC Fellows gain knowledge, educational resources and ongoing support to enhance their classrooms and help students cultivate a passion for learning by creating projects that initiate positive change in the world.



Michael and Lori Milken founded the Milken Scholars Program in 1989 to honor exceptional young men and women who have demonstrated the potential to make a profound difference in the world. Scholars are chosen on the basis of distinguished academic performance, school and community service, leadership and evidence of triumphing over obstacles. A large number of these young people represent the first in their families to achieve the dream of higher education.



Milken Scholars receive financial assistance during their undergraduate careers, with Scholars attending the nation's most prestigious colleges and universities. Yet what makes the program truly unique is the vast array of resources provided to scholarship recipients, such as an annual Summit as well as opportunities for community service. Being a Milken Scholar means joining an extended family of fellow Scholars and Foundation staff, who provide a strong support system lasting over time.

The Milken Scholars Program is a joint initiative of the Milken Family Foundation and the Milken Institute.

“Whether they become doctors, research scientists, educators, entrepreneurs or diplomats, the common denominator of Milken Scholars is a genuine sense of service.”

Michael Milken
Founder, Milken Scholars

www.MilkenScholars.org



MILKEN FAMILY
FOUNDATION

Mission Statement

The Milken Family Foundation (MFF) strives to discover and advance inventive, effective ways of helping people help themselves and those around them lead productive and satisfying lives. Since 1982, MFF has pursued this mission through its work in education, medical research and public health.

In EDUCATION, MFF is committed to:

- Strengthening the profession by recognizing and rewarding outstanding educators, and by expanding their professional leadership and policy influence.
- Attracting, developing, motivating and retaining the best talent for the teaching profession.
- Stimulating creativity and productivity among young people and adults through programs that encourage learning as a lifelong process.
- Building vibrant communities by involving people of all ages in programs that contribute to their growth and well-being.

In MEDICAL RESEARCH and PUBLIC HEALTH, MFF is committed to:

- Advancing and supporting basic and applied medical research—especially in the field of cancer—to discover causes, treatments and ultimately cures.
- Improving public health awareness through education, research and practice.
- Supporting public health care programs to assure the well-being of community members of all ages.

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