

MILKEN EDUCATOR AWARDS

The future belongs
to the educated





“Since I received the Milken Educator Award, students at my school have been much more vocal about their appreciation of teachers. Students from past years and students I have never personally had in class come up to me to say congratulations and that I deserve it.

I’ve also had several students tell me that they want to be a teacher, just like me, when they grow up. It brings tears to my eyes every single time.”

AMANDA RAUPE

2016 Oklahoma Milken Educator



Education Commission of the States honored Milken Family Foundation Chairman and Co-Founder Lowell Milken with the 2017 James Bryant Conant Award for outstanding individual contributions to American education.

“Education is at the heart of nearly everything we value as individuals, as citizens and as productive human beings.”

LOWELL MILKEN

A MESSAGE FROM LOWELL MILKEN

Chairman and Co-Founder, Milken Family Foundation

In 1987, we presented the first Milken Educator Awards to one dozen exemplary California educators. Since then, the Awards have led me on a quest to schools across America to seek out and reward a true class of heroes. For whether a school is urban, suburban or rural... whether it represents the affluent or those most destitute... within the course of a school day, research confirms that nothing and no one has more impact on student learning than the quality of the teacher in the classroom.

Focusing the spotlight of recognition on such excellence inspires not only educators, but students and entire communities to new

heights of commitment and expectations—characteristics that are vital to our nation’s future leadership, prosperity and security. An effective education equips each new generation with the knowledge and skills to make sound and independent judgments, as well as to 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.

Today, more than any other time in history, no profession is more crucial than that of the talented teacher. For as the watchwords of the Milken Educator Awards proclaim, “The future belongs to the educated.”

A handwritten signature of Lowell Milken in cursive script.

Lowell Milken

Chairman and Co-Founder
Milken Family Foundation

The Milken Educator Awards

TOUCHING HEARTS AND MINDS

Since 1987, more than two million students have experienced that special day when an educator was surprised with a \$25,000 award, hailed as a celebrity, and showered with attention from students, colleagues, VIPs, media and community.

Unlike most teacher recognition programs, the Milken Educator Awards have no formal nomination or application process. Candidates are sourced through a confidential selection process and then reviewed by blue ribbon panels appointed by state departments of education. Those most exceptional are recommended for the Award, with final approval by the Milken Family 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, unrestricted financial prize of \$25,000 and experience the unfamiliar but well-deserved acclaim and acknowledgment they rightly merit.

Media multiplies the message of the pivotal role that talented educators play in student achievement. Thousands of headline news stories from coast to coast herald the inspiration and contributions of these newly discovered role models in education.



“The Milken Educator Award reminds students that teaching is like being a lawyer or being a doctor. It’s one of our society’s most respected professions and it’s something that they can consider as part of their life dreams.”

JOHN WHITE

*Louisiana State Superintendent
of Education*



“The Milken Educator Award presentation was a surprise for us all. My colleagues and students had the chance to hear my story and to learn that I was once a statistic—raised by a single parent, living in poverty—but through continued educational opportunities, I was able to transform and impact my life in a positive way. My students realized that we are more alike than different.”

TIFFANY TYNES CURRY
2016 Ohio Milken Educator

HELPING TEACHERS AND STUDENTS REACH THEIR POTENTIAL



“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 ever 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.”

DR. JANE FOLEY

1994 Indiana Milken Educator

Senior Vice President, Milken Educator Awards



“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
*President and Co-Founder,
Milken Family Foundation*



“I was quite young, having just started my seventh year of teaching, when I received this awesome, unexpected, and life-changing Award. My first response was, ‘They must think I’m doing something really great, so I’d better get started.’

I used the Award money to earn my master’s degree, which launched my career into administration. Many doors opened because of my association with the Milken Family Foundation, and I have had an amazing journey.”

DR. ANGIE BESENDORFER

*1996 Missouri Milken Educator
Chancellor, Western Governors University
Missouri (WGU)*



THE 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.
- ✓ Engaging and inspiring presence that motivates and impacts students, colleagues and the community.

“As educators, we shape the world. In order to do so, we must continuously be lifelong learners ourselves. Those who are educated will have the unique ability to continue to break down barriers, find cures, achieve great success in their profession and ultimately impact the lives of those around them. Education is truly power.”

DESI NESMITH

*2014 Connecticut Milken Educator
Chief Turnaround Officer,
Connecticut State Department of Education*



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.
- ✓ Focus public attention on the importance of excellent educators.
- ✓ Encourage able, caring and creative people to choose the challenge, service and adventure of teaching as a career.
- ✓ 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.
- ✓ Engage nonprofit, business and policy partners in assisting Milken Educators and in supporting policies that advance education.



NATIONAL MILKEN EDUCATOR FORUM

A professional highlight of receiving the Milken Educator Award takes place each spring as the newest class of Milken Educators comes together to meet and be inspired by fellow Award recipients, as well as “veteran” Milken Educators whose accomplishments continue to impress. An instant camaraderie develops as recipients share experiences, techniques and accomplishments while developing bonds that last a lifetime.

During sessions with national policymakers and education leaders, Milken Educators learn how to cultivate their impact beyond their classroom walls and to further advance educational excellence at state and national levels. Most importantly, the Forum helps Milken Educators articulate their passions and develop their “voice” into leadership roles.



“This Award has been an invitation to a challenge that I have been waiting for. It is an acknowledgment not only of what I have done, but more importantly, what I am capable of doing in the future. I recognize that I am an investment in the future of education and fully intend to produce a strong return on that investment.”

VALERIE BAALERUD
2017 Alaska Milken Educator

MILKEN EDUCATOR NETWORK

Cultivating Effective Leadership and Education Reform

The visibility and reputation of a Milken Educator Award results in unlimited opportunities for educators to improve education from local to international levels. New recipients join the Milken Educator Network, a group of more than 2,800 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, national gatherings, webinars and other experiences promote collegiality and enhance communication among education stakeholders.



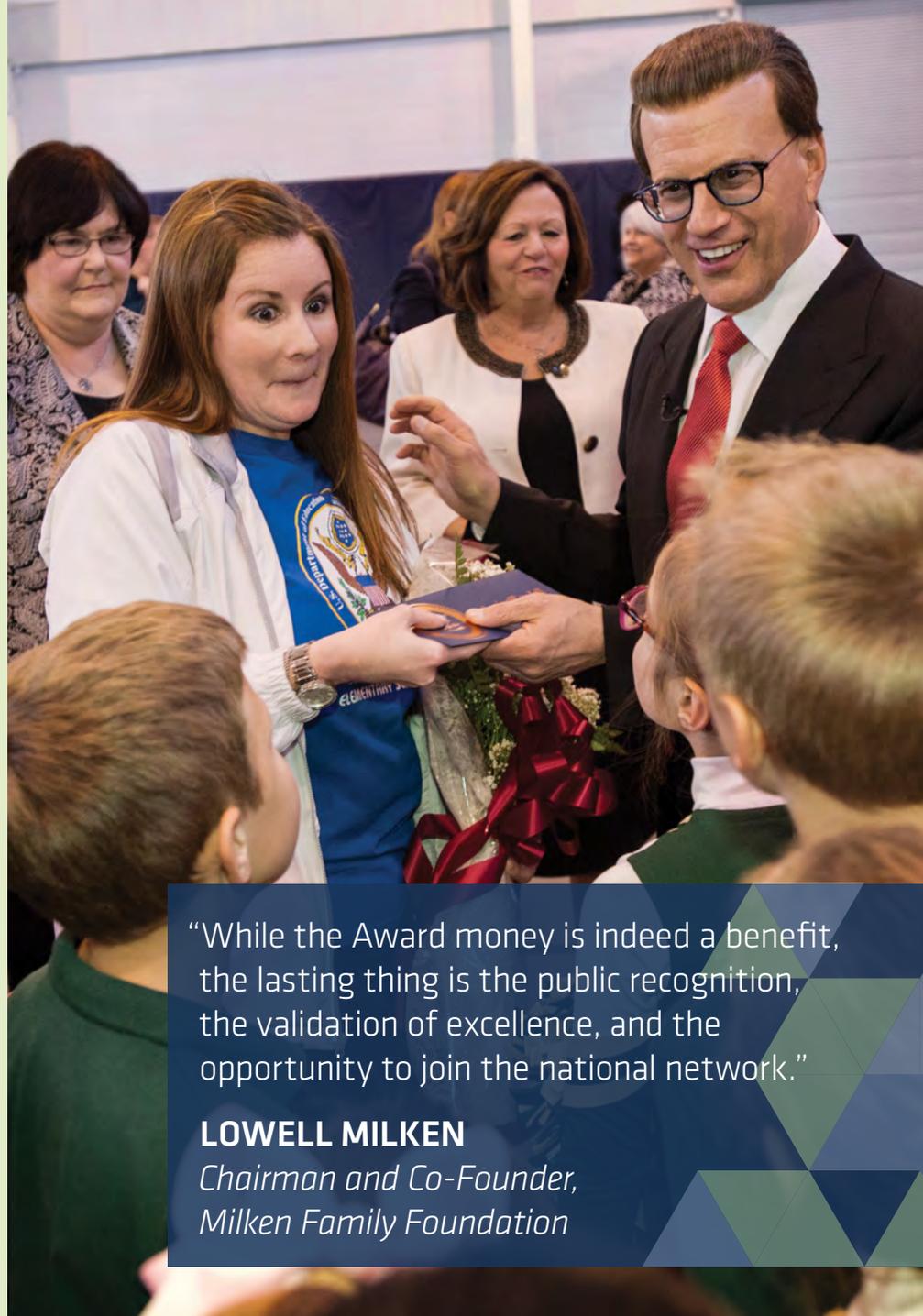
“Receiving the Milken Educator Award completely changed my life. It gave me an invitation to a world that was previously unavailable to me—a world where policy makers and educational leaders actually wanted to know what I thought about things.

The Award also provided a family of people who celebrated the success of others and who encouraged and cheered as other educators did innovative things.

The work that I do now came decades after the Award, but there’s a fairly direct line between what I gained from the Award and the opportunity I have to create positive learning experiences for a much larger group of students.”

CRAIG LINDVAHL

*1989 Illinois Milken Educator
Illinois State Board of Education*



“While the Award money is indeed a benefit, the lasting thing is the public recognition, the validation of excellence, and the opportunity to join the national network.”

LOWELL MILKEN

*Chairman and Co-Founder,
Milken Family Foundation*

STATE NETWORKS

Across the country, Milken Educators...

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 Educators family. A special highlight is an annual event to honor their new recipient and present mini-grants to early career teachers.



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 both future and practicing educators to pursue excellence in teaching. Three years later, they launched the Teachers of Promise Institute (www.teachersofpromise.com), an annual two-day event that features presentations by master educators from across the nation.

To date, over 2,100 future teachers from three dozen college and university schools of education have been recognized as Teachers of Promise, and more than 50 master educators—including over 30 Milken Educators—have served as mentors and presenters. The Institute is funded by the Teachers of Promise Foundation, a 501(c)(3) established by Wade Whitehead, VA '00, in 2010.



“We are identifying and honoring the next generation of great teachers and are working to advance their understanding of what teaching and learning really are. Truly, they are our last, best hope for navigating the astounding potential hidden in our schools.”

WADE WHITEHEAD

*2000 Virginia Milken Educator
Executive Director, Teachers of Promise Institute
President, Teachers of Promise Foundation*

ACTIVATE

MEA Why Not Us

Milken Educators accept the Award as both an honor and a responsibility, acknowledging that it provides opportunities and expectations to grow as a leader in the profession. The 2017 MEA Forum in New Orleans gave rise to an exciting initiative called the Mentor and Mentee Program (M & M). M & M provides partnerships between new and veteran Milken Educators to facilitate focused and substantive communication. Personalized support and coaching assist Milken Educators in determining how, when and where they will “Activate” to explore, prepare and serve in leadership roles at the school and beyond to positively influence practice and policy.

Pursuing the philosophy of “MEA Why Not Us,” Mentors and Mentees connect through monthly calls, webinars, and Zoom meetings to determine priorities, set goals, and outline strategies and timelines. Mentors and Mentees are thought partners with the shared qualities of passion, excellence and motivation. These deep professional relations establish unique connections to discuss professional activities, provide feedback and information, share areas of expertise, and build bridges between the wealth of resources within the Milken Educator Network.

Thanks to the Mentor & Mentee Program, Milken Educators are growing and leading at an exponential rate. By impacting teachers and students across our nation, they strengthen the legacy of our watchwords, *The Future Belongs to the Educated*.



“My Mentor has an outside and experienced perspective that has allowed me to learn and expand my understanding in a setting that is friendly and open. As I transition into a new role, she has been invaluable in guiding me through reflection and next steps. My Mentor has been both my cheerleader and my guide. I couldn’t ask for more!”

JENNIE SCHMALTZ
2016 Colorado Milken Educator

MILKEN EDUCATORS AS LEADERS

The Milken Educator Award is an ongoing relationship that provides recipients with additional resources and opens up a world of opportunities.



“I vividly remember Lowell Milken at my notification telling me that he expected great things from me. I recall him saying that this Award was being given for what I was going to do to make a positive difference in education. I took that to heart! I will remember that day forever because I suddenly had an entire ‘family’ who believed that I had the ability to make a difference. That is extremely powerful.”

SHANNON GARRISON

2008 California Milken Educator

National Assessment Governing Board, 2010–2018

While continuing in her role as a classroom teacher, Shannon was one of three educators on the National Assessment Governing Board, which sets policy for the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), also known as “the Nation’s Report Card.” She was reappointed for a second term in 2014.

Throughout the years, Milken Educators have assumed the challenges and responsibilities of leadership, frequently earning new accolades along the way. The recent achievements listed below are but a sampling of the thousands of leadership roles undertaken to strengthen education in its many forms.

STATE CHIEF SCHOOL OFFICERS

Dr. Michael Johnson, 2008 Alaska Milken Educator, Commissioner of Education and Early Development for the State of Alaska

Dr. Steven Paine, 1995 West Virginia Milken Educator, State Superintendent of Schools for the State of West Virginia

STATE LEGISLATORS

Roger Fuller, 1993 Maine Milken Educator, Maine House of Representatives, 59th District

Carol Juneau, 1993 Montana Milken Educator, Montana State Senator

Arnold Roblan, 1997 Oregon Milken Educator, Oregon State Senator, District 5

STATE DEPARTMENTS OF EDUCATION: MILKEN EDUCATORS IN KEY ROLES

Bruce DePlanty, 1999 Arizona Milken Educator, Director of Certification and Outreach, Arizona Department of Education

Desi Nesmith, 2014 Connecticut Milken Educator, Chief Turnaround Officer, Connecticut State Department of Education

Dewey Gottlieb, 2003 Hawaii Milken Educator, Mathematics Resource Teacher, Hawaii Department of Education

Aaron McKinnon, 2009 Idaho Milken Educator, Science Coordinator, Idaho State Department of Education

Christopher Kates, 2008 Indiana Milken Educator, Educator Effectiveness Specialist, Indiana Department of Education

Matt Walsh, 2003 Indiana Milken Educator, Curriculum Specialist, Indiana Department of Education

Michelle Ryan, 2015 Massachusetts Milken Educator, History and Social Science Content Support Lead, Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

Dixie Grupe, 1996 Missouri Milken Educator, Director of Social Studies, Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

Dr. Jacquelyn Sampsell, 1999 Mississippi Milken Educator, Science Content Specialist, Mississippi Department of Education

Tonya Breland, 2006 New Jersey Milken Educator, Director, Office of Professional Development, New Jersey Department of Education

Beverly Plein, 2003 New Jersey Milken Educator, Social Studies Coordinator, New Jersey Department of Education

Erika Klose, 2017 West Virginia Milken Educator, K-12 Technology Integration Coordinator for STEM and Computer Science, West Virginia Department of Education

Dr. Vaughn G. Rhudy, 2003 West Virginia Milken Educator, Executive Director, West Virginia Department of Education

STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION MEMBERS

Catherine Payne, 1995 Hawaii Milken Educator, Hawaii State Board of Education

Craig Lindvahl, 1989 Illinois Milken Educator, Illinois State Board of Education

Sue Belish, 1995 Wyoming Milken Educator, Vice Chair, Wyoming State Board of Education

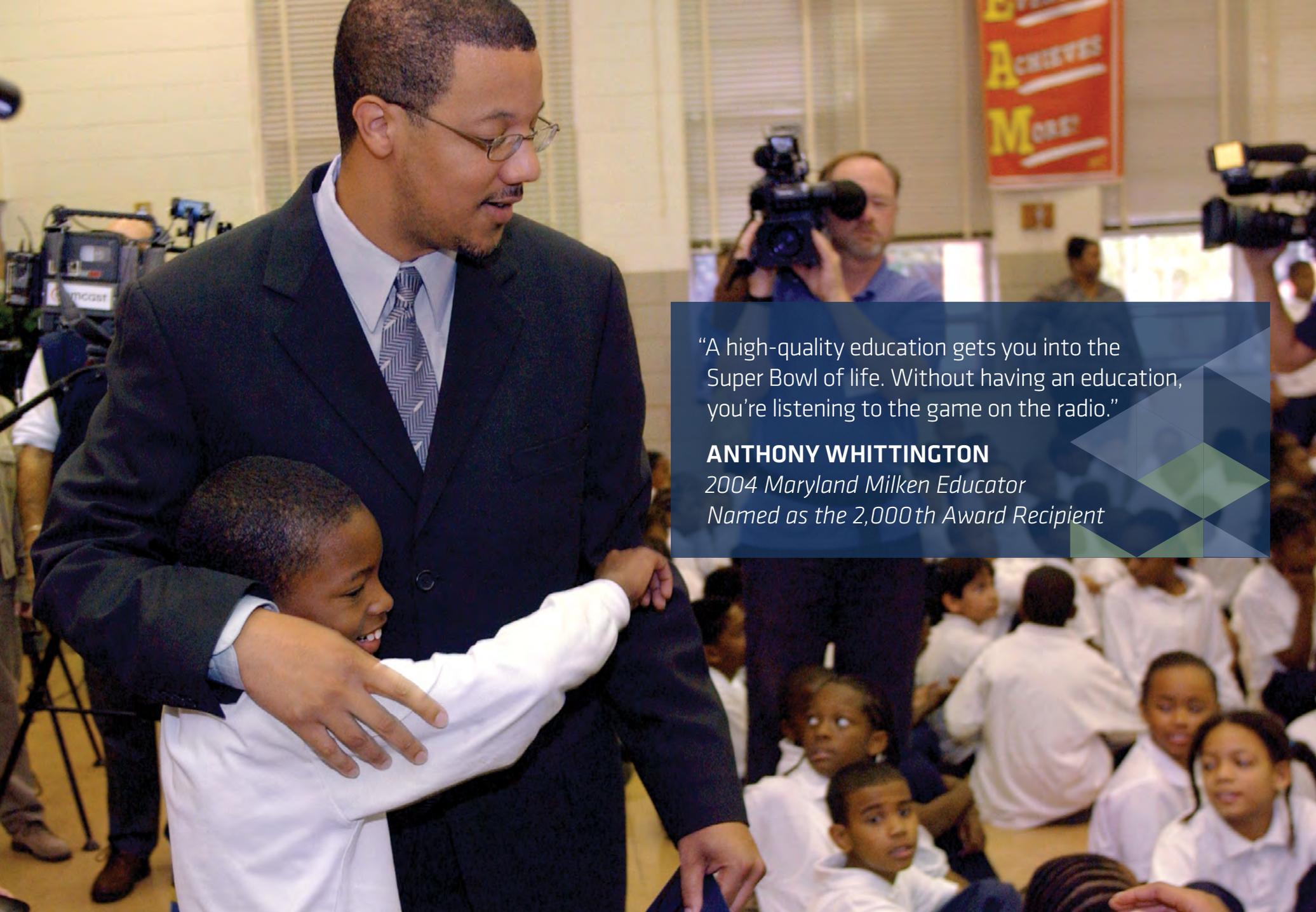
Walt Wilcox, 2007 Wyoming Milken Educator, Chair, Wyoming Board of Education



“I need to thank the Milken Family Foundation for giving me the opportunity to build my platform as an educator and a leader. Their support, and the support of other Milken Educators, has changed me. I feel so empowered and cannot wait to see what my future will bring... but I know I’m ready!”

JAYDA PUGLIESE

*2016 Pennsylvania Milken Educator
Pennsylvania Teachers Advisory
Committee*



“A high-quality education gets you into the Super Bowl of life. Without having an education, you’re listening to the game on the radio.”

ANTHONY WHITTINGTON

2004 Maryland Milken Educator

Named as the 2,000th Award Recipient

Affiliated Initiatives in Education



“Real heroes tower and guide. They are the North Star that today’s youth can look up to. But their stories need to be discovered and heard. And when we do, we have the opportunity to motivate new generations to aspire to values that are essential during the challenging times we face individually, as a nation, and as a world community.

That is the purpose of the Center for Unsung Heroes.”

LOWELL MILKEN

Founder



Unsung Hero (n):

One who created positive change in history by improving the lives of others, and has yet to be recognized for his or her actions.

Lowell Milken Center FOR *Unsung Heroes*

Discover

Create

Change

The Lowell Milken Center for Unsung Heroes (LMC) transforms classrooms and communities through student-driven projects that discover unsung heroes from history—individuals who changed the world through their courage and compassion, yet are not found in history books. Established in 2007 as a partnership between Lowell Milken and 1992 Kansas Milken Educator and history teacher Norm Conard, LMC's unique project-based learning approach integrates research, critical thinking, and creativity for students and educators across diverse cultures and academic disciplines.

LMC has reached over one million students worldwide via its online projects, educator resources, and student competitions. The Fort Scott, Kansas, headquarters has welcomed visitors from over 90 countries. The Hall of Unsung Heroes was added in 2016, featuring an inspirational, high-tech space with interactive exhibits and expanded research opportunities. LMC is an initiative of the Lowell Milken Family Foundation.

www.LowellMilkenCenter.org



Despite finally making it through the front door of the high school, the Little Rock Nine were never welcome there. As a nationwide battle raged outside the school walls, the Nine suffered relentless physical and verbal abuse from many of their white peers.



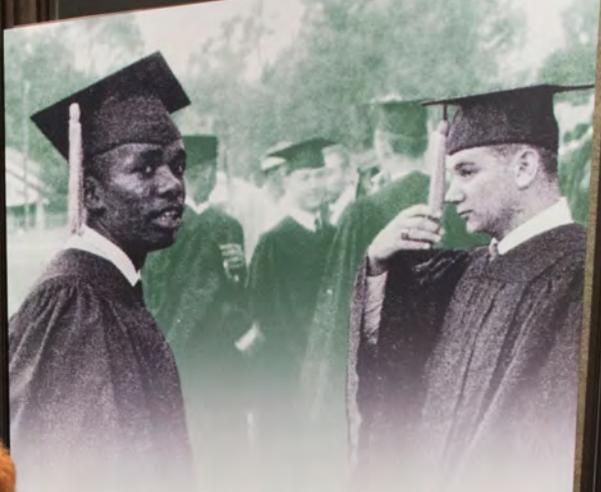
Coretta Scott King was a civil rights activist and the wife of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. She was the first African American woman to be elected to the U.S. Senate. She was also the first African American woman to be elected to the U.S. House of Representatives.

“My choice to join this group of nine was an act of bearing witness to the sacrifices of all those who have spilled their blood in the ongoing fight for equal rights in this country. My acceptance of the baton they passed along is my testimony to future generations who must finish the work started by their ancestors we share in common.”



FRIENDSHIP: AMONG THE STORM

...one of the... creating an... understanding... two white... Williams... the extreme... through... in in of...



The climate of hate and prejudice endured throughout the school year.

One day, broken glass was put in the gym shower before Ken got in. He also received bomb threats to his home and vile calls from community members degrading him. As the calls continued, Ken's parents restricted his night and weekend activities. But they always supported his courage and were proud of the example he set.

Despite the violence and threats he endured, Ken maintained his kindness toward the Little Rock Nine, making a point to speak with each of the students. He would often eat lunch with Ernest Green and Terrence Roberts, and visit with them in his room. As the year progressed, he became increasingly isolated from his white classmates. Although Ken had little to gain by standing up to his peers, he always insisted on doing the right thing despite the consequences, as true heroes do.

Ernest Green (pictured here with Ken Reinhardt) was the only Little Rock Nine member to graduate that year, as he was a senior. The principal told him that he was not recommended for graduation because there had been too many complaints against him. However, Ernie told the principal that he would walk the stage since his mother, grandfather and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. were in the audience to watch him.

On the last day... tormentor walk... and punched h... and other stud... After graduating... college, Ken los... Ernest and the...

“We did not anticipate the situation it did... I understand but I will be vitriolic”

The Hall of Unsung Heroes has welcomed visitors from over 90 countries.

LOWELL MILKEN CENTER FELLOWS

The LMC Fellowship attracts top educators from the U.S. and around the world to the historic Fort Scott headquarters. The prestigious, merit-based professional-development program focuses on a distinctive discovery process rooted in project-based learning.



“The LMC Fellowship was my most intense professional-development experience. It was on a completely different plane than anything I’ve experienced in 20 years of teaching.”

ANNA HULL

*2010 Florida Milken Educator
Lowell Milken Center Fellow*



“Through LMC Unsung Hero Projects, my students are exposed to inquiry, innovation, and the opportunity to apply 21st-century skills—for example, producing a documentary to share with the world.”

STACEY DONALDSON

Lowell Milken Center Fellow

www.LowellMilkenCenter.org

STUDENT COMPETITIONS

Illustrating its motto to “**Discover–Create–Change**”, LMC holds two annual competitions offering students a total of over \$30,000 in cash prizes.

DISCOVERY AWARD

Uncovering and then sharing the impact of an Unsung Hero takes resourcefulness, determination and passion on the part of students. In the process, young people learn invaluable research, communication and life skills. LMC’s Discovery Award offers financial prizes totaling \$17,000 to students in grades 4—12 who produce compelling Unsung Hero Projects. Entries can take the form of a documentary, performance, website or exhibit, and must include a process paper.



“History is the connective tissue between generations. It provides the moral fiber. By uncovering these stories, we hope to instill these values in our own generation and our children’s generation.”

CALEB JOHNSON

*2013 Discovery Award Grand Prize Team Member
12th grade
Prince George, Virginia*

THE ArtEffect PROJECT

DISCOVER the power to **CREATE** positive **CHANGE** through art.

The ArtEffect Project offers cash prizes totaling \$15,000 to middle and high school students from around the world who share the lives and lessons of history’s Unsung Heroes through the visual arts. Students are encouraged to showcase completed projects beyond the classroom walls in order to stimulate positive community impact and inspire social action. Winning artwork is considered for display in the LMC Hall of Unsung Heroes gallery.



ArtEffect grand-prize winner:
“The Old Man and the Cranes,”
by Liran Hu, ninth grade

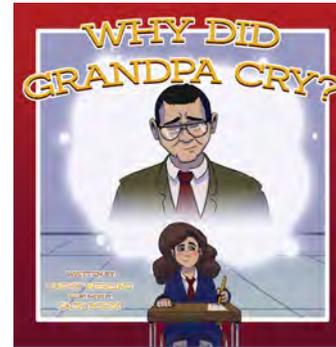
CHILDREN'S BOOK SERIES

Inspiring children and adults alike with uplifting stories of Unsung Heroes

It's never too early for elementary school students to gain an appreciation of history and character. The new LMC Unsung Heroes Children's Book Series by award-winning educator Cathy Werling do just that.

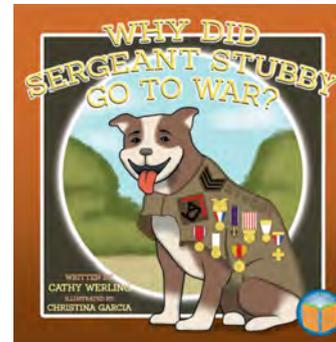
Stories of heroes like Ken Reinhardt, who stood up against racism in 1957 during the integration of Little Rock Central High School. Or Sergeant Stubby, a stray dog who captured the heart of a soldier and went on to save countless lives during World War I. Or Irena Sendler, the Catholic social worker who rescued over 2,500 Jewish children in World War II and was the catalyst for the Lowell Milken Center's creation. Their actions provide important examples for children, and help young students discover their own power and responsibility to effect positive change in the world. Each compelling story is complemented by colorful illustrations.

Books are available on the LMC website and major online booksellers.



"This is an amazing children's book to teach kids about tolerance, acceptance, compassion, and understanding. It encourages children to stand up to bullying and tormentors, and to do the right thing. Definitely a powerful, tearful read, but a great short story, even for an adult!"

PARENT



"Wonderfully written book! Written in language that explains the story so that even young audiences can understand. It is an amazing true story that deserves to be told. I highly recommend!"

FIRST-GRADE TEACHER

www.LowellMilkenCenter.org



The **Milken Scholars Program** was founded in 1989 by Lori and Michael Milken to honor exceptional young men and women based on scholarship, leadership, service, character, and triumphs over obstacles. Scholars are graduating high school seniors from New York; Washington, D.C.; and Los Angeles, who go through a rigorous nomination and interview process.

Each receives a \$10,000 scholarship, but what makes the program unique is the access to a lifetime of resources, including mentorship throughout their college careers and beyond. The annual three-day Summit in Los Angeles, with presentations by outstanding leaders from diverse fields, allows Scholars to form and renew friendships as they exchange ideas and aspirations. The Program is a joint initiative of the Milken Family Foundation and the Milken Institute.



“Milken Scholars are clearly the leaders to effect change and lead from a position of personal experience about topics such as education gaps, health-care disparities, and environmental issues.”

DR. JOELLE SIMPSON

1995 Milken Scholar

Medical Director of Emergency Preparedness

Children's National Health System, Washington, D.C.



“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

STAFF

PROFESSIONAL STAFF

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THE FUTURE BELONGS TO THE EDUCATED





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