

The 2007 Kansas Counselor of the Year was awarded at the KCA brunch on Friday, March 16 at the Wichita Marriott. Six most worthy candidates were recognized for their dedication to the profession.

Finalist:

Lyndel Adams, K-12 counselor at Lucas-Luray Schools, makes the Energizer Bunny look like he is standing still. She is organized and efficient and took great time to write and implement the school counseling curriculum for her district. She is never satisfied because there are still kids out there who need to be reached. A role model for school counselors everywhere, Lyndel takes “each and every student under her wing and cares for them as if they were her own.” Lyndel represents the Northwest Region.

Angie Gerdes, Olathe Northwest High School, was one of three counselors chosen to open a cutting edge concept in 21st century high school. She is a counselor who is her students’ strongest advocate, going out of her way to make sure that things are taken care of quickly and competently with minimal fuss. Angie has used test drive data to drive and improve classroom instruction and worked with the four academic areas to modify classroom practices. Angie has also co-authored the “Pyramid of Intervention” and is leader of the Student Improvement Team. Angie was nominated by the Northeast Region.

Sue Poore, Heatherstone Elementary – Olathe, is described as a lifelong learner who is well informed, intelligent and innovative with a strong dedication to the profession. Her programs include Peer Mediation, Character Education, After School club, Parenting classes, “Happy Bear” and “Kindness is Contagious....Catch It” She is described as being a wonderful listener, supporter, team player and one who embraces each day with optimism. Sue was recognized at the Kansas School Counselor Association recipient and therefore a finalist for KCA Counselor of the Year.

Marilea Rittenhouse, Jetmore, created her very own counseling program to meet the needs of her students. She has the ability to initiate and to complete tasks that seem unimaginable to many of her peers. Marilea is described as being the cornerstone of USD 227, who has a thirst for knowledge and is totally committed to her work, dedicated to the profession as well as service oriented. Marilea represents the Southwest Region.

Judy White, Southeast of Saline High School – Gypsum, is often described as “superwoman” and a “life-changer.” She is a mentor, who sees potential and does an amazing job at bringing out the best and looking for the best. Judy has been instrumental in various community service projects which include CARE, Big Brothers/Big Sisters school program, Friends of Rachel. Judy was nominated by the North Central Region.

Counselor of the Year:

Ruth Hitchcock, Associate Professor Wichita State University, has been an influence and impact on the field of counseling which stretches over the years. She remains one of the most dedicated, hard-working, caring, innovating, passionate counselor educators in our state. Described like “an underground river that nourishes the growth above ground, Ruth’s assuming wisdom and support promotes professional and personal growth in a broad range of those in the counseling field.” As a teacher, advisor and mentor, Ruth allows her students to progress and develop without restrictions, providing meaningful and thought provoking projects. The list could go on!! Ruth represents the South Central Region.

Hall of Fame:

Paulette Brunskill, K-12 Counselor Chetopa –St. Paul, she has been a steadfast force and an anchor to Kansas school counseling in her service to the professions as well as her commitment to students. She has served as a state coordinator for the High Skills project, member of the Kansas ACT council, President of the southeast region KCA, KSCA, KASGW and a charter member of the KADAA. Paulette is described as gifted, focused, wise, ethical, respected, appreciated, cooperative and decisive. Combine these qualities with her willingness to continue to learn, an educational philosophy based on years experience and a tremendous work ethic, you have a special person who is now added to the list of Hall of Fame members.

Each of these individuals is an inspiration to others. Congratulations to everyone on the prestigious honors bestowed to you!!