

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Patricia Laney Named 2007 DoDEA Teacher of the Year

ARLINGTON, VIRGINIA – Patricia A. Laney is the 2007 Department of Defense Education Activity's Teacher of the Year.

Mrs. Laney, a 23-year teaching veteran, is a 4th grade teacher at Murray Elementary School in Fort Bragg, NC. She has also taught at Department of Defense Schools in Bad Kreuznach, Germany, Irwin Middle School at Fort Bragg, and at Terrance Hills Elementary School in El Paso, TX. She earned her Bachelor of Science Degree in Elementary Education from the State University of New York at Geneseo, Geneseo, NY, and a Masters Degree in Education from Fayetteville State University in Fayetteville, NC.

The DoDEA Teacher of the Year Program recognizes and promotes excellence in education. Teachers may be nominated by a peer, administrator, parent, student, or community member. Nominees complete an application packet and submit it to a selection panel at a DoDEA District Office where one applicant is chosen as the District Teacher of the Year. A second panel assembled at DoDEA Headquarters then selects the DoDEA Teacher of the Year from the candidates submitted from each district. The DoDEA Teacher competes for the title of National Teacher of the Year.

The Teacher of the Year Program encourages teachers to take an active part in educational leadership. As outstanding educators, those selected perform a variety of roles. They promote the teaching profession and work with school officials to enhance the quality of teaching and the education of DoDEA students.

In selecting Mrs. Laney, the panel cited her leadership of the School Improvement Team at Murray Elementary. Dr. Susan D. Walters, Mrs. Laney's former building principal for eight years said, "Pat believes in total school improvement and is one of the first to volunteer for whatever needs to be done in the building to enhance learning and engage children in the school community."

Mrs. Laney also volunteered to establish and lead the Young Astronauts Club, an after-school program for students who want to learn about space and build and launch rockets. Her dedication and commitment to this program supports her belief in the importance of connecting with students in meaningful ways that influence the kinds of people they want to become.

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“I have always believed that to be a successful teacher, one must make personal connections with students. Many of our children do not have family living close to them, and they have parents who may be deployed for long periods of time. Making those connections is even more important for our students,” said Laney.

Laney is not only involved in her school, but in her community as well. With more than 20 years experience as an Army spouse, she knows the importance of community and the stability it provides to military families. “I know from personal experience that my students have many wonderful opportunities available to them,” said Laney. “However, very often they do not have the close connection with family that lives hundreds and thousands of miles away. I make a point of connecting with my students outside the classroom by regularly attending sporting events, concerts, recitals and all other special activities in which my present and former students are involved.”

This sense of community serves as the basis for Laney’s message if she is selected as the 2007 National Teacher of the Year. If chosen for that award, she would serve as a spokesperson and representative for the entire teaching profession. According to Laney, “It takes the entire school, families and community to make highest student achievement a reality. All of us working together can develop a sense of caring that is real, a sense of personal responsibility and self-discipline that is necessary for children to be successful students and citizens of the world.”

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