



Katy Thomason Is 2018 PCPS District Teacher of the Year

Liberty Elementary school teacher, Katy Thomason has been selected as the Ponca City Public Schools' 2018 District Teacher of the Year. The announcement was made at the annual Teacher of the Year Banquet held on February 21 at the high school commons.

With over 200 people in attendance, this year's banquet, catered by Ponca City Public Schools' Campus Catering, was one of the largest crowds ever to attend. The theme for this year's event was "We Treasure Our Teachers." The tables and room were decorated with timeless treasures.

The evening started with an invocation by Pastor Lynn Schuyler, Associate Pastor at Central Baptist Church. Superintendent Dr. David Pennington gave the welcome and thanked everyone who helped with the banquet. He gave a special thanks to the Campus Mart Catering staff for the meal, the high school National Honor Society students for serving, and all the Central Office personnel responsible for the planning and preparations for the banquet. He introduced Susan Rhoads, District Professional Development/Teacher of the Year Committee, who explained the Teacher of the Year selection process.

Bret Smith, Executive Director of Operations, introduced the 2017 Teacher of the Year Lindsay Burkhalter who talked about her year as District Teacher of the Year. Ms. Keri Bartley of Ponca City Friends of Education spoke and presented a gift basket to Lindsay.

A media presentation using the banquet theme was shown highlighting each TOY candidate, produced by Chris Adams, Broadcast Engineer and Mary Ladd, District Public Information Coordinator.

Shelley Arrott, Executive Director of Human Resources/TLE recognized previous TOY candidates and introduced this year's nominees. As each candidate was introduced, student comments specifically written for their TOY candidate were read. According to attendees, these student comments are always one of the highlights of the banquet.

For Release February 21, 2017

Each candidate was presented a beautiful bronze statue of a student holding up a star, along with certificate from the district and \$500 in Chamber bucks from the Ponca City Public School Foundation. Assisting with the presentations were Dr. David Pennington, Judy Throop (Board President), Barbara Cusick (Executive Director of Curriculum) and Teri Vogele (Associate Director of Curriculum).

Dr. Pennington and Shelley Arrott made the big announcement of the new 2018 District Teacher of the Year – Drum roll please, and the big announcement was made – Katy Thomason! The crowd applauded and gave her a standing ovation as she made her way to the podium to give her acceptance speech.

Dr. Pennington and Shelley Arrott presented Katy with the golden apple and a large gift bag of gifts from local businesses and individuals. Patsy Williams presented her with a \$500 check from the Ponca City School Foundation, Inc., and Dr. Daniel Fenn from the Newkirk Dental Center also presented her with a \$500 check. Dr. Pennington read a special Proclamation from the State of Oklahoma written by Senator Eddie Fields and State Representative Steve Vaughan. Other donors included A+ Printing, KLVV and many other local businesses.

Dr. Pennington made the closing remarks thanking everyone for coming and emphasizing how thankful he is for our Ponca City teachers. He stated, "Teaching today is harder than ever with all the demands from the state and federal government. Even though Oklahoma teachers are working with higher class sizes and lower salaries, our teachers are still doing what is best for children. Our teachers make a difference in their student's lives every day. We have to do more to treasure our teachers, and now is the time. If we truly treasure teachers, we will contact our elected officials and encourage them to find solutions to the teacher shortage and issues facing education. Nothing will change until everyone is committed to this effort."

