



P R E S E N T S T H E TEACHER OF THE MONTH



Archietta James Literacy teacher takes profession beyond classroom for all-around student success

“Over the 30 years I’ve taught, I have

been a doctor, a nurse, a psychologist, a preacher, a referee, an actor, counselor and a step-in mother to my students,” says Archietta Burch James, literacy teacher at Ida Handley Elementary School and this month’s Garland ISD Teacher of the Month.

As a previous winner of both Garland ISD Teacher of the Year and her school’s Teacher of the Month, Mrs. James has achieved a great deal of recognition from her peers. However, influencing the lives of her students is her greatest reward, she says.

Following in the footsteps of her grandmother and great-aunt, Mrs. James became a teacher. Her first experience in leading students was as a Bible verse teacher at her church in Langston, Okla. When her students won a district competition, she knew she had found her calling. She has heeded that calling for 33 years, as an elementary school teacher and a literacy specialist.

Just as she followed the examples set for her, Mrs. James says she has influenced others to follow her example. She recounts the story of a struggling third-grade student she had worked with, tutoring him after school and encouraging him to work hard and follow his dreams. She says he invited her to attend his graduation from a master’s program in counseling. He began his own teaching career the following fall.

As a teaching mentor, Mrs. James has influenced first-year teachers by sharing with them her knowledge about teaching strategies, classroom management and discipline methods. She says she has the opportunity to observe those teachers occasionally and is gratified to see how her instruction has helped them succeed in their own classrooms.

In her role as literacy specialist, Mrs. James says she is positioned to help students succeed in all facets of their education, and set them on the road to success as they move through their education.

“As the literacy teacher at Handley, I feel my job is not only rewarding – it is a valuable necessity for schools today, especially with the student drop-out rate rising at a rapid pace. I am helping close the gap for students that are behind and struggling academically.”

Mrs. James earned her teaching certification at Langston University in Langston, Okla. After marrying, she and her husband, Clarence, moved several times to accommodate his career as a college-level football coach, including stops in Austin where he was on the coaching staff at the University of Texas at Austin, and most recently at Southern Methodist University.

Handley Principal Loyed Jones says Mrs. James’ contributions are recognized by her peers throughout the school.

“Handley teachers chose her as our Teacher of the Year 2006-2007, and she has lived up to the title. I depend on Archietta to help some of our students with the greatest need: good basic reading instruction. My teachers work very hard helping students with gaps in their learning; however, sometimes there are children who have gaps that extend beyond the norm.

“I consider Mrs. James to be one of our ‘cornerstone’ staff members who has a significant impact on the school atmosphere,” Mr. Jones says.

Handley Elementary is fortunate to have a staff member as dedicated and gifted as Archietta James, this month’s deserving recipient of the Garland ISD Teacher of the Month award.



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