



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



Lana Hawkins received 36 roses from her husband and daughter in honor of her 36 years as a teacher.

Lana Hawkins

Cooper Elementary School in Garland

Teacher Lana Hawkins retires after 36 years

Garland's Teacher of the Month, Lana Hawkins, has spent nearly four decades making a difference in the lives of young children. At the end of this school year, she says goodbye to that career, but it won't be a final farewell to education.

Ms. Hawkins has taught second grade at Cooper Elementary School in Garland for 32 years. But the long-time teacher said she will find a variety of things to occupy her time, so there's no chance she'll be bored.

"After I retire at the end of the year, I plan to do some traveling and go on a cruise," she said. "But I will still volunteer at the school and substitute for Garland."

She grew up in Camden, Ark., and received her bachelor's degree in education at Southern Arkansas University. She later earned her master's degree in elementary education, with certification in supervision, from Stephen F. Austin University.

"I started out in college and didn't know what I wanted to do," she said. "My mom suggested teaching, and I think she saw it in me long before I did."

Ms. Hawkins and her husband, Fred, settled in Dallas in 1969, where she began teaching in Oak Cliff. After four years, they decided to move to Garland, where they found a nice neighborhood to call home and raise a family.

She started teaching at Cooper

Elementary in 1972. Ms. Hawkins said she has enjoyed teaching younger elementary school children.

"I like the children in the second and third grades because they can understand my dry wit. They're also independent and their personalities really come out," Ms. Hawkins said.

"And I've worked with wonderful people here at Cooper," she adds.

With such a long teaching career, Ms. Hawkins said she has seen just about everything possible in education, including all its ups and downs. But she has no regrets.

"I've had a lot of wonderful experiences, and I've enjoyed seeing the kids come back and keep in touch through the years," she said. "It's different every day. No day is ever the same."

One thing that will keep Ms. Hawkins coming back is that her daughter, Rachel, teaches second grade at Cooper Elementary. Rachel, who even attended Cooper, will keep the teaching tradition going, she said.

"I promised to volunteer for her class," Ms. Hawkins said.

Although she'll have more time for her hobbies and interests, such as reading, cooking and traveling, she will maintain her career roots in Garland. Because once you're a teacher, you're always a teacher.

"If I had it to do all over again, this is exactly what I'd do," she said.



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