



Thursday, May 2, 2013

**EMBARGOED UNTIL 9PM**

## **Foundation Names Lester MCSD Teacher of the Year**

The Muscogee Educational Excellence Foundation (MEEF) named Kim Lester, 5<sup>th</sup> grade English Language Arts, Writing and Reading teacher at Britt David Magnet Academy, the 2013 MCSD Teacher of the Year. The award was given during the Foundation's Teacher of the Year Gala at the Columbus Convention and Trade Center on Thursday, May 2.

Lester was chosen from 59 honorees representing each school in the Muscogee County School District. Lester said in her interview, "My teaching philosophy is rooted in the fact that I love my students and I want them to know it. They are my kids from the moment they walk into our classroom until the day I take my last breath."

MEEF Chairman, Lee Brantley, presented this year's MCSD TOTY by relaying comments from the TOTY Selection Committee, "This teacher's enthusiasm and passion for the kids and for their life-long learning was contagious. Every element in the room was encouraging and engaging for the student and all who entered. She demonstrated multiple techniques, allowing her students to explore different ways of learning. She made learning personal."

Each school honoree received \$100, the Top Ten honorees received \$500, the Top Three received \$1,000 and Lester received \$5,000 and will be featured on a billboard.

MEEF is dedicated to fostering excellence in education in the MCSD. The Foundation's main programs are the Teacher of the Year Gala, the Harvard Professional Development Program and the Teacher grant program. In its seventeen-year history, the Foundation has awarded **over \$1,500,000** to honor and recognize outstanding and innovative teachers in the Muscogee County School District.

Brantley added, "We are especially grateful for our generous sponsors who enable MEEF to reward and recognize excellent teachers including W. C. Bradley Company; Aflac; CB&T; Synovus; St. Francis Hospital; TSYS; Columbus Regional Healthcare System; Georgia Power Foundation; Hatcher Stubbs Land Hollis & Rothschild; Alexander Electric; Bell Media; Certus Bank; Columbus Technical College Foundation; Columbus Water Works; Hecht Burdeshaw Architects; Howell Rusk Dodson Architects; Hughston Clinic; MeadWestvaco; Neal Kendust & Murray; Schuster Enterprises; Spud Bowen & Associates; The Honorable Art Smith; TIC Federal Credit Union; Judy Thomas; and Virtucom."

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*Media, Marketing ... and More! Inc. serves as the administrator for the Muscogee Educational Excellence Foundation. For more information, please call Helena Coates at 706-660-9702 or 706-570-6667(c).*



## **2013 MCSD Teacher of the Year**

### **Kim Lester**

**Britt David Magnet Academy**

The Muscogee Educational Excellence Foundation (MEEF) selected Kim Lester of Britt David Magnet Academy as the 2013 MCSD Teacher of the Year at a gala honoring 59 Teacher of the Year (TOTY) honorees. Lester was chosen the most outstanding representative of the teaching faculty of MCSD.

Muscogee Educational Excellence Foundation Board member and Selection Committee Chair Janet Davis, said, “The classroom had an air of excitement the minute we walked into the room. This teacher created a safe environment where creativity and curiosity are welcome. While observing this teacher, we could feel her energy and passion for her work. Everyone in the room was having fun and more importantly, the students were learning. They were fully engaged with all their senses.”

#### **Teaching:**

Lester has been teaching English Language Arts, Writing, Reading and Social Studies at Britt David Magnet Academy since 2010. Prior to Britt David, she also taught at Downtown Elementary and South Columbus Elementary. Prior to her teaching career, Lester spent four years as a newspaper journalist.

#### **Education:**

Bachelor of Arts in Journalism, 1991

Master of Early Childhood Education, 1997

Specialist in Reading, 2012 – Columbus State University

Currently enrolled in the Doctor of Education program – Columbus State University

*For more information, an interview or to book a speaking engagement with Kim Lester, please call Helena Coates at 706-660-9702 or 706-570-6667 (c).*



March 28, 2013

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For Immediate Release

## **Top Three Honorees Selected in MEEF Teacher of the Year Program**

The Muscogee Educational Excellence Foundation (MEEF) announced the Top Three honorees for the Muscogee County School District Teacher of the Year (TOTY) today, March 28, 2013. The Top Three were selected after interviews with the Top Ten finalists – each named the Teacher of the Year for their respective schools. Top Three Honorees are:

Brenda Howell	<i>Hardaway High, 9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade – Environmental Science, Forensic Science, IB Environmental</i>
Ellen Lane	<i>Gentian Elementary – 5th grade</i>
Kim Lester	<i>Britt David Magnet Academy, 5th grade</i>

MEEF recognizes teachers who have dedicated themselves to excellence in the classroom. The Top Three will have an on-site classroom observation by the MEEF Selection Committee, which is made up of business and educational leaders in Columbus. After the observations at their respective schools, the Selection Committee will select the 2013 MCSD Teacher of the Year. The announcement for the 2013 Teacher of the Year will be announced at the TOTY Gala on Thursday, May 2<sup>nd</sup> at the Trade Center to an expected crowd of 800 supporters of excellence in education.

The gala is open to the public and tickets to the Gala can be purchased at Springer Box Office April 15 - 26 for \$35 each.

The Selection Committee members include MEEF Board members, community leaders and former MCSD Teachers of the Year. Chair is Janet Davis - TIC Federal Credit Union; Travis Chambers - ERA Elite Ventures Realty; Tom Titus – Community Leader; Dr. Tom Hackett – CSU; Debbie Caballero - Girl Scouts and Partners in Education; Colby Cardin - CB&T; former MCSD TOTYs Debra Everett – Spencer; Christine Powell – Northside and Paul Hampton – Columbus High.

MEEF is a non-profit organization dedicated to fostering educational excellence by focusing on individual teachers who are innovative and exceptionally effective in their profession in the Muscogee County School district. The Foundation has awarded over \$1,500,000 to innovative teachers in MCSD, through financial incentives in the TOTY program, the MEEF Grant program and the MEEF Endowment Fund, the STEM-T3 program and the Harvard Graduate School project.

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*Please contact Marquette McKnight 706-660-9702 for more information.*