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3 local educators given WKU award

By Bobbie Hayse Messenger-Inquirer
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Teacher Cami Fulkerson, right, of Newton Parrish Elementary School, is awarded the Distinguished Educator Award on Monday during a special ceremony at the school by Corinne Murphy, dean of the College of Education and Behavioral Sciences at Western Kentucky University.

Photo by Alan Warren, Messenger-Inquirer | awarren@messenger-inquirer.com



Terri Zborowski

Cami Fulkerson was shocked when she walked into the Newton Parrish Elementary School gymnasium Monday morning and was surprised with a pep rally created in her honor.

Fulkerson, NPES reading intervention teacher, is one of three local teachers who was given distinguished educator awards by the Western Kentucky University College of Education and Behavioral Sciences.

The other teachers were Holly Johnson, Apollo High School PE teacher, and Terri Zborowski, Burns Middle School special education teacher. They were each presented with the award during special ceremonies at their respective schools.

This is the third year WKU has hosted the awards program, which has been given to select teachers in the spring. Educators are nominated for the award by their peers and colleagues for being examples of excellence for student teachers and those who are considering entering the field.



Holly Johnson

There are 10 categories in which educators are nominated. Winners receive a cash prize and a commemorative plaque, and are honored in the Louie B. Nunn Kentucky Teacher Hall of Fame on display at WKU's College of Education and Behavioral Sciences, according to the university.

"I had no idea they were doing this," Fulkerson said. "I am just very grateful for my principal for nominating me, and grateful for my colleagues who are so easy to work with. I teach at a wonderful school, and they make anything I do easier."

Throughout her career in education, Fulkerson said she has tried to be supportive of other teachers. Specifically, the last 19 years of her career she has worked directly with other teachers to help them hone their craft.

"I couldn't do this without excellent people around me," she said. "I am very humbled by this because I get to come to school and do something I love, and I have been really lucky in my career to work with wonderful educators."

Jennifer Crume recommended Johnson for the WKU Distinguished Educator Award in Physical Education. She said Johnson serves as a mentor to novice teachers, and shares resources and strategies for student engagement.

Crume, DCPS director of secondary schools, also said Johnson has created a safe space for students to release stress, and has shared with them strategies for coping with life challenges.

"Holly gets to know the students in her class individually, creating relationships with them," Crume said in her nomination letter. "Her whole-child teaching approach allows her to see what each student may need as additional support for success in school."

Zane Ferguson, BMS principal, nominated Zborowski for the WKU Distinguished Educator Award in Special Education. He said she is a "model special education teacher and advocate."

"As the instructional leader in a classroom of students whose disabilities range from moderate to severe, Mrs. Zborowski is constantly looking for ways to serve and support her students, who represent a wide range of academic abilities," Ferguson said. "She adapts all of her lessons to meet the needs of each child."

He also said she teaches her instructional assistant to teach mini-lessons for each student. She also works with other teachers to provide social and academic experiences in other classes, as well as continually researching and exploring new ways to reach her students.

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