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News Release

Highlands Ranch High School Deaf and Hard of Hearing Instructor Susan Elliott Named 2009 Colorado Teacher of the Year

All great teachers have passion, but teacher Susan Elliott embodies it.

In her acceptance speech as 2009 Colorado Teacher of the Year, Elliott said, "I believe in my students. I know that anything is possible for them."

Elliott's passion as a deaf and hard of hearing instructor for ninth through twelfth grade English and Social Studies students at Highlands Ranch High School was honored Tuesday (Nov. 11) when she was named 2009 Colorado Teacher of the Year by the Colorado Department of Education.

Elliott believes that teaching is an art that holds the power to shape the future of America and every student deserves a great teacher who is committed to continuous improvement. Susan says she feels richly rewarded when students are so absorbed in learning that they express disappointment when the bell rings.

"The environment she has built here is amazing," said Jerry Goings, principal of Highlands Ranch High School. "Susan truly believes all students have a chance to find their own success."

The Teacher of the Year is chosen by a seven-member committee from a list of nominees of exemplary classroom teachers.

The recipient becomes the Colorado nominee for National Teacher of the Year honors and serves as a teaching ambassador to communities and organizations around the state and nation. The Colorado Teacher of the Year represents the entire teaching profession in Colorado.

The Teacher of the Year selection process includes a written application, letters of recommendation, classroom visits, endorsements from the teacher's district and personal interviews.

Nominees are judged on their ability to inspire students of all backgrounds and abilities. They are expected to play an active role in the community and to have earned the respect and admiration of students, parents and colleagues.

Other finalists for the 2009 Colorado Teacher of the Year were Lynn Jackson, a fourth grade teacher at Eldorado K-8 in Superior and Nicholas Kawalec, a reading teacher at Scott Carpenter Middle School in Denver.

The winner was announced during an evening reception to at the Arvada Center for the Arts and Humanities (6901 Wadsworth Blvd.).

The Colorado Department of Education and the Colorado State Board of Education sponsor the program and are supported by Colorado Masons, The Arvada Center for the Arts and Humanities, SMARTer Kids Foundation and SMART Technologies Inc.

Photos of the 2009 Colorado Teacher of the Year banquet are available by contacting the CDE communications office at the numbers listed below.

For more information, contact Mark Stevens, 303-866-3898, or Megan McDermott, 303-866-2334, in the CDE Office of Communications. To sign up for the CDE e-mail news service, please visit <http://www.cde.state.co.us/Communications/index.html>.

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