Chasing Rainbows Award

Dolly Parton's Chasing Rainbows Award is a partnership between The National Network of State Teachers of the Year and The Dollywood Foundation.
NATIONAL NETWORK OF STATE TEACHERS OF THE YEAR

The National Network of State Teachers of the Year (NISTOY) is a professional service organization made up of outstanding teachers who represent excellence in American education. What We Stand For: Mission Statement: NISTOY seeks to improve student learning across the nation by defining, sharing, and advocating for effective teaching practices and policies. Vision Statement: NISTOY’s vision is for all students to learn from highly effective teachers. Each member has been previously selected as a state or U.S. protégé/representative recipient of a Council of Chief State School Officers award as Teacher of the Year. Organized in 1988, and committed to the education of America’s youth, NISTOY endeavors to do the following:

- Assume a leadership role in the promotion of educational excellence.
- Encourage quality education for each individual through quality teaching.
- Recognize the excellence and commitment of professional educators.
- Promote a positive image of education through public awareness.
- Be actively involved in the recruitment of dedicated people into the field of teaching.
- Stimulate the professional growth of NISTOY members and encourage their participation in a variety of educational activities.

OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

This service organization networks with national and state professional education organizations, universities, school districts, and civic groups through:

- Contributing to educational publications.
- Presenting workshops, courses, speeches, and in-service programs.
- Participating in national surveys and research projects related to educational issues.
- Sponsoring a national scholarship program for students pursuing undergraduate or graduate degrees in education.
- Furthering the teaching and strengthening student learning by focusing on three critical areas: Policy, Practice, and Advocacy.

ANNUAL CONFERENCE

At the annual Conference, NISTOY members convene to:

- Encourage and support excellence in teaching.
- Collectively strive for the betterment of education.
- Develop strategies for recognizing the importance of teachers and teaching.
- Hear reports on member educational activities across America.
- Share their programs with college education majors and local teachers.
- Investigate ways of placing TOY’s skills at the service of their respective communities, hear speakers of state and national reputation address important issues in education.
- Elect national NISTOY officers.
- Conduct the general business of the organization.
- Utilize committees to guide organizational projects.

THE TEACHER OF THE YEAR AWARDS

The Teacher of the Year (TOY) Award Program was initiated in 1932 by President Dwight D. Eisenhower in order to bring recognition to the importance of teachers as nurturers of the “American Dream.” His intention to honor all teachers by the selection of a representative teacher from each state would find completion in the yearly choice of a national teacher of the year. Through an organized and varied selection process involving classroom teachers, school administrators, state officials, students, parents, and business representatives, each state and U.S. protégé/representative nominates its own Teacher of the Year. This name is then submitted to a national committee where the process is repeated and the final selection is made of the National Teacher of the Year. Care is taken at all levels to ensure that the teacher selected at the local, state, and national level is not labeled “the best” but simply identified as a representative of all dedicated teachers. The TOY program is co-sponsored by the Council of Chief State School Officers and Subaskr, Incorpor. For over sixty years, the Council of Chief State School Officers (COSSE) has coordinated the National Teacher of the Year Program working with the U.S. States, Territories, the District of Columbia, and the Department of Defense Education Agency.

DOLLY’S STORY: “CHASING RAINBOWS”

“Chasing Rainbows” definitively sums up Dolly’s no story as she went from rags to riches. She was born January 19, 1946 in a one-room cabin on the banks of the Little River in the Great Smoky Mountains of East Tennessee. She grew up poor—very poor. In fact, her daddy couldn’t afford to pay the doctor for delivering her, so he gave her a sack of cornmeal. Being poor was something Dolly was neither proud nor ashamed of. Although her young life was tough, growing up with her parents and eleven brothers and sisters in a close-knit home that while materially lacking, was more than rich in spirit.

Dolly’s young life was filled with the inspiration for music that led to the famously independent, ambitious eighteen-year-old, the day after high school graduation, to arrive in Nashville with nothing but her guitar and her dream. Since that day in 1964, she has become one of the most well-known and loved celebrities in the world. Sometimes lost in the glamour of stardom is her enormous talent as a singer, writer, and actress. Undoubtedly, this talent was a gift granted her the day she was born, a talent which she had developed and nurtured through her incredible work ethic. Dolly endued the ups and downs in her life and gives the credit to her faith which helped her overcome many obstacles. Dolly never stayed far from her roots, and through her humanitarian efforts, has given back a great deal of her "pot of gold" to the community in which she grew up and to boys and girls across the nation.

DOLLY’S CONTRIBUTIONS: “NOT A POT OF GOLD; A HEART OF GOLD”

Dolly says, “The kids call me the ‘Book Lady,’ and I think it’s great!” Dolly launched the Imagination Library in 1994 to promote reading among preschool children in Sevier County, a rural community in the Great Smoky Mountains. It generated so much interest in 2000 that she decided to offer the program nationally. Today, Dolly’s Imagination Library reaches millions of children in thousands of communities in the US, Canada, United Kingdom and Australia. The books—born from her little lessons to bedtime stories—were mailed once a month, starting at birth, and continues through five reading milestones until the child turns five years old. She has a national literacy board that selects the books and the Imagination Library is managed by her Dollywood Foundation’s Board of Directors.

DOLLY’S INSPIRATION

The National State Teachers of the Year was excited to present to Dolly Parton the “Chasing Rainbows” Award on April 5, 2002 at the dedication of the Chasing Rainbows Museum in Dollywood. Dolly has not only captured the rainbow, but the pot of gold as well. But it wasn’t the pot of gold that captured NISTOY’s attention; it was “a heart filled with gold.” Dolly loves children and it is her desire that all children across the nation have books of their very own in their own home, become better readers, and expand their imaginations. Although everyone knows Dolly as a talented singer, songwriter, and actress, this award honors her for her lifelong commitment to improve the lives of children.

Every year NISTOY will honor a special Chasing Rainbows Teacher of the Year who, like Dolly Parton, has overcome great obstacles in his/her life, has captured the rainbow, and is helping children. This distinguished award will be displayed in a permanent place in the Chasing Rainbows Museum with the award winning teacher’s name beside Dolly’s as a reminder to people to never be afraid to chase their dreams. The recipient of the award will be treated to a weekend trip to Dollywood to meet Dolly, have their name added to the award and enjoy the beautiful Smoky Mountains.

It takes two things to make a rainbow: a bright shining light and tiny droplets of water. This bright light, representing Dolly and the teacher, shining through the tiny droplets of water, which are the children, make a beautiful rainbow and lead us all to the pot of gold, ... our future generation!

THE SPIRIT OF DOLLY PARTON’S CHASING RAINBOWS AWARD

Dolly Parton was the first recipient of the “Chasing Rainbows” award on April 5, 2002. Now NISTOY will recognize annually a Chasing Rainbows Teacher of the Year who epitomizes the “spirit” of this award.

The goals of this award are:

- To bring recognition to the Chasing Rainbows Teachers who overcome obstacles to become an exemplary teacher
- To honor teachers who enhance the teaching profession in the eyes of the public
- To stress empathy and better meet the needs of students.

REQUIREMENTS FOR NOMINATION

1. The nominees may be nominated by someone else or be self-nominated.
2. The nominees may be actively teaching or retired.
3. NISTOY member may nominate any teacher.
APPLICATION GUIDELINES

1. Application must be completed in its entirety.
2. Binders, folders, clips, or clear plastic covers are not allowed. Staple the items in the top left corner only.
3. Please include a black and white professional photograph (size may vary from 2 x 3 to 8 x 10). This photograph will be used for publicity purposes only and will NOT be a consideration during the actual selection process. (photo is optional)
4. Send six completed packets (3 original and 3 copies)
5. Five letters of support are required. Include one from each of the following individuals, plus one additional letter from an individual of your choice:
   - Student
   - Colleague/peer member
   - Parent of a student
   - Principal or other supervisor
6. If retired, use your last year of teaching for reference
7. If nominator, send completed nomination form.
8. The self-portrait should be three double-spaced typewritten or computer generated single-sided sheet of white paper.

DEADLINES

March 1—Deadline for applications
April 1—Notification of nominees

SEND APPLICATIONS TO:

Edna Rogers
564 Lake Smokey Road
Savannah, TN 38376
(800) 774-0777

NOMINATION FORM

This page is to be completed by the person making the nomination.

I officially nominate ________________________________ for Dolly Parton's "Chasing Rainbows" Award. I indicate in 50 words or less why the nominee should be given this award.

Signature of nominator

NOMINATOR INFORMATION

(print or type)

Name _______________________

Address _______________________

City ________________________ State __ Zip __

Phone ________________________ E-mail ________________________ Fax ________________________

Signature ________________________

SELF-PORTRAIT

Please describe in full detail the obstacles/obstacles that have happened in your personal or professional life and that because of "Chasing that Rainbow," you have been able to overcome, have made a difference in the lives of students/undergraduates, and have become exemplary in the teaching profession. Your self-portrait should include 5 steps:

1. CLOUDS—Tell about your obstacle/obstacles in life (illness, adverse conditions, tragedies, poverty, poor working conditions, discrimination, handicaps, etc.)

2. CHASING RAINBOW—Describe how you began to overcome your obstacle/obstacles and something positive began to happen.

3. BRIGHT LIGHT—Tell how these experiences made you a better teacher.

4. DROPLETS OF WATER—Explain how your story has made a difference in the lives of students/graduates.

5. POT OF GOLD—Explain how these experiences have been rewarding to you and motivated you into an exemplary teacher.

LETTERS OF SUPPORT

Please include five letters of support. Include one from each of the following individuals listed under application guidelines, plus one additional letter of your choice.

SIGNATURE

Signature ________________________

NOMINEE INFORMATION SHEET

Name ________________________

Home Address ________________________

Day ________________________ State __ Zip __

Phone ________________________ Home E-mail ________________________ Fax ________________________

Note: If retired, please complete this page with reference to your last active professional position.

Title/Subject ________________________ Grade Level ________________________

Years Teaching Experience ________________________ Name of School ________________________

School/Work Address ________________________

School/Work Phone ________________________

State and Year named Teacher of the Year (If applicable) ________________________

NOMINEE PERMISSION AND VERIFICATION SHEET

I give permission for this nomination form and the accompanying materials to be shared with the NISTTYS Selection Committee and persons interested in promoting Dolly Parton's Chasing Rainbows Award. I acknowledge the information in this packet is true and correct.

Signature ________________________

SELF-PORTRAIT

Please describe in full detail the obstacles/obstacles that have happened in your personal or professional life and that because of "Chasing that Rainbow," you have been able to overcome, have made a difference in the lives of students/undergraduates, and have become exemplary in the teaching profession. Your self-portrait should include 5 steps:

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