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TWO ORGANIZATIONS RECEIVE ROBINSON AWARD

(FRANKFORT, Ky.) – At its meeting today in Frankfort, the Kentucky Board of Education presented the Dr. Samuel Robinson Award to co-winners – Kentucky Educational Television (KET) and the YMCA of Central Kentucky.

Since 2004, the Dr. Samuel Robinson Award has been conferred on an individual or group in Kentucky for outstanding leadership, commitment and service in promoting equity and opportunity to learn at high levels for all Kentucky students.

The award went to Kentucky Educational Television for its work in providing high-quality resources, services and support across the educational spectrum.

Tim Bischoff, KET's senior director for communications and marketing, noted in his nomination that its resources are used in every Kentucky public school.

"KET provides an efficient and equitable way to help overcome geographic barriers and economic disparities throughout Kentucky," Bischoff wrote.

Bischoff cited KET's work in K-12 education, which includes the production of more than 3,000 digital classroom resources in science, mathematics, health, history, social studies, the arts and early childhood that has made it a leading national partner in PBS LearningMedia – a comprehensive online multimedia learning service provided by KET in partnership with the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE). Since 2014, Kentucky students and teachers have used more than 3.5 million PBS LearningMedia resources.

In addition, KET provides distance learning courses for high school students in arts and humanities, Latin, German, Chinese and Spanish, all of which are available for dual credit through Morehead State University. It also supports teachers with professional learning courses, instructional videos and on-site workshops, awarding more than 65,000 professional learning certificates last year.

KET's efforts in early childhood education include providing PBS Kids programming statewide via its broadcast network, online and on mobile devices; the recent launch of its 24-hour PBS Kids channel; and its Everyday Learning initiative that provides child care workers and preschool instructors with KET-produced toolkits of classroom resources, lesson plans and hands-on training in several subject areas.

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The board recognized the YMCA of Central Kentucky with a Robinson Award for its work in strengthening communities through youth development, healthy living and social responsibility.

Brenda Blakovich, vice president of financial development, noted in her nomination that the YMCA provides free community outreach programs – including the Back to School Rallies and Y Readers – that focus on closing the achievement gap for disadvantaged youth.

The rallies are a partnership between the Y, Fayette County public schools and local community leaders that provide school supplies to 7,000 low-income children in 15 Lexington neighborhoods.

Y Readers is a free summer reading and enrichment program that supports rising 1st- and 2nd-grade children from low-income environments in their literacy and academic progress over the summer. The program is designed to mitigate summer learning loss, with the goal of helping children who are reading below grade level to get back on track by the 3rd grade.

YMCA youth development programs encompass strong academic and enrichment components for high-need students with clear success measures and school/community engagement.

“The primary goals of our programs are to ensure that all families have access to high-quality and affordable child care during out-of-school hours, to increase student achievement and to reduce risk-taking behaviors through a balanced program model built on academic intervention, health and enrichment programming,” Blakovich wrote.

The YMCA of Central Kentucky serves more than 68,000 men, women and children in Lexington and the surrounding area annually through a wide range of programs and services in four full facilities, two program centers, 11 school-age child care programs and nine summer camps. The Y provided more than \$1 million in financial assistance to more than 10,000 people in need, and nearly one in four people it serves receives assistance in order to participate.”

Dr. Samuel Robinson, for whom the award is named, is a former educator who served on the Kentucky Board of Education from 1991 to 2004 and is known for being a racial and social justice advocate and for promoting the difference education can make in the lives of all students.

Past Recipients of the Dr. Samuel Robinson Award

2004 – Sen. Gerald A. Neal of Louisville and the One Community, One Voice Achievement and Closing the Gap Community Committee of Fayette County (joint recipients)

2005 – Robert Smotherman, superintendent of the Bardstown Independent school district

2006 – Marlene Helm, former interim dean of the Eastern Kentucky University College of Education, and Rep. Frank Rasche of Paducah (joint recipients)

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2007 – Kathy Reed, member of the Bardstown Independent school board

2008 – Laura McGrail, lead school psychologist for the Henderson County school district

2009 – Arriba Ninos (Upward Children) program of Shelbyville and First Baptist Church Bracktown in Fayette County (joint recipients)

2010 – Helen Mountjoy, former secretary of the Education and Workforce Development Cabinet

2011 – Robert Sexton, former executive director of the Prichard Committee for Academic Excellence (posthumous)

2012 – Gregory Ross, former principal of McNabb Elementary, Paducah Independent school district, and Kern Alexander, former president of Murray State University and Western Kentucky University (joint recipients)

2013 – The Fayette County Equity Council and Ronnie Nolan, director of the Kentucky Educational Collaborative for State Agency Children (joint recipients)

2014 – Cindy Heine, retired associate executive director of the Prichard Committee for Academic Excellence, and Henry Webb, superintendent of Floyd County Schools (joint recipients)

2015 – Award not presented

2016 – Playhouse in the Park/Murray-Calloway County Community Theater and the Partnership Institute for Math and Science Education Reform at the University of Kentucky (joint recipients)

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