



## KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

### NEWS RELEASE

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## **KELLIE CLARK NAMED 2018 KENTUCKY TEACHER OF THE YEAR**

(FRANKFORT, Ky.) – Kellie Clark, a 16-year veteran teacher at Randall K. Cooper High School in Boone County, is the 2018 Kentucky Teacher of the Year.

Valvoline, Inc.™ and the Kentucky Department of Education made the announcement today at a ceremony held at the Capitol Rotunda in Frankfort. Lt. Governor Jenean Hampton; Education and Workforce Development Cabinet Director Mardi Montgomery; Commissioner of Education Stephen L. Pruitt; and Sam Mitchell, chief executive officer of Valvoline, were on hand to make the presentation.

Belinda Raye Furman, a 2nd-grade teacher at Sherman Elementary in Grant County, is the 2018 Elementary School Teacher of the Year. Jennifer Meo-Sexton, a visual arts teacher at Bondurant Middle School in Franklin County, is the 2018 Middle School Teacher of the Year.

The three joined 21 other teachers from across the state honored with 2018 Valvoline, Inc. Teacher Achievement Awards.

“Teachers are our most important asset and these teachers represent the best in the state,” said Kentucky Commissioner of Education Stephen L. Pruitt. “These teachers have shown again and again they are committed to doing whatever it takes to ignite the passion, potential and possibility in each and every one of their students. They also serve invaluable partners and leaders in Kentucky education, often going outside of their classrooms to share their insights and expertise as we formulate ways to take all of our students to higher levels of learning.”

Furman and Meo-Sexton received \$3,000 each and a customized, art-glass vase from Valvoline, Inc., while Clark received \$10,000 and a commemorative crystal-glass bowl. In addition, the Kentucky Department of Education will provide a sabbatical or suitable alternative for Clark, who also will represent the state in the 2018 National Teacher of the Year competition.

The remaining 21 winners each received \$500 cash awards. All 24 teachers received framed certificates and were recognized at a luncheon following the ceremony.

“It is my pleasure to once again recognize the 24 Valvoline Teacher Achievement Award winners and the Kentucky Teachers of the Year. Having the opportunity to recognize and support outstanding teachers that bring energy, passion and dedication to the classroom highlights our commitment to community, especially in preparing students to excel in a global

society,” said Sam Mitchell, chief executive officer of Valvoline, Inc.

Valvoline and the Kentucky Department of Education co-sponsor the Kentucky Teacher Achievement Awards. Applications for the program were distributed across the state, and the first tier of the selection process was completed in March, with 24 teachers selected as 2018 Valvoline Inc. Teacher Achievement Award winners.

The nine top scorers – three each from the elementary, middle and high school levels – were selected, and teams of educators visited their classrooms to view them at work and to conduct personal interviews. From those nine, three were selected as 2018 Kentucky Teachers of the Year. The selection of the overall Kentucky Teacher of the Year was based on the compilation of scores from all phases of the judging.

The Kentucky Teacher Achievement Awards program combines the best elements of what was formerly known as the Ashland Teacher Achievement Awards. Valvoline separated from Ashland to become a publicly traded company headquartered in Lexington, Ky., and is now sponsoring the Teacher Achievement Awards and the Kentucky Teacher of the Year programs. This marks the 17th year the Kentucky Department of Education and Ashland/Valvoline have partnered to honor Kentucky educators. Since 1988, the program has awarded more than \$800,000 to 548 teachers in grades K to 12.

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### **About Valvoline**

Valvoline, Inc. (NYSE:VVV) is a leading worldwide producer and distributor of premium branded automotive, commercial and industrial lubricants, and automotive chemicals. Valvoline ranks as the #2 quick-lube chain by number of stores and #3 passenger car motor oil brand in the DIY market by volume in the United States. The brand operates and franchises more than 1,070 Valvoline Instant Oil Change™ centers in the United States. It also markets Valvoline lubricants and automotive chemicals; MaxLife™ lubricants created for higher-mileage engines; SynPower™ synthetic motor oil; and Zerex™ antifreeze. Visit [www.valvoline.com](http://www.valvoline.com) to learn more.

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## **TEACHER OF THE YEAR BIOGRAPHIES**

### **Kellie Clark, 2018 Kentucky High School Teacher of the Year and 2018 Kentucky Teacher of the Year**

#### **Randall K. Cooper High School, Boone County Schools**

Sixteen-year teaching veteran Kellie Clark has spent her career teaching choral music and AP music theory at Cooper High. She earned a bachelor's degree at Morehead State University and a master's degree at Ohio's Miami University in Oxford. She serves as the Creating and Performing Arts team leader for her school and has coached numerous students for participation in honors/all-state choirs; the Governor's School for the Arts; and for Overture awards. She recently received a C3 Outstanding Educator Award. Her professional affiliations include the Kentucky Music Educators Association; National Association for Music Education; and the American Choral Directors Association.

### **Belinda Raye Furman, 2018 Elementary School Teacher of the Year**

#### **Sherman Elementary School, Grant County**

Belinda Furman has spent 17 years as an educator teaching 2nd-grade students at Sherman Elementary. She earned a bachelor's at Northern Kentucky University and a master's degree at Eastern Kentucky University. She has achieved Rank I certification through the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. She serves as a District Peer Learning Lab host and as a District ActivBoard trainer. She is a Kentucky Center for Instructional Disciple Core Team member and began a book study group that meets monthly to discuss best practices in math. Her professional affiliations include the Kentucky Reading Association and the Kentucky and National Education Associations.

**Jennifer Meo-Sexton, 2018 Middle School Teacher of the Year  
Bondurant Middle School, Franklin County Schools**

Jennifer Meo-Sexton, a 21-year teaching veteran, has taught visual arts to sixth- through eighth-grade students throughout her career. She earned a bachelor's degree at the University of Kentucky and a master's degree at Eastern Kentucky University. She also achieved National Board for Professional Teaching Standards Certification. In conjunction with the Ohio Valley Education Cooperative, she hosts a Learning Lab Classroom for the Public Education and Business Coalition. She serves on her school's Literacy Design Collaborative Team; implements model LDC lessons; and has presented on LDC implementation and lesson design.

**2018 Valvoline Inc. Teacher Achievement Award Winners**

**Elementary School**

- Amber Adams, Wrigley Elementary, Morgan County
- Lori Clements, West Louisville Elementary, Daviess County
- Natasha Craft, Pulaski Elementary, Pulaski County
- Belinda Furman, Sherman Elementary, Grant County
- Wendy Gamblin, West Broadway Elementary, Hopkins County
- Cheryl Nance, Collins Lane Elementary, Franklin County
- Carla Oetinger, Ryland Heights Elementary, Kenton County
- Mandy Ridenour, Audubon Traditional Elementary, Jefferson County

**Middle School**

- Jennifer Beasley, Meece Middle, Somerset Independent
- Ashley Haynes, Hazard Middle, Hazard Independent
- Kim Joiner, Noe Middle, Jefferson County
- Brianne McDowell, Mason County Middle, Mason County
- Ashley McGaughey, Spencer County Middle, Spencer County
- Jennifer Meo-Sexton, Bondurant Middle, Franklin County
- Apryl Moore, The Academy at Shawnee, Jefferson County
- Olga Payne, Daviess County Middle, Daviess County

**High School**

- Amy Argo, Lyon County High, Lyon County
- Misty Bivens, LaRue County High, LaRue County
- Kellie Clark, Randall K. Cooper High, Boone County
- Taylor Clements, Atherton High, Jefferson County
- Benjamin Davis, Campbellsville High, Campbellsville Independent
- Cortney Flannery, Betsy Layne High, Floyd County
- Douglas Logan, Randall K. Cooper High, Boone County
- Ryan New, Boyle County High, Boyle County

Bios for each of the 2018 Valvoline, Inc. Teacher Achievement Award winners can be found [here](#).

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