



KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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LEXINGTON ORGANIZATION RECEIVES DR. SAMUEL ROBINSON AWARD

(FRANKFORT, Ky.) – At its meeting today in Frankfort, the Kentucky Board of Education presented the Dr. Samuel Robinson Award to the Black Males Working (BMW) Academy program.

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.

Roszalyn Akins, who co-founded the program with Dr. Roger Cleveland, was presented the award at the board's meeting.

For the past 14 years, Cleveland and Akins have been mentoring and providing disadvantaged males of color an opportunity to listen to dynamic presenters, accelerate their learning through tutoring and explore their country and other parts of the world through field trips.

The BMW program meets every Saturday for students in pre-K through high school. What once began as a program at Leestown Middle School in Lexington, has now expanded to four different sites across the city. The program hosts students from Fayette County as well as surrounding Kentucky counties and instills accountability and pride for its participants, teaching them important skills and knowledge, as well as appropriate conduct and behavior. The program also includes a parental component where parents must pledge to attend sessions with the youth, provide a safe and quiet place at home for the children to learn, and provide transportation to and from the program.

Jimmy Meadows, Jr., who nominated the program for the award, said BMW is now seeing the many “fruits of its labor”, as former students frequently come back to share college and workforce experiences and to mentor other young people.

“BMW definitely meets the criteria of leadership, commitment and service to equity at all levels,” Meadows said.

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.

(more)

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)
- 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)
- 2017** – Kentucky Educational Television (KET) and the YMCA of Central Kentucky (joint recipients)

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