



KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

NEWS RELEASE

Number 18-078

May 15, 2018

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JESSICA DUEÑAS NAMED 2019 KENTUCKY TEACHER OF THE YEAR

(Frankfort, KY) –Jessica Dueñas, a 10-year teaching veteran who has taught special education classes for three years at Oldham County Middle School, is the 2019 Kentucky Teacher of the Year.

Valvoline and the Kentucky Department of Education made the announcement today at a ceremony held at the Berry Mansion in Frankfort. Lt. Gov. Jenean Hampton; Interim Commissioner of Education Wayne Lewis and Sam Mitchell, chief executive officer of Valvoline, were on hand to make the presentation.

NyRee D. Clayton-Taylor, a creative writing teacher at Phillis Wheatley Elementary in Jefferson County, is the 2019 Elementary School Teacher of the Year. Tiffany Marsh, a vocal music teacher at Paul Laurence Dunbar High School in Fayette County, is the 2019 High School Teacher of the Year.

The three joined 21 other teachers from across the state honored with 2019 Valvoline Teacher Achievement Awards.

“I am inspired by the teachers recognized today. They represent the best of the teaching profession, and they deserve to be celebrated,” Lewis said. “These professionals are student-focused leaders inside and outside of their classrooms. I look forward to working with them to promote teaching excellence, and to accelerate learning for students across the Commonwealth.”

Clayton-Taylor and Marsh received \$3,000 each and customized crystal awards from Valvoline, while Dueñas received \$10,000 and a customized crystal award. In addition, the Kentucky Department of Education will provide a sabbatical or suitable alternative for Dueñas, who also will represent the state in the 2019 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.

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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 2019 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 2019 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.

Since 1988, the program has awarded more than \$825,000 to 572 teachers in grades K to 12.

Go online to the [Kentucky Teacher of the Year website \(http://www.kentuckytoy.com/2019AchievementAwards.html\)](http://www.kentuckytoy.com/2019AchievementAwards.html) for full biographies and pictures of the award winners.

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