



Physicians Caring for Texans

TMA NEWS RELEASE

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TMA Physicians Award Outstanding Science Teachers

The Texas Medical Association (TMA) named twelve Texas science teachers winners of its 2017 Ernest and Sarah Butler Awards for Excellence in Science Teaching. TMA recognizes elementary, middle, and high school teachers for helping to create tomorrow's physicians by inspiring students in the field of science. Teachers receive cash prizes and their schools receive cash resource grants to enhance their science program.

The three first-place winners were honored today at TexMed, the association's annual conference, in Houston. TMA surprised one of the top winners as the "overall winner," which carries with it an additional cash award. Three second and three third-place awards, and three rookie awards (given to science teachers with fewer than 5 years' teaching experience) will be presented in upcoming local ceremonies.

Additionally, a state representative will recognize the TMA science teaching awards and some of this year's honorees at the state Capitol during National Teacher Day on May 9. Rep. Ken King (R-Canadian) will present a resolution honoring all science teachers and congratulating TMA's 2017 science teacher award winners.

Overall Winner:

The overall, third-place, and rookie awards are brand new this year. TMA selected the overall winner from the first-place honorees. The inaugural recipient of this top honor is **Teresa Kelm** of Connally Elementary School in **Waco**. The overall winner receives \$5,000 in addition to the first-place winner prize.

First-Place Winners:

Ms. Kelm – Connally Elementary School, **Waco**

Terri Henry – Benold Middle School, **Georgetown**

Monica Amyett – Azle High School, **Azle**

(See winner biographies below.) TMA awarded each a \$6,000 cash prize, plus their schools receive a \$2,000 resource grant to enhance science classroom learning.

Second-Place Winners:

Therese Ermer – Salinas Elementary School, **Universal City**

Jana Lindley – Clark Middle School, **Abilene**

Julieta Banuelas – Fabens High School, **Fabens**

Second-place winners each receive a \$4,000 cash prize and their schools receive a \$1,000 resource grant.

Third-Place Winners:

Holly Land – South Bosque Elementary School, **Woodway**

Gena Lopez – Ennis Junior High School, **Ennis**

Karey Moore – Aledo High School, **Aledo**.

TMA gives each third-place winner a \$2,000 cash prize and a \$1,000 resource grant for their schools.

Rookie Award Winners:

Lexi Law – Ben Franklin Elementary, **Wichita Falls**

Brittany Monds – Clarendon Junior High School, **Clarendon**

Krystal Scott – Goodrich Independent School District, **Goodrich**.

Each rookie award winner receives a \$1,500 cash prize and their schools receive a \$1,000 resource grant.

Teresa Kelm — Overall Winner, and Elementary School First-Place Winner - Waco

Mrs. Kelm teaches fifth-grade science at Connally Elementary in Waco. “I want to make science fun and engaging for students, to make it alive and applicable,” she says. Learning is a hands-on activity in Mrs. Kelm’s classroom, where she calls students “Starfleet Cadets” from the science fiction franchise Star Trek’s Starfleet Academy. With “Captain Kelm” at the helm, the cadets boldly explore new science concepts, perform experiments, and challenge themselves daily. “She is a difference-maker and a hero,” says Connally Elementary principal Gina Pasisis. “It is no wonder that so many students tell me Captain Kelm is their favorite teacher.”

Terri Henry — First-Place Middle School Winner - Georgetown

Mrs. Henry teaches eighth-grade science at Benold Middle School in Georgetown. Her classroom is never quiet or dull — students are always absorbed in learning through touching, hearing, seeing, tasting, smelling, and doing. “Science is a hands-on experience — I could not imagine teaching any other way,” she says. “Mrs. Henry possesses the ability to make science come alive, enabling the most challenging students to achieve mastery-level learning,” says Benold Assistant Principal Joseph Ferguson. Outside the classroom, Mrs. Henry volunteers for several after-school programs, helping students with homework and teaching computer coding, crafts, photography and videography, underwater robotics, and practical skills for 21st century jobs.

Monica Amyett — First-Place High School Winner - Azle

Mrs. Amyett teaches ninth through 12th grade biology and engineering classes at Azle High School in Azle. “I attempt to convey my love for the subject in hopes that I might inspire future scientists, medical professionals, and teachers,” she says. To encourage her students to pursue these careers, Mrs. Amyett established a robotics team and a STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) program at Azle High School. Her lessons always link science to practical applications so students know science is essential in everyday life. “Mrs. Amyett is one-of-a-kind,” says Azle junior Ainsley McDonald-Boyer, a NASA High School Aerospace Scholar and student of Mrs. Amyett. “She has helped me to shape my future.”

The 2017 TMA Ernest and Sarah Butler Awards for Excellence in Science Teaching are made possible with a grant from the Texas Medical Association Foundation, which is supported through an endowment generously established by Dr. and Mrs. Ernest C. Butler and gifts from physicians and their families.

TMA is the largest state medical society in the nation, representing more than 50,000 physician and medical student members. It is located in Austin and has 110 component county medical societies around the state. TMA’s key objective since 1853 is to improve the health of all Texans. TMA Foundation is the philanthropic arm of the association and raises funds to support the population health, science and quality-of-care priority initiatives of TMA and the family of medicine.

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