

John Gaw Award 2006

ATEQ honors an exceptional ATEQ member who has demonstrated outstanding leadership qualities within the English Language Arts community.

The John Gaw award was presented at the annual English Language Arts Springboards 2006 conference, held at McGill University.

ABIGAIL ANDERSON is the 2006 John Gaw Award recipient.

It is indeed with great pleasure, ladies and gentlemen, that this year's recipient of the John Gaw Award is Abigail Anderson.

As Coordinator of Curriculum for English Language Arts at MELS, Abigail has been involved with the English Language Arts community for over 30 years. Her commitment and support of the English Language Arts community has placed her as a forerunner and advocate for the improvement of the profession and in turn the betterment of the students that we as a community deal with each day.

Because she believes that innovation and progress come from the grass roots level, and because, in spirit, she never really left her beloved classroom at Chomedey High, Abigail has been dedicated to fostering the links among teachers who are so often isolated in their own schools.

Her vision for and leadership of the Secondary Language Arts Advisory Council (SLAAC) and the Elementary English Language Arts Committee (EELAC) as a network for professional sharing and professional development greatly contributed to teachers' feelings of belonging to the profession and to their ownership of their own professionalism.

Abigail's name reverberates through the ELA community and is synonymous with a love of teaching and progressive endorsement of English Language Arts in schools.

Her dedication is above reproach; in fact she is rare indeed in her never-ending quest to collaborate with teachers and make MELS accessible. Abigail's contribution to the English Language Arts community at large is invaluable. She is indeed an outstanding leader in our profession and so without a doubt, a prime candidate for this award.

In fact, many may say it is long overdue!

Abigail's creative talents and passions lie not only in education but also in life. She is an accomplished artist, who donates personal and thoughtful tributes to the retirements of honoured ELA teachers. She is a creative spirit, and a trailblazer. Known for her passion for horses and animals in general – especially those named Jericho – she has many theories likening teachers to lone wolves or even to the great horse Secretariat – constantly pushing the boundaries, moving for change, and never settling.

Those who bear witness to Abigail Anderson's work ethic know that she is a determined activist, with an unwavering pledge to complete a task at hand.

She is the type of leader who will always dive in – head first to test the waters and then, when safe, invite her colleagues to follow. She never demands anything she is unwilling to do herself, and is the most encouraging and nurturing of mentors. She gives to others, selflessly and without ego – because to her the integrity of the profession belongs to all of us.

Ultimately being able to surround herself with a pack of strong, independent, and creative people is pretty much heaven to Abigail. Her legacy is that she inspires you to be the best that you can be.

Abigail, we have admired your candor and your resilience. To quote a fellow wolverine, Emily Dickinson,

“We never know
how high we are
Till we are asked to rise;
And then,
if we are true to plan.
Our statures
Touch the skies.”

On behalf of ATEQ and your colleagues, I present you with the John Gaw Award for excellence and commitment to the English Language Arts community.

Thank you
Suzy Brisson, President ATEQ (2006)