

KENTUCKY WORLD LANGUAGE OUTSTANDING TEACHER IS A FAYETTE COUNTY, FRENCH EDUCATOR

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September 26, 2015, Louisville, KY – At the annual conference of the Kentucky World Language Association (KWLA) held this year at the Triple Crown Pavilion, Laura "Roché" Youngworth, a French teacher at Beaumont Middle School in Lexington, Kentucky was awarded the 2015 KWLA Outstanding Teacher Award. As the 2015 winner of this prestigious award, Ms. Roché will go on to represent Kentucky world language teachers at the Southern Conference on Language Teaching (SCOLT) to be held in Charlotte, North Carolina on February 18-20, 2016. If she is named the "SCOLT Teacher of the Year", Ms. Roché will then proceed on to compete for the title of "National Language Teacher of the Year" awarded every year by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) at their annual conference in November.

Dr. Laura Roché Youngworth, who uses her maiden name professionally, is a life-long resident of Lexington and is in her twenty-fourth year of teaching French. She graduated from the University of Kentucky with a Bachelors in English, French, and Secondary Education and then earned a Masters and Rank I in Curriculum & Instruction. Finally, in 2014, Laura earned a Doctorate of Education in Administration and Instruction with a research focus of language proficiency and the perceptions and pedagogical choices of world language educators regarding standards, assessments, and context. Laura began her teaching career in Kenton County, at Scott High School, then moved to Anderson County High School where she built a program including levels I-AP, led multiple student-trips abroad and within the United States, sponsored Le Cercle Français and La Société Honoraire de Français, led faculty professional development on Learning Centered Schools, and served as the Gifted & Talented Coordinator. For the last six years, Laura has been teaching French at Beaumont Middle School where she is the French Club sponsor, co-sponsor of the summer World Language Immersion Camp, cooperating teacher for student-teachers, Department Chair of Arts & Humanities and Facilitator of the Global Competency & World Language Program Review. She is the current President of AATF-KY, voice of the UK/KWLA Language Talk Podcast Series, co-chair of the KWLA PD Committee, K-12 contact for the Outreach Clearinghouse, and presenter at numerous conferences throughout the state. Laura is passionate about proficiency-based teaching and providing her students engaging opportunities to use and expand their French. She embraces any opportunity to share this passion with colleagues and strives to always continue evolving her instructional practices.

Ms. Roché was chosen by the Awards Committee of KWLA from a group of four candidates in all, each representing several different Kentucky chapters of professional language teaching organizations: Dr. Stacey DuBravac, a professor of Second Language Acquisition and Applied Linguistics and Director of the MA in Teaching World Languages at the University of Kentucky and winner of the "Outstanding Post-Secondary Teacher Award"; Melissa Willing, a Spanish teacher at Garden Springs Elementary School in Fayette County and winner of the "Outstanding NELL Teacher Award" from the Kentucky chapter of the National Network for Early Language Learning; Jennifer Larson, a Spanish teacher at Daviess County High School in Owensboro,

Kentucky and winner of the “Outstanding Spanish Teacher Award” from the Kentucky chapter of the American Association of Teachers of Spanish and Portuguese (AATSP); and Ms. Roché being herself also the winner of the “Outstanding French Teacher Award” from the Kentucky chapter of the American Association of Teachers of French (AATF) making her and all of the winners here mentioned eligible to be named the “KWLA Outstanding Teacher” overall. During the Awards Banquet at the recent KWLA fall conference, Ms. Roché was revealed as the 2015 KWLA Outstanding Teacher Award winner overall in what had been, up to that point, a closely guarded secret by only a few members of the KWLA executive board until the big reveal at the banquet. “The idea is to have a pool of candidates, each winning the award from their respective professional organizations and each representing the best of teachers in their particular language or field, to be in the running for the coveted KWLA “Outstanding Teacher Award” and then to reveal at the Awards Banquet which candidate is the “Outstanding Teacher” overall as a big surprise to heighten the suspense and anticipation from the time up to and during the conference,” says Ben Hawkins, KWLA Awards Committee Chair.

The 2015 KWLA Fall Conference, held this past weekend, September 24-26 at the Triple Crown Pavilion in Louisville, KY was attended by 390 world language teachers and plus another 27 administrators and offered an exciting program of high-quality professional development learning experiences for all who came in the form of 60 minute sessions and 3 hour workshops, most spending their own money and with some receiving funds from their school districts. This year’s conference theme entitled “Communicate. Collaborate. Captivate. Building bridges to proficiency” was further highlighted with a feature workshop and session presented by keynote speaker Nicole Naditz, who also serves at the 2015 ACTFL Teacher of the Year.

ABOUT KWLA - The Kentucky World Language Association, as KCTFL, was founded in 1974, is dedicated to the improvement and expansion of the teaching and learning of all world languages at all levels of instruction through providing the latest and the best in professional development for its many members of world language teachers and professionals. Each year the organization recognizes through their awards program individual teachers, administrators, professionals, businesses or other organizations that have made significant contributions to the profession of world language education. For more information, visit the website at www.kwla.org.