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PBHS Teacher Earns Statewide Biology Award

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Poplar Bluff educator Gretchen Pendley has won the 2019 outstanding biology teacher award for the state of Missouri through the National Association of Biology Teachers.

State director of the OBTA program, Ryan Lacson, traveled from the greater Springfield area to hand-deliver the prestigious award during a surprise recognition ceremony featuring family, school administrators and faculty colleagues on Wednesday, June 5, at the High School.

A selection committee carefully reviewed all statewide nominees, according to Lacson, who noted that Pendley would receive a special gift package, including customized micropipettes.

“Gretchen’s extensive knowledge of science curriculum, her advanced skills in pedagogy and classroom management, and her mindset of esprit de corps made the transition a very easy one,” Gail Karlish stated in a peer nomination letter. Karlish, the PBHS Science Department chairwoman, was referring to Pendley succeeded herself as leader of the departmental professional learning community per personal recommendation.

Pendley began teaching biology at PBHS in 2014, and was named Secondary Grade-Span Teacher of the Year within just two years. In addition, she has served as an adjunct biology instructor at Three Rivers College, where she was named the 2014 Adjunct Teacher of the Year.

“She brings new and innovative teaching techniques to her students through using a great variety of computer software and programs like Pear Deck and Eduweblabs; by being an innovator such as in piloting the use of Chromebooks for our school, and writing grants like the one for which she was recently awarded a new type of microscope projector,” continued Karlsh, “and by teaching students how to navigate through different delivery platforms such as Schoology and Blackboard.”

The OBTA program annually recognizes a single outstanding biology educator, grades 7-12, in every participating state. Last year’s Missouri winner hailed from Maplewood Richmond Heights High School in St. Louis.

The mission of the National Association of Biology Teachers is to empower educators to provide the best possible biology and life science education for all students, according to its website.

Pictured: PBHS biology teacher Gretchen Pendley is presented a statewide award from the National Association of Biology Teachers by Missouri program director Ryan Lacson during a surprise celebration.

Article and photo submitted by Tim Krakowiak, Communications/Marketing Director, Poplar Bluff R-I School District

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