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National Teacher of the Year 4/7/92 [OA 7571][1]

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Paul Hosefros/The New York Times

Thomas A. Fleming, a formerly illiterate high school dropout from Detroit, was named the national teacher of the year. He appeared yesterday with President Bush at a Rose Garden ceremony.

## A Dropout Is Named Teacher of the Year

WASHINGTON, April 7 (AP) — A formerly illiterate high school dropout from Detroit who has been named the national teacher of the year was lauded by President Bush today as a "hero, a man of great strength and courage and great heart."

Thomas A. Fleming, 59 years old, who teaches history, government and geography at a juvenile detention center in Ann Arbor, Mich., received a crystal apple from the President in ceremonies at the White House.

"It's miraculous to come as far as I've come," said Mr. Fleming, who in 1950, as a 17-year-old in inner-city Detroit, could not read or write.

### 'A Fantastic Group'

Today he has a master's degree in special educa-

Mr. Fleming was chosen from among more than 2.5 million public school teachers in the United States. The contest is sponsored by the Council of Chief State School Officers in partnership with Encyclopaedia Britannica Inc.

Mr. Fleming stresses reading. A favorite classroom project, he said, is requiring students to stand before the class to read passages from a book.

"Can you imagine kids who cannot read wanting to stand up and read in front of others?" he said. "I ask them: 'Can you imagine yourself as Bryant Gumbel? Do you know how much money he makes?' That is what good reading will give you."

Mr. Fleming, who was born in Reading, Pa., was reared by his grandparents in Detroit. At 16 he lied about his age and joined the Army National Guard,

# Renegade Researchers Offer Rebuttal: U.S. Schools Are Better Than Many Say

By SUSAN CHIRA

Forget all the bad news about American schools. There is no crisis in American education, say a number of renegade researchers whose ideas have touched off a bitter debate with broad implications for education policy in an election year.

By falsely claiming that almost all American schools are failing, these critics charge, the Bush Administration and others divert attention and money from the real crisis: poor inner-city and rural schools.

The debate itself reveals how little Americans know about their schools' performance and how far away the country is from defining just how good its schools should be.

The defenders of American education wave a batch of surprising statistics: test scores and dropout rates have held steady for at least 15 years, the percentage of top-scoring students is roughly the same as it was 15 years ago, and comparisons that show American students trailing those in nearly every other country are distorted by faulty methodology.

### Improvement Since 1981?

"Most schools in America are better than they were in 1981," said Harold Hodgkinson, director of the Center for Demographic Policy, a research organization in Washington. "I'm interested in a focus on the worst kids in the worst schools. Given the fact that everyone agrees that the bottom third of our kids are awful, they get very little spent on them."

But the purveyors of bad news are regrouping, charging the renegades with complacency and fighting them statistic by statistic. Even if schools over all are not much worse than 15 years ago, they say, they are nowhere near good enough, and they still trail America's competitors.

"The critics are wrong in saying the schools are just as good as they ever were," said Diane Ravitch, an Assistant Secretary of Education. "That is deeply damaging; it inspires complacency and a false sense of self-

performance of the top-ranked students — have varied little in the past 15 to 20 years, they say.

They believe that whatever declines do exist have occurred because schools now, unlike those of a generation or two ago, are trying to educate everybody — more immigrants, more minorities, more students who once would have dropped out and gotten good jobs on the assembly line. And they say international comparisons are flawed because American students as a whole are being compared to other countries' elites.

For example, the number of 17-year-olds who complete high school rose from 10 percent in 1910 to about 75 percent in 1965 and has stayed at

## A spirited debate leaves questions unanswered.

about that level since, said Gerald W. Bracy, an educational consultant and former researcher for the National Education Association, who cites as his source the National Center for Education Statistics. Even that figure understates the number of students who eventually receive a high school diploma or its equivalent, he says; 91 percent of the class of 1980 had done so by 1986, according to a Department of Education study.

Not only are more children staying in school, but more are going to college, and so it makes sense that scores on the Scholastic Aptitude Test would dip somewhat, said Mr. Bracy and a report by the Sandia National Laboratories of Albuquerque, N.M., which is financed by the Department of Energy.

Since the 1960's, they argue, more white students with lower grade-point averages and lower ranks in class and more minority students who his-

erally-financed National Assessment of Educational Progress, widely known among educators as the nation's report card. Reading scores are about the same as they were 20 years ago. Math scores have held steady since 1973. Science scores are somewhat lower than they were in 1969, but scores of 9- and 17-year-olds have improved steadily during the 1980's. Both these tests and S.A.T. tests show that scores for minorities have also risen.

Mr. Bracey and Mr. Hodgkinson contend that America's top-scoring students do as well as ever. Scores on the Graduate Record Examinations, required for graduate school, have risen even though more students have taken them. Average scores on tests required to attend business schools also rose. The percentage of students scoring above 600 points (out of 800) on the S.A.T. math and verbal scores fell until 1975 but has held steady since.

Yet for virtually every statistic the researchers produce, critics of American schools offer a rebuttal. Scores on the "nation's report card" tests may have stayed about the same for 20 years, but they are stuck at low levels, according to the National Center for Education Statistics, part of the Department of Education.

### Still Not Good Enough?

While American schools still produce some brilliant students, Ms. Ravitch argues that even at the top there is reason to fear. The percentage of students who scored above 600 on the verbal S.A.T. may have stabilized since 1975, she says, but go back only three years, to 1972, and the numbers will show a drop of 35 percent in the last 20 years.

Many scholars argue that the researchers are right to say that schools have not gone downhill, but are drawing the wrong conclusions.

"It's true, but it's irrelevant," said Marc Tucker, president of the National Center on Education and the Economy, a Rochester, research center

inner-city Detroit, could not read or write.

### 'A Fantastic Group'

Today he has a master's degree in special education and has spent 20 years at his job at the Washenaw County juvenile detention center. His students spend anywhere from a week to several months at the center while their cases wind through juvenile court. In one year, he and two co-workers teach more than 200 teen-agers.

"The adolescent group is a fantastic group to work with," Mr. Fleming said. "They are always ready to accept a challenge."

Mr. Fleming, who was born in Reading, Pa., was reared by his grandparents in Detroit. At 16 he lied about his age and joined the Army National Guard, where he became a member of an all-black combat engineers unit that was called into active service and sent to West Germany.

When he returned from overseas, Mr. Fleming earned a high school equivalency diploma in night school, and then a bachelor's degree from what is now William Tyndale College, in Farmington Hills, Mich. In 1968 he received a master's degree from Eastern Michigan University.

### Photo Copy Preservation

ever were," said Diane Ravitch, an Assistant Secretary of Education. "That is deeply damaging; it inspires complacency and a false sense of self-esteem. To say we do as well today as we did 20 years ago — our kids today are not going to be competing with their parents, but with children being educated in other countries."

Although most Americans probably believe that schools are worse than ever, the defenders of American schools argue that they are as good or even better than before. Many indicators — test scores, dropout rates, the

Since the 1960's, they argue, more white students with lower grade-point averages and lower ranks in class and more minority students who historically have not scored well on the tests have taken S.A.T.'s. This accounts for the 5 percent decline in average S.A.T. scores in the last 20 years, the Sandia report said. Even so, Mr. Hodgkinson said, S.A.T. scores of 31 states actually rose between 1980 and 1990.

Moreover, children are scoring at about the same level on the most reliable standardized tests — the fed-

"It's true, but it's irrelevant," said Marc Tucker, president of the National Center on Education and the Economy, a Rochester research center. "Doing as well or slightly better than we used to do is doing appallingly badly relative to the rest of the world."

Here, too, the renegades contest conventional wisdom. Iris C. Rotberg, a senior social scientist at the Rand Corporation, argues that international science and mathematics comparisons are flawed because Americans are compared to other countries' elites, and curriculum differences are not weighed.

### Strong in Research

Although the tests indicate that, on the average, Americans trail all other students, comparisons from 1991 show that the top 10 percent of American students tested well compared with the top 10 percent of other countries. American scientists, Ms. Rotberg says, still account for one-third of all research papers — far more than any other country.

While it may be true that existing international comparisons are imperfect, there is every reason to believe that America's major economic competitors are educating more of their students to a higher standard, said Ms. Ravitch, Mr. Tucker and a number of other scholars.

Some countries may have included only their elite students in math and science tests, but several of the United States' most important economic competitors, like Japan and South Korea, keep virtually all their students in school through age 16. Even if those countries tested only students in elite high schools, other researchers have found that Asian children are ahead of Americans in math as early as first grade.

Harold W. Stevenson, a professor of psychology at the University of Michigan, and his colleague, James W. Stigler, compared children's math performance in Japan, Taiwan and the United States over a 10-year period. They found that Asian children's scores were better in first grade, and that the older the children got, the further behind the Americans fell. Nor were many American children among the highest scorers, Mr. Stevenson said, so it was not just a question of the lesser students' bringing down the Americans' average.

"I'm convinced there's really a serious problem," said Mr. Stevenson, co-author with Mr. Stigler of "The Learning Gap," the new book about their study published by Summit Books.

## Kentucky Presses Crackdown on Local School Mismanagement, Charging 4 People

By WILLIAM CELIS 3d

In a continuing crackdown on mismanaged school districts, Kentucky education officials have charged school board members and a superintendent in four school systems with neglect of duty, influence peddling and misconduct.

The charges, filed by the Office of Education Accountability, an investigative arm of the State Legislature, will be reviewed Friday by the State Board of Education in Frankfort to determine whether the local school officials should be removed.

The actions are part of Kentucky's effort to overhaul its school systems and make them more accountable.

Under a five-year legislative plan now in its second year, tougher curriculum and teacher standards have been mandated and schools have been given an additional \$600 million in the first two years to meet the higher standards.

In return, schools must produce results, and the legislation gives state education officials authority to oust local school officials for failing, through mismanagement, to meet the new standards.

### Money as Incentive

Although 16 states have passed legislation giving state officials the authority to take over school districts and remove local school officials,

Kentucky has moved more aggressively than other states to rein in errant school boards, largely because of its financial investment.

### 4 Rural Counties Involved

"The public is saying we are putting a lot of money into public education at time when the economy is not doing very well," said Connie Bridge, director of the Institute of Education Reform at the University of Kentucky. "We expect these school officials to be accountable to us, and when they aren't, they need to go."

This tougher stance has met mixed reactions across the state. In Harlan County, residents bitterly criticized the state after Thomas C. Boysen, the

State Education Commissioner, in January removed three Harlan County school board members on charges of mismanagement.

The most recent charges, representing a variety of infractions, were filed against school board members in Hart County, Elliott County and Letcher County and the superintendent in Floyd County. All of the counties are rural.

One school board member was charged with misconduct after he and a high school teacher got into a fight at a basketball game over a disagreement about hiring a new superintendent, according to the Office of Education Accountability.

Another was charged with neglect of

duty and immorality after several convictions for driving under the influence of alcohol and carrying concealed weapons.

The third board member was charged with misconduct after the Office of Education Accountability said he used his position on the board to steer school business to a coal-delivery concern in which he has a financial interest.

And Ronald L. Hager, the superintendent of Floyd County Schools, was charged with filing fraudulent financial statements for the school district for the 1989 and 1990 fiscal years, according to the Office of Education Accountability. Mr. Hager declined to comment.

## More Military Retirees Going Into Classrooms

By WILLIAM CELIS 3d

When Steve Dexter retired from the Navy last fall, the former captain embarked on a new career as a sixth-grade teacher in an inner-city school in Portsmouth, Va.

Although the widely traveled officer can speak firsthand about the cultures of Egypt, Italy and Greece to his world history class, Mr. Dexter often finds himself frustrated by the problems of his 22 students, 19 of whom come from single-parent homes and many of whom are poor.

"I enjoy teaching," said Mr. Dexter, who is nearing the end of his first year. "But I was not prepared for how tough it is."

As the military shrinks in its large-

ing the transition from the military to the classroom a logical one, a chief reason many former military people cite for pursuing second careers in public schools.

### Encouraging the Effort

The military has a substantial minority representation, and schools around the nation are short of teachers from minorities, especially males from minorities. The service branches and several universities have been making efforts to encourage more departing military personnel to try teaching, and to help them with the transition. Last June, the Army began an toll-free line, 1-800-227-LEAD, to provide information about teacher certification, and so



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## Ex-officers find a new world of discipline.

est manpower reduction since the end of American involvement in Vietnam, a small but growing number of former military people are pursuing second careers as public school teachers.

### 'Very Valuable to Us'

"Although there are no national data on the number of military people in public schools, Federal education officials estimate that 2,000 to 3,000 of the 1.2 million people who have left the military since 1987 are now teaching or soon will be.

"The military is very valuable to us," said Dr. Jay Shotel, special assistant to the president at George Washington University, and an education professor who in 1985 helped design a teacher training program especially for military personnel. "We have to make sure they succeed, because they have skills that schools need."

Virtually all these former military personnel possess strong backgrounds in mathematics and science and fine management and organization skills. Many also taught young recruits in the armed services, mak-

ing the transition from the military to the classroom a logical one, a chief reason many former military people cite for pursuing second careers in public schools.

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Also, teacher training programs especially aimed at military personnel have been created at 10 colleges and universities, many of them near military bases. The oldest is at Old Dominion University in Norfolk, Va., whose four-year-old program has grown to 400 students from 35 students in its first year.

A major problem in recruiting former soldiers to teaching is that when military personnel retire their pension is about half of their salary, yet they often still have families to support. When they pursue teacher certification courses, they usually do so at the expense of getting another job. Representative Jim Kolbe, Republican of Arizona, has proposed legislation that would allow retired military people to continue to receive full pay for one year after they leave so they can pursue college courses needed for certification.

If a teaching candidate survives the course work and the student teaching, finding work is not easy. The hiring of teachers in each of the nation's 15,600 school districts is highly decentralized, and some school systems do not hire until a few weeks before the academic year starts. Legislation proposed by Senator William V. Roth Jr., Republican of Delaware, would create a nationwide job bank to match would-be teachers with job openings.

Underlying the bureaucratic hassles are differences between the military and public school classroom en-



Jim Wilson/The New York Times

Many former military personnel are pursuing second careers as teachers. Isaac Bristow, a former Navy lieutenant commander who is a student

teacher in a San Francisco high school, has had trouble maintaining discipline. "I can't rely on the authority my rank gave me in the military," he said.

vironments. Some former military people have difficulty bringing their vocabularies down to student level. Others have trouble figuring out how to administer discipline without the advantages of military rank.

"You can give orders to a private, but you can't give orders to a kid with green hair and an earring," Dr. Shotel said.

Indeed, another problem is the changes in the students over the past three decades. Dr. Robert McDonald, a professor of curriculum and instruction at Old Dominion, said of the new teachers, "They say the school they would have liked to have taught in existed in 1959."

The social problems that many children bring to school have worn down some of these early teaching recruits. Among them is Mr. Dexter, the Portsmouth teacher, who retired from the Navy after 26 years as a supplies officer.

Mr. Dexter, who gets advice from his wife, an elementary school teacher, said he planned to look for another school next fall. "I don't know if I want to do this inner-city stuff," he said. "I liken teaching to being an ensign in my early years in the Navy, only I don't have a chief petty officer to take care of me."

Roland Hargett, a retired Air Force senior master sergeant in Columbia, S.C., wanted to become a public school teacher to help minority students. "I see myself as a coach and a motivator," said Mr. Hargett, who is black. "I want to tell kids that if you prepare yourself and get an education and work hard then you can do it."

### Coaching in Discipline

School districts have generally welcomed these new teachers with enthusiasm. In San Francisco, Isaac Bristow, a former Navy lieutenant

commander, said he has been supported by other teachers and by his principal, Philip Lum, as he navigates his new surroundings.

One area in which veteran teachers have helped to coach Mr. Bristow is discipline. Although he is enrolled in a teacher training program for the military at San Francisco State University, Mr. Bristow has discovered that education courses do not really help a new teacher quell a rambunctious class.

"The classroom is not the military, where people have the authority to discipline," he said. "I can't rely on the authority my rank gave me in the military."

Mr. Bristow says he is learning, for example, to ask disruptive students "if they have something to share with the whole class." But sometimes, he said, an old-fashioned military-style glare does the trick.

psychology at the University of Michigan, and his colleague, James W. Stigler, compared children's math performance in Japan, Taiwan and the United States over a 10-year period. They found that Asian children's scores were better in first grade, and that the older the children got, the further behind the Americans fell. Nor were many American children among the highest scorers, Mr. Stevenson said, so it was not just a question of the lesser students' bringing down the Americans' average.

"I'm convinced there's really a serious problem," said Mr. Stevenson, co-author with Mr. Stigler of "The Learning Gap," the new book about their study published by Summit Books.

### A 'Triage' in Education?

The debate, both sides say, has crucial implications for education policy. The revisionists argue that exaggerating the crisis in all American schools distorts policies that should be focused on poor schools where children are really failing.

"The top are doing as well as they need to," Mr. Hodgkinson said. "The middle are going to take care of themselves better than the lower third will. It's triage."

By contrast, the Bush education plan assumes that all schools must do better. "To say the only problem we have is inner-city schools is misleading," Ms. Ravitch said. "There are lots and lots of good suburban schools where kids have not gotten a good education. It's not the inner-city kids who are dragging us down."

A debate about which schools are in trouble, Mr. Tucker said, misses the point. "Our competitors haven't made these choices" between the best and worst students, he said. Instead, they teach most of their citizens the skills they need to find productive jobs and lead full lives. For example, Mr. Tucker said, the top 2 percent of American students perform as well on math tests as the top 50 percent of Japanese students.

In the end, he said, what this debate reveals is how few answers there are to the important questions — how well are schools and students doing compared with other nations, and how will Americans know when their schools are good enough?

*introd as  
Ed Pres*  
NATIONAL TEACHER OF THE YEAR \ ROSE GARDEN  
TUESDAY, APRIL 7, 1992 \ 11:15 A.M.

THANK YOU, LAMAR. WELCOME TO THE ROSE GARDEN,  
EVERYBODY -- IN ADDITION TO OUR SECRETARY OF EDUCATION,  
I'M GLAD TO SEE GORDON AMBACH OF THE COUNCIL OF CHIEF  
STATE SCHOOL OFFICERS; SUPERINTENDENTS ROBERT SCHILLER  
AND MICHAEL EMLAW FROM MICHIGAN; ALL YOU KIDS FROM  
JEFFERSON JUNIOR HIGH AND SAINT RITA'S SCHOOL; AND, OF  
COURSE, THE FOLKS I JUST HAD THE PLEASURE TO MEET IN  
THE OVAL OFFICE -- TOM, DIANE, AND MALCOLM FLEMING AND  
DIANE'S MOTHER JOSEPHINE ROSINSKI. \ \ *Stand up*

- 2 -

WE'RE ALL HERE TODAY TO SALUTE AND THANK THE  
THOUSANDS OF OUTSTANDING MEN AND WOMEN WHO EDUCATE THIS  
NATION'S CHILDREN. THERE'S NO CALLING GREATER THAN A  
TEACHER'S, BECAUSE THERE'S NOTHING MORE PRECIOUS THAN  
WHAT THEY TOUCH -- THE MINDS OF OUR YOUTH. \ \

THE TALMUD SAYS TEACHERS ARE OUR "PROTECTORS."  
THAT'S TRUE. BY TEACHING OUR KIDS WHAT WE'VE LEARNED -  
- AND BY TEACHING THEM TO DREAM -- TEACHERS PROTECT THE  
TREASURES OF OUR PAST AND THE PROMISE OF OUR FUTURE.

\ \ \

TODAY, I WANT TO SHARE WITH YOU A STORY -- ABOUT A DETROIT KID BROUGHT UP BY HIS GRANDPARENTS, GORDON AND CARRIE BELL STARKS. HE STRUGGLED IN SCHOOL -- WAS LABELED A SLOW LEARNER.

WHEN HE DROPPED OUT OF HIGH SCHOOL, HE COULDN'T READ OR WRITE OR SPELL. HE DIDN'T THINK THAT MATTERED. BUT ONE DAY IT DID. HIS FAITH BECAME TREMENDOUSLY IMPORTANT TO HIM AND HE WANTED TO READ THE BIBLE, BUT HE COULDN'T -- HE DIDN'T KNOW HOW.

---

FROM THAT MOMENT, HE THOUGHT ABOUT WHAT IT WOULD REALLY MEAN TO TAKE CHARGE OF HIS LIFE. \

THAT MOMENT CHANGED HIS LIFE. FIVE YEARS AFTER HE DROPPED OUT, HE ENROLLED IN NIGHT SCHOOL TO LEARN HOW TO READ HIS BIBLE -- AND EARN HIS HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA. HE WENT ON TO BIBLE COLLEGE, WHILE WORKING AS A MINISTER TO KIDS LIKE HIMSELF IN NORTHWEST DETROIT. HERE HE FOUND HE HAD THE POWER TO TOUCH AND CHANGE LIVES.

HE DECIDED TO BECOME A TEACHER, AND WORKED WITH FORGOTTEN KIDS AT A STATE INSTITUTION FOR JUVENILE OFFENDERS.

THERE'S AN OLD SAYING: "WHOEVER WOULD BE A TEACHER OF MEN, LET HIM BEGIN BY TEACHING HIMSELF BEFORE TEACHING OTHERS -- AND LET HIM SET AN EXAMPLE BEFORE TEACHING BY WORD." \\ THAT'S EXACTLY WHAT THE YOUNG MAN OF THAT STORY DID -- AND WE'RE HERE TODAY TO HONOR HIM AS THE 1992 TEACHER OF THE YEAR -- THOMAS FLEMING.  
\\

TOM IS A HERO -- A MAN OF STRENGTH, COURAGE AND GREAT HEART. FOR THE LAST 20 YEARS, AS LEAD TEACHER IN THE WASHTENAW <sup>Presumably for</sup> COUNTY JUVENILE DETENTION PROGRAM, HE'S TAUGHT HISTORY, GOVERNMENT AND GEOGRAPHY TO KIDS AGE 12-16.

BUT HE TEACHES MUCH MORE. TO KIDS WHO'VE HAD THE HOPE DRAINED OUT OF THEM BY A VICIOUS CYCLE OF ABUSE, NEGLECT, FAILURE, DRUGS, AND CRIME -- HE GIVES LIFE-TRAINING. HERE'S WHAT HE SAYS TO THEM: "KNOWLEDGE IS POWER -- THE MORE YOU KNOW, THE MORE YOU'RE WORTH."

IN THESE "THROW-AWAY" KIDS HE INSTILLS PRIDE. \\  
\\

TOM DOESN'T WANT THE MOON FOR HIS KIDS. HE WANTS SOMETHING MORE IMPORTANT -- A FUTURE. IN HIS CLASSROOM, IT WILL BE A FUTURE FORGED OUT OF NEW PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY -- ENTHUSIASM <sup>and</sup> FOR LEARNING -- AND HOPE.

SOME OF HIS KIDS HAVE GONE ON TO RESPECTED CIVIC AND RELIGIOUS POSITIONS -- ONE EVEN REBUILT TOM'S ORIGINAL YOUTH CLUB AS A MINISTRY OF HIS OWN.

AND ONE OF HIS KIDS, "SATURDAY NIGHT LIVE" COMEDIAN A. WHITNEY BROWN, IS HERE WITH US TODAY -- WHERE ARE YOU, WHITNEY? \\  
WHITNEY SPOKE FOR MANY OF TOM'S KIDS WHEN, MORE THAN 20 YEARS AFTER BEING IN HIS CLASSROOM, HE DEDICATED HIS BOOK "THE BIG PICTURE" TO TOM AND TO HIS COLLEAGUE ANNE KLEIN, WHO'S ALSO HERE TODAY. HE CALLED THEM "TWO TEACHERS WHO MADE A DIFFERENCE." \\\

*I'm glad you didn't bring Dan & Carvey.*

I HAVE A FEELING THIS CRYSTAL APPLE ISN'T AS IMPORTANT TO TOM AS HIS OTHER REWARDS -- SEEING THE FIRST SPARK OF LIGHT IN A KID'S EYE -- OR EVEN JUST HAVING A KID, WHO NEVER BEFORE HAD BEEN ABLE TO READ, ASK HIM FOR A BOOK FROM THE PUBLIC LIBRARY.

BUT THE APPLE DOES SYMBOLIZE THE RESPECT WITH WHICH TOM'S COUNTRY VIEWS HIM. AND THE APPLE REMINDS US OF TOM'S MESSAGE: EDUCATION IS IMPORTANT BECAUSE EVERY LIFE CAN BE REDEEMED -- EVERY LIFE COUNTS. ///

WHETHER YOU'RE CONCERNED ABOUT THE BIG ISSUES THAT SHAPE OUR WORLD -- OR ABOUT THE VALUES CLOSE TO HOME, EDUCATION IS A FUNDAMENTAL PART OF THE THREE PRECIOUS LEGACIES AMERICANS TAKE TO HEART: STRONG FAMILIES. GOOD JOBS. A WORLD AT PEACE.

EVERY DAY, ON THE MOST INTENSE AND PERSONAL LEVEL, TOM FLEMING SEES THE HEART OF THE PROBLEMS WE FACE: THE BREAKDOWN OF FAMILIES -- THE LOSS OF TRADITIONAL VALUES -- THE LURE OF CRIME AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE -- THE DEAD-END OF UNEMPLOYMENT AND HOPELESSNESS.

BUT HE KNOWS THAT GOOD TEACHERS WILL HELP US FIND A SOLUTION -- FOR WITH EVERY STUDENT YOU TEACH -- YOU SHAPE A FUTURE, YOU TOUCH A LIFETIME. \\\

BUT TEACHERS CAN'T EXIST IN ISOLATION. OUR TREMENDOUS RESPECT FOR THEM, AND OUR UTTER CONVICTION THAT EDUCATION IS THE KEY TO OUR COUNTRY'S FUTURE, LED US TO DEVELOP AMERICA 2000 -- OUR REVOLUTIONARY BLUEPRINT FOR EDUCATIONAL REFORM.

IT WILL LEAD US TO <sup>achieve</sup> ~~REACH~~ OUR SIX NATIONAL EDUCATION GOALS: ADOPTED MORE THAN TWO YEARS AGO IN AN EXTRAORDINARY NONPARTISAN, FEDERAL-STATE PARTNERSHIP BY THE NATION'S GOVERNORS AND THIS ADMINISTRATION.

LET ME REMIND YOU OF THESE SIX GOALS, WHICH WILL PROPEL THIS NATION FORWARD INTO EXCELLENCE. BY THE YEAR 2000 -- OUR CHILDREN WILL START SCHOOL READY TO LEARN. \ AMERICA'S STUDENTS WILL ACHIEVE AT LEAST A 90% HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION RATE. \

THEY WILL DEMONSTRATE COMPETENCE IN FIVE CORE SUBJECTS  
MEASURED AGAINST WORLD-CLASS STANDARDS. \

BY THE YEAR 2000, OUR CHILDREN WILL BE FIRST IN THE  
WORLD IN SCIENCE AND MATH. \ OUR ADULTS WILL BE  
LITERATE AND ABLE TO COMPETE IN THE WORK FORCE. \ AND  
FINALLY, OUR SCHOOLS WILL BE SAFE, DISCIPLINED, AND  
DRUG-FREE. \\\

WE'LL ACHIEVE THESE GOALS BY ADVANCING FOUR  
TRANSFORMING IDEAS AT THE HEART OF AMERICA 2000.

FIRST, FLEXIBILITY FOR TEACHERS AND PRINCIPALS --  
FREEDOM FROM THE WEB OF FEDERAL REGULATIONS THAT IMPOSE  
A ONE-SIZE-FITS-ALL SOLUTION ON OUR SCHOOLS. \

SECOND, A GENERATION OF NEW AMERICAN SCHOOLS --  
TEACHERS ARE CRITICAL TO THIS EXCITING BREAK-THE-MOLD  
EXPERIMENT IN WHAT EDUCATION CAN BE. \

**THIRD, WORLD CLASS STANDARDS AND VOLUNTARY NATIONAL EXAMS -- AGAIN, TEACHERS ARE LEADING THE WAY IN DEFINING STANDARDS, CREATING CURRICULUM FRAMEWORKS AND DEVELOPING EXAMS TO HELP US RAISE OUR SIGHTS AND MEASURE OUR PERFORMANCE. \**

**FOURTH AND FINALLY, PARENTAL CHOICE OF SCHOOLS -- PUBLIC, PRIVATE, RELIGIOUS. \ \**

**OUR PLAN IS INNOVATIVE; IT'S EXCITING; IT'S UNITING THIS COUNTRY -- AND IT WILL WORK. \ \ \**

*Loud Press*  
///

**CHANGING OUR SCHOOLS IS TOO IMPORTANT TO WAIT -- OR TO WASTE -- A GENERATION. THAT'S WHY EDUCATION IS ONE OF THE FIVE URGENT REFORM CHALLENGES I'VE BEEN TALKING ABOUT. WE KNOW WE'VE GOT TO BE COMPETITIVE IN A CHANGING WORLD. WE CAN'T GO ON SENDING OUR CHILDREN INTO THE WORKING WORLD UNDER-EDUCATED AND ILL-EQUIPPED -- AND EXPECT THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY TO SPEND BILLIONS TEACHING NEW WORKERS WHAT THEY SHOULD HAVE LEARNED IN SCHOOL.**

**STATUS QUO SCHOOLS WON'T CARRY US INTO THE NEXT CENTURY. WE SET OUR GOALS FOR THE YEAR 2000 BECAUSE WE KNOW OUR ECONOMIC HEALTH -- OUR ECONOMIC SURVIVAL -- DEPENDS ON HOW WE EDUCATE OURSELVES TO FACE THE CHALLENGES A NEW CENTURY WILL BRING.**

**TOM AND THE THOUSANDS OF MEN AND WOMEN LIKE HIM WILL HELP US MEET THOSE CHALLENGES.**

**TEACHERS KNOW THAT REAL EXCELLENCE DEMANDS COMMITMENT FROM EVERYONE IN EVERY COMMUNITY AS WE WORK TO CREATE COMMUNITIES WHERE LEARNING CAN HAPPEN.**

**IT DEMANDS THAT TALENTED MEN AND WOMEN GIVE TIME TO BECOME TUTORS AND MENTORS. IT DEMANDS THAT BUSINESSES, CHURCHES AND SYNAGOGUES, AND CIVIC GROUPS JOIN TOGETHER TO SUPPORT LOCAL SCHOOLS. IT DEMANDS THAT EVERY CITIZEN HELP HIS COMMUNITY DEVELOP A PLAN OF ACTION BASED ON AMERICA 2000 -- AND HELP THE NATION REACH THE NATIONAL EDUCATION GOALS.**

**TOGETHER, WE WILL REINVENT THE AMERICAN SCHOOL  
COMMUNITY BY COMMUNITY, NEIGHBORHOOD BY NEIGHBORHOOD,  
ALL ACROSS THIS COUNTRY. \\\**

**AND AT THE HEART OF THIS SHINING NEW SCHOOL WILL BE  
-- AS ALWAYS -- THE TEACHER. LAST WEEK AT THE OSCARS,  
FILMMAKER GEORGE LUCAS MIGHT HAVE CAPTURED IT BEST,  
WHEN HE THANKED THE TEACHERS OF HIS CHILDHOOD. HE  
SAID: "ALL OF US ... ARE TEACHERS, TEACHERS WITH VERY  
LOUD VOICES, BUT WE WILL NEVER MATCH THE POWER OF THE  
TEACHER WHO IS ABLE TO WHISPER IN A STUDENT'S EAR."**

---

**TOM -- ON BEHALF OF ALL AMERICANS WHO'VE HAD THE  
RARE AND PRICELESS PRIVILEGE OF HAVING A FINE TEACHER  
WHISPER IN THEIR EAR -- CONGRATULATIONS. YOU TEACH THE  
ONE LESSON THAT MATTERS MOST. THERE'S NO DISTINCTION  
BETWEEN WHO YOU ARE AND WHAT YOU DO -- YOU'VE WOVEN THE  
VALUES OF YOUR LIFE INTO YOUR WORK. THANK YOU, TOM --  
AND MAY GOD BLESS YOU. \\\**

AND NOW I HAVE SOMETHING SPECIAL FOR YOU. THE  
APPLE IS THE TRADITIONAL SYMBOL OF TEACHING -- AND  
CRYSTAL REPRESENTS THE CLARITY OF VISION AND COMMITMENT  
THAT GREAT TEACHERS POSSESS. ON BEHALF OF A GRATEFUL  
AND ADMIRING NATION, TOM -- CONGRATULATIONS.

# # # # #



# FACT CHECK COPY

(Hinchliffe/Nix)  
April 2, 1992 9 p.m.  
TEACHER Draft One

**PRESIDENTIAL REMARKS: NATIONAL TEACHER OF THE YEAR  
TUESDAY, APRIL 7, 1992 11:15 A.M.  
ROSE GARDEN**

*OPL  
Diane  
Leonard*

Thank you and welcome to the Rose Garden. [ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS]

We're here to salute and thank the thousands of outstanding men and women who educate this nation's children. There's no calling greater than a teacher's, because there's nothing more precious than what they touch -- the minds of our youth. The Talmud says teachers are our "protectors." That's true. By teaching our kids what we've learned, and by teaching them to dream, teachers protect the treasures of our past and the promise of our future.

*Teacher's  
Miscellany  
Pg 285*

I want to share a story -- about a Detroit kid brought up by his grandparents. He struggled in school -- was labeled a slow learner. When he dropped out of high school he couldn't read or write or spell. He didn't think that mattered. But one day it did. His faith became tremendously important to him and he wanted to read the Bible, but he couldn't -- he didn't know how. From that moment, he thought about what it would really mean to take charge of his life.

*Per Diane Fleming (313) 663-9376*

*Gordon and Carrie Bell Sparks*

*Fleming essay in application*

*Mention service in France in last paragraph*

That moment changed his life. Five years after he dropped out, he ~~went to~~ <sup>enrolled in</sup> night school ~~for two years~~ to learn how to read -- and earn his high school diploma. He went on <sup>to</sup> ~~for seven more~~ years to Bible College, while working as a minister to kids in the ghetto. Here he found he had the power to touch and change lives. He decided to become a teacher. He began by working with forgotten kids at a state institution for juvenile offenders.

*DT NW neighborhood*

*adolescents w/ special needs at a psychiatric hospital and then with*

→

Teacher's  
Miscellany  
Pg. 278

There's an old saying: "Whoever would be a teacher of men, let him begin by teaching himself before teaching others -- and let him set an example before teaching by word." That's exactly what the young man of that story did -- and we're here today to honor him as the 1992 Teacher of the Year -- Thomas Fleming.

Tom is a hero -- a man of strength, courage and great heart.

Fleming  
application

For the last 20 years, as lead teacher in the Washtenaw County Juvenile Detention Program, he's taught history, government and geography to youths aged 12-16. But he teaches much more. To kids who've had the hope drained out of them by a vicious cycle of abuse, neglect, failure, drugs, and crime -- he gives life-

Fleming  
application

training. Here's what he says <sup>to them:</sup> "Knowledge is power -- the more you know, the more you're worth." And in these suspicious throw-away kids he instills pride.

e.g. sad, tormented, troubled  
wording change needed

Tom doesn't want the moon for his kids. He wants something more important -- a future. In his classroom, it will be a future forged out of new personal responsibility; enthusiasm for learning; and hope.

Fleming  
application

Some of his kids have gone on to respected civic and religious positions -- one even took over Tom's original inner-city youth ministry, <sup>clubs as a</sup> ~~of his own~~.

Fleming  
application  
and  
Diane  
Fleming

And one, "Saturday Night Live" comedian <sup>Tom's</sup> A. Whitney Brown, spoke for many when, <sup>more than 23</sup> 20 years after being in his classroom, he dedicated his book to Tom for the difference this man had made in his life.

I have a feeling this crystal apple isn't as important to Tom as his other rewards -- seeing the first spark of light in a kid's eye -- or even just having a kid <sup>before had</sup> who'd never been able to

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read ask for a book from the public library. But the apple does symbolize the respect in which Tom's country holds him. And the apple reminds us of his message: education is important because every life can be redeemed -- every life counts.

Every day, on the most intense and personal level, Tom Fleming sees the heart of the problems we face -- the breakdown of families; the loss of traditional values; the lure of crime and substance abuse; the dead-end of unemployment and hopelessness. But he knows that good teachers will help us find a solution -- for with every student you teach -- you shape a future, you touch a lifetime.

But teachers can't exist in isolation. Our tremendous respect for them, and the utter conviction that education is the key to our country's future, led us to develop America 2000: our revolutionary blueprint for educational excellence. At the heart of it stand four key reforms. First, Flexibility for Teachers and Principles: freedom from the web of federal regulations that impose a one-size-fits-all solution on our schools. Second, A Generation of New American Schools -- a break-the-mold experiment in what education can be. Third, World Class Standards and Voluntary National Exams -- to help us raise our sights and measure our performance. Fourth and finally, Parental Choice of Schools -- public, private, religious. Our plan is innovative; it's exciting; it's uniting this country -- and it will work.

Changing our schools is too important to wait -- or to waste -- a generation. We know we've got to be competitive in a

An  
2000  
program  
booklet

changing world. We set our goals for the year 2000 because we know our economic health -- our economic survival -- depend on how we educate ourselves to face the challenges of a new century.

Tom and the thousands of men and women like him will help us meet those challenges. Teachers know that real excellence demands commitment from everyone in every community as we work to create a new generation of American schools. It demands that talented men and women give time to become tutors and mentors. It demands that businesses, churches and synagogues, and civic groups form partnerships to support local schools. It demands that every citizen helping his or her community develop a plan of action based on America 2000: our new Declaration of Educational ~~Rights~~ <sup>Excellence</sup>.

Together, we will reinvent the American school community by community, neighborhood by neighborhood, all across this country.

And at the heart of this shining new school will be -- as always -- the teacher. Last week at the Oscars, filmmaker George Lucas might have captured it best, when he thanked the teachers of his childhood. He said: "all of us ... are teachers, teachers with very loud voices, but we will never match the power of the teacher who is able to whisper in a student's ear."

Tom -- on behalf of all Americans who've had the rare and priceless privilege of having a fine teacher whisper in their ear -- congratulations. You teach the one lesson that matters most. There's no distinction between who you are and what you do: you've woven the values of your life into your work. Thank you, Tom -- and may God bless you.

Now, I'd like to present the Crystal Apple to Thomas E. Fleming.

Change  
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 Excellence

NEXIS  
 AP News  
 story  
 March  
 30, 1992

name values

FACT CHECK COPY

(Hinchliffe/Nix)  
April 2, 1992 9 p.m.  
TEACHER Draft One

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what we've learned, and by teaching them to dream, teachers  
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Teacher's  
Miscellany  
p. 285

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Fleming  
essay in application

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Teacher's  
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Fleming  
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Fleming  
application

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change  
needed</sup>

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Fleming  
application

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Fleming  
application  
and  
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Fleming

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*Change for Real Excellence Nelson*

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*NEXIS AP story March 30, 1992*

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*Now, I'd like to present the Crystal Apple to - . . .*

(Hinchliffe/Nix)  
April 3, 1992 9 a.m.  
TEACHER Draft Two

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That moment changed his life. Five years after he dropped out, he went to night school for two years to learn how to read -- and earn his high school diploma. He went on for seven more years to Bible College, while working as a minister to city kids like himself. Here he found he had the power to touch and change lives. He decided to become a teacher, and worked with forgotten kids at a state institution for juvenile offenders.

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reform challenges I've been talking about. We know we've got to be competitive in a changing world. We can't go on sending our children into the working world under-educated and ill-equipped - - and expect the business community to spend billions teaching new workers what they should have learned in school. Status quo schools won't carry us into the next century. We set our goals for the year 2000 because we know our economic health -- our economic survival -- depend on how we educate ourselves to face the challenges a new century will bring.

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And at the heart of this shining new school will be -- as always -- the teacher. Last week at the Oscars, filmmaker George Lucas might have captured it best, when he thanked the teachers of his childhood. He said: "all of us ... are teachers, teachers with very loud voices, but we will never match the power of the teacher who is able to whisper in a student's ear."

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And now

# # # # #



# National Teacher of the Year Program

April 2, 1992

**FACSIMILE TRANSMISSION**

**202/456-6218**

**3 Pages**

## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Michell Nix  
The White House

**FROM:** Jon Quam, Director

**SUBJECT:** Article on Thomas Fleming

Per your request.

Please give me a call if you need additional information. Thanks.

The Ann Arbor News  
Sept. 8, 1991, p. B1 + B4

LOC

# A NATURAL TEACHER

## Finalist for state teacher of the year has spent 20 years with delinquents

By DAVE WILKINS  
NEWS STAFF REPORTER

Tom Fleming circles the large rectangular table in the center of the small classroom.

He leans over one student to point out a detail in a textbook; he leans on another who isn't much interested in the morning's assignment.

It is Fleming's 20th year as a teacher here, at the Washtenaw County Juvenile Detention Center.

His lesson during third period Wednesday was disjointed and rambling — part teaching, part preaching, part plain talk: A brief overview of U.S. history from the Great Depression to Pearl Harbor. A chat over a fight that escalated from a dodgeball game the night before. A discussion of the causes of homelessness. A mini-sermon on responsibility.

Tall and white-haired, he circles — checking students' progress on the assignment, offering insights, making connections — and the lesson take its own shape.

Fleming reminds his students they must date all their papers. "I want you to know every day you're in jail," he says. "When you're back in your own school, I want you to say, 'I'll be good, I'll be good, I'll be good.'"

Eight or 10 incarcerated teen-agers sit around the table: A bright, personable 14-year-old girl who reads novels and can easily handle the

will be here for a week, others for months. Some return again and again.

It's like a one-room schoolhouse for delinquents, with kids at drastically different stages academically, emotionally, and socially — with teachers who can never be sure how much of a difference they make.

"I know I'm not going to have you long," Fleming tells his students. "I'm just trying to get you in touch with what you can do. . . . But this is a 50-50 proposition. I cannot teach you if you don't want to learn."

Later, after the class is over and the students are off having lunch, Fleming says: "I don't know how you (meet their diverse needs) academically. I do know how important it is to affirm that child — letting that kid have some success in school, letting them have a good day."

### Troubled roads

Perhaps Tom Fleming gets through to troubled young people because he has traveled many of their roads: abandonment, poverty, racism, difficulty in school.

At the same time, he knows the strength of a nurturing hand. Fleming was raised by hard-working grandparents whom he cherished. Even today, long after they've passed away, Fleming asks that they be mentioned here: Gordon and Carrie Bell Sparks.

When he was 11 or 12, he told his grandmother he would one day buy the couple a home.

**'I don't know how you (meet their diverse needs) academically. I do know how important it is to affirm that child — letting that kid have some success in school.'**

— Tom Fleming

**'Maybe part of it has to do with his own sense of wonder. He's a person who's always learning, buying books, reading books, talking to people, searching for answers, trying to see**

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work of an 11th-grader. A student with a visual disability that makes reading and writing a struggle. A 16-year-old boy caught, when he's outside these walls, in a tug-of-war between his success as a drug dealer and the traditional values he confronts at home.

things in a new way.'  
— The Rev. Larry Greenfield

"Nobody wants to touch these kids," says Dale Rice, a special education professor at Eastern Michigan University who has known Fleming since 1965. "They've become so hardened over the years, there's just no way to get through."

"Tom gets through. He relishes it." For that, Fleming is one of 14 finalists for Michigan Teacher of the Year 1991-92. The winner is scheduled to be announced later this month.

Some of his students are neglected, some have learning disabilities, some can't read, some are repeat offenders. Some are 12 years old, others are 16. Many have never known success in school. Some

a home.  
"She said, 'Yeah, boy,' and rubbed my head," he says. "But that promise stayed in my heart."

After Fleming's birth in Redding, Pa., in 1933, his mother left him with her parents, one of three black families in their Detroit neighborhood. She said she would be back for him when she could afford to raise a child.

He saw her once when he was 9 or 10 years old and again as a young adult.

Fleming never knew his father. A "bad-ass kid" in a tough Detroit neighborhood, Fleming spent sixth grade in the equivalent of a reform school and ran with a rough crowd in high school: "I'd walk into school and somebody would say 'Hello, Sambo' or 'Hello, Hershey Bar,' and I'd fire 'em up."

He lied about his age to get into the National

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See TEACHER, B4

# Juvenile detention center teacher makes a difference

EACHER, from B1

d in 1949 and became a member of the 1279th Combat Engineers, ultimately serving with the occupation troops in Germany in the early 1950s.

After his hitch, he returned to the old neighborhood and look up with the old crowd. In a week, they were jailed for a break-in at a local theater. Fleming wasn't involved; still unsure if his friends were.

When he was released the next day, Fleming decided he was better off in the military and re-enlisted. About the same time, he saw a mother for the second time.

"She gave me a white cross and told me to do it all the time, because I'd be blessed," Fleming remembers.

When he was in Chaumont, France, driving a cement truck on an Army construction project that was building airstrips. He was saving money to a bank back home, and working most nights.

After one round of carousing in Paris with buddies, Fleming reached a turning point. "Not until I got back to the base that I realized I'd broken the cross," he says. "I felt totally damned my soul."

## and politics

After the draft, he sought help from a man named David who worked in the motor pool and was routinely chastised for reading the Testament. The man told Fleming to put his trust in Jesus.

When Fleming lost interest in drinking and praying on the barrack's concrete floor, he too was chastised: "While I was in the army, they'd throw combat boots at me."

When he returned from overseas in 1955, took the money he had saved from his military pay and showed it to his grandparents the home he had inherited. They used them as a boy. He went to night school, earned a high school equivalency diploma, and, in 1957, enrolled at Detroit Bible College, now William Tyndale College. "I always wanted to read the Bible," he says.

'These are kids who are wary of people. They've been burned and they're not going to just let anybody into their lives. Tom can win them over in a very honest way.'

— Dale Rice, EMU professor

"That's why I went back to school. My basic goal was just to learn to read the Bible."

While earning a bachelor's degree in religious education during the late '50s and early '60s, he combined his two loves — the church and working with young people — by serving as youth director at churches in northwest Detroit.

But later, while he was a graduate student at Eastern Michigan University, Fleming questioned the political relevance of the church. A "coffeehouse revolutionary" was born.

He was involved in the formation of the Black Student Union at Eastern and affiliated with the Black Panthers. In 1970, he participated in the first Black Action Movement march at the University of Michigan.

"When I enrolled in graduate school, I was disappointed with the politics of the religious community," Fleming wrote in the application his employer, the Washtenaw Intermediate School District, submitted to the Teacher of the Year program.

"I had met Dr. Martin Luther King during one of his visits to Detroit, and agreed with his assessment that the church 'was called to be the light of the world, and now is the tall-light. . . . I discovered black history and read almost day and night: Richard Wright, James Baldwin, Lerone Bennett, Langston Hughes, W.E.B. DuBois, and John Hope Franklin."

In the late 1970s, Fleming received "a second touch from God." Today, he is associate

minister at the First Baptist Church of Ann Arbor and less than a year away from being ordained.

"That would be confirmation in a sense," says the Rev. Larry Greenfield, interim minister at First Baptist. "I dare anybody to claim that this isn't already a full-fledged minister of God."

## Making a difference

In 1968, Fleming completed his master's degree in special education and took his first professional job teaching at the W.J. Maxey Boys Training School in Whitmore Lake. It didn't last long.

When two of Maxey's teen-age inmates were transferred to a mental facility in Traverse City, Fleming and another teacher, Anna Klein, complained, saying the boys were tough to handle but they were bright and did not belong in a mental institution.

One of the boys, Fleming says, "was just a satirist. The staff would say something to him and he'd come back with something smart and it'd piss off the staff. . . . He was sharp."

But the protests from Fleming and Klein were ignored.

"We were told it wasn't our business," Fleming says. "But I made it my business."

The two teachers went to Traverse City, retrieved the two boys and returned them to Maxey. Fleming ultimately lost his job over it. The teen-ager with a gift for satire was A.

Whitney Brown, today a writer and performer on television's "Saturday Night Live." He dedicated his 1989 book, "The Big Picture," "to Anna Klein and Tom Fleming, two teachers who made a difference."

## The natural

Last week, the detention center was full, with 27 juveniles. Fleming and the other two teachers who work there — Pat O'Connell and Deb Hanewich-Duranczyk — expect to see 200 to 250 students come through its "revolving door" this school year.

But Fleming shows no sign of tiring, of succumbing to the frustration of the work he has done for two decades.

The Rev. Greenfield says it's a "combination of passion, commitment and ability that makes this character so unusual."

"Maybe part of it has to do with his own sense of wonder," Greenfield says. "He's a person who's always learning, buying books, reading books, talking to people, searching for answers, trying to see things in a new way. . . ."

"There is a child in Tom Fleming. . . . There's an awe, an openness."

EMU's Rice explains it similarly.

"These are kids who are wary of people," he says. "They've been burned and they're not going to just let anybody into their lives."

"Tom can win them over in a very honest way. . . . He's a very honest person. It's not something he developed over the years — it's almost as if he was born with it. It's not something you learn from a college textbook. It's almost an art."

"You let your guard down around him. . . . You feel safe, you can trust him completely. Kids feel safe with him."

"It's not a technique. It's not a calculated part of him," he says. "It's natural. You talk about the natural in baseball. He's the natural with delinquent kids."

Rose Garden  
Educational

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President a crystal  
apple

On behalf of the  
Chief State  
School Officers

John Kwan

336-7047

Members of edue assoc  
Local Students & Teachers  
200 people

Wife, ~~a~~ son, mother-in-  
law



There's no distinction between who he is & what he does

MARRIED 1975

17 years

5

Integrating values into life & education

Not a  
qualification  
Kids keep  
you going

Why it's important  
to know the  
name of the person

Crashing  
Commencement

Interview

He's real

He'll tell you the truth

He's a special teacher

He believes in them.

their potential

Highly respected

Writing p  
Call from Cousin

1969

His respect & love for him  
has continued.

A. Whitney  
Brown  
Maxey Boys  
Training  
School

Follow thru program  
for Head Start

Piaget's Theory of Development

Rock video, or rap song  
sho

Will make them mad  
to defend

Intense & personal style  
Using high emotions  
10 yr old → 17 year olds

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Religious → wanted to read the Bible  
but couldn't & didn't know  
how

Wanted to read  
Met Martin Luther King in Detroit  
discovered his black history

Fleming's Grandmother's name - still alive  
Wife's name

Grandparent Carrie Bell Starks  
Grandfather Gordon

Diane, wife  
son Malcolm Gordon 13  
- 2. Thomas Kevin  
other marriage Sharon Fay

Ann Arbor News - John Deuan  
Sept 8 Article titled  
"A Natural Teacher"  
He's a born teacher  
That's who he is

Once bought  
Legos

Wizard of Oz, Robin Hood ←  
Uses characters to  
talk about good & evil

To Michelle  
Date 4/1 Time 1:40

**WHILE YOU WERE OUT**

M. Diane Fleming  
of \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone 313 663-9376  
Area Code Number Extension

TELEPHONED		PLEASE CALL	
CALLED TO SEE YOU		WILL CALL AGAIN	
WANTS TO SEE YOU		URGENT	
RETURNED YOUR CALL			

Message \_\_\_\_\_  
please call back  
regarding  
Thomas Fleming  
Operator George



23-021 CARBONLESS

*Devina*

# 1992 NATIONAL TEACHER OF THE YEAR APPLICATION FORM

## I. General Information/Signatures

Nominee Name Thomas A. Fleming

School Name Washtenaw County Juvenile Detention

School Address 2270 Platt Road

<u>Ann Arbor</u>	<u>Michigan</u>	<u>48104</u>	<u>( 313) 971-0034</u>
City	State	Zip Code	Telephone

School Profile (check one):       Urban       Suburban       Rural

Number of Students in Nominee's:      District 43,084      Building 215

Major Subject Area (if any) Special Education      Grade Level Secondary

Total Years of Teaching Experience 23      Years in Present Position 19

I hereby give my permission that any or all of the attached materials may be shared with persons interested in promoting the National Teacher of the Year Program. I also acknowledge that if selected as the 1992 National Teacher of the Year I will be released from classroom responsibilities during the year of my recognition in order to fulfill the obligations inherent in the honor.

Signature of Nominee *Thomas A. Fleming*      Date 10/30/91

## II. Educational History and Professional Development Activities

In 1950, when President Truman activated Michigan's 1279th Combat Engineers' unit of the National Guard, I left Detroit's Chadsey High School without knowing how to read, write, or spell. I consider my five and a half years of service in the U.S. Army part of my "higher education" because my experiences there changed my life and gave me the desire to learn and to read. When I returned from France in 1955, I enrolled in night school classes. In 1957 I completed the requirements for the G.E.D. and began to pursue a degree at the Detroit Bible College (now William Tyndale College). I graduated with a Bachelor's of Religious Education in 1964.

During this time, until 1966, I was also actively involved in ministry among youth in Detroit's northwest neighborhoods. I was a founding member and became youth director of the Bible Community Baptist Church (1958-1965). In 1963-64, I was youth director and then assistant minister of the New Light Baptist Church for two years (1965-1966). As a young minister, I led Bible studies with young adults and preached regularly. I began to build a personal library of books and to become an avid reader.

My interest in adolescents with special needs was sparked when I began commuting to Ypsilanti, Michigan and to a job at the Yorkwoods Center of the Ypsilanti Regional Psychiatric Hospital. I began coursework at Eastern Michigan University in 1965, and in 1968 graduated with a M.A. in Education and teacher certification for Special Education, K-12 and Regular Education, K-8. My student teaching took place at the W.J. Maxey Boys Training School, a state institution for juvenile offenders, and I was hired there as a social studies teacher in 1968.

At the end of that school year, I had the opportunity to join the High Scope Educational Research Foundation; I was an educational consultant for the foundation in Project Follow Through until June of 1971. In the fall of 1971, I was hired by the Washtenaw County Intermediate School District to teach in the county Juvenile Detention school program. I taught U.S. history, U.S. government, and geography following the special education guidelines of the State of Michigan.

I assumed the role of coordinating teacher within five years, and in that capacity, in addition to my teaching responsibilities, I have continued to interact with a variety of supporting agencies and individuals including the police department, court staff, volunteers from local universities, foster grandparents, and personnel from school districts in Washtenaw County, as well as serving as the de facto "principal" of the detention school. My students range from 12 to 16 years of age and from third grade to college level in academic performance.

In the course of my 19 years of teaching in the Washtenaw Intermediate School District, I

**(Section II. continued - Educational History and Professional Development Activities)**

have trained a number of special education majors from Eastern Michigan University and the University of Michigan. In March, 1982, I authored an article "Detention School Reaches Out with Second Chance for Troubled Youth," for the district newsletter, AREA. In 1984 a videotape of my presentation, "Educating the Juvenile Delinquent" was made by Dr. Dale Rice to be used in his teacher training courses at E.M.U. I also appeared in a film made in the early 1980's to promote the Foster Grandparent program at the national level.

I have been a member of the Phi Delta Kappa for eleven years. At different points I have held membership in the National Association of Black School Educators and the Michigan Association of Teachers of Exceptional Children, attending a number of workshops and conferences sponsored by these organizations.

My "continuing education" has always been the media and the printed word, although I have taken occasional courses to expand my knowledge of the field of special education. I have read extensively in the areas of education and related disciplines of psychology, child development, and sociology. I am continually reading books and articles in the areas of history, religion, government, and current national and world affairs, particularly those with an African-American focus. I am immersed in current events via educational media and radio and television news. I am a regular reader of local and regional newspapers and national news magazines. I attend lectures and workshops offered on the University of Michigan campus related to all these interests. I have an extensive library of books, textbooks, videos, and audio recordings of current and historical interest, and I incorporate this knowledge into my public speaking and community involvements.

### III. Professional Biography

My decision to become a teacher originated from my own love of learning and in the excitement of discovering that I could share knowledge with young people. This was during my earliest years in the neighborhood churches.

In 1958, as a church youth leader, I developed a plan to attract the young boys of our neighborhood to the church. Many of them came to special programs we had in the storefront church where weekly services were held. I began by starting baseball and football teams.

To bring a sense of pride and appreciation to our boys, ranging from 9 to 14 years, we called our group the "Boys Contact Club." The name also became our mission. We tried to persuade other boys to avoid getting into trouble by joining us. I played with these boys, talked with them about winning and losing and about the importance of friendship and trust. Later, some of these boys went to Vietnam and others distinguished themselves as civic and religious leaders. One of them returned and reestablished the club as a ministry of his own. This experience convinced me that I had something to offer as a role model for young people.

Later, as youth director in another church I was responsible for the entire youth ministry. It was exciting to teach foundational principles of honesty, fair play, and friendship, and to introduce black youth to the larger culture of the city.

When I enrolled in graduate school I was disappointed with the politics of the religious community. I had met Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. during one of his visits to Detroit, and agreed with his assessment that the church "was called to be the light of the world, and now it is the tail light!" I realized that many of the students I had worked with in the community had not developed sufficient skills in reading, writing, and spelling to succeed in life. Social studies was my strength. I discovered black history and read almost day and night: Richard Wright, James Baldwin, Lerone Bennett, Langston Hughes, W.E.B. DuBois, and John Hope Franklin.

In my first professional teaching job at the W.J. Maxey Boys Training School, I used this wealth of information in my social studies classes with delinquent youth. I developed my own materials to supplement the American history and government textbook lessons with information about the African-American experience. I collected pictures and other visuals, developed timelines, graphs, and worksheets that were inclusive of this part of our history and culture. I continue to do this in my teaching today.

In 1969 the opportunity came for me to become an educational consultant with the High Scope Educational Research Foundation in Ypsilanti, Michigan. There I worked with Dr. David Weikart, who has distinguished himself as one of the nationally recognized pioneers in research on early childhood education. For two years I traveled to the inner city public schools of Chicago, Denver, New York, and other cities, working with teachers, administrators, and parents

**(Section III. continued - Professional Biography)**

to integrate developmental curriculum into public school programs. From the Piagetian model of development I learned how children think, and began to believe that every individual must be nurtured to formulate a personal world view and a sense of belonging to the social environment in which they live.

In 1971 I was employed as a teacher in the school program at the Washtenaw County Juvenile Detention Center, under the administration of the Washtenaw Intermediate School District. During my years there I have developed a number of teaching strategies to attract troubled youth. I have learned to address the range of abilities and behaviors of students who have a history of delinquency, school failure, abuse, neglect, drug involvement, and dysfunctional family life. An example strategy was a summer "Reading Laboratory" in which I became the stenographer for students as they read books and verbally dictated a summary of the day's reading. These students became so excited about having such personal attention that they read voraciously and I was happy when the summer ended!

During another period I developed a series of packets of pictures and vocabulary words to involve students in classification, sequencing, and other thinking skills that would apply to our study of history, geography, and current events. Later, I brought in 3-D figures of popular characters from stories and TV, such as the Wizard of Oz, Fat Albert, and superheroes. These objects encouraged concept and vocabulary development, understanding of cause and effect, and the development of formal thinking operations.

I continue to develop hands-on activities in every area of the curriculum. In active learning I have seen students move from negativism to creative excitement and to begin to function as contributing members of a group. I consider this discovery to be my greatest professional accomplishment. Through it, I have come to know that my students can achieve mastery if given an appropriate instructional program and supportive follow-up. This conviction, that all students can succeed, motivates me as a professional educator and helps me to "keep hope alive."

#### IV. Community Involvement

I have been actively involved in the public realm through volunteer work and public speaking, and have been active in a number of community organizations in the secular and religious arenas.

I have done tutoring and storytelling at the local Hikone Community Center, Bryant community Center, and in public schools, with an emphasis on African-American heritage. I have continued to be involved as a volunteer Bible teacher at the Maxey Boys Training School for the past three years, visiting 1-2 Sundays a month, and most recently in Saturday study groups in connection with the chaplaincy work of Rev. Howard Fauntroy.

My civic activities have focused on promoting the memory and work of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and addressing issues related to cultural diversity. I have participated in community and church sponsored activities honoring Dr. King, including special services, annual marches, Black History Month observances, and public forums. My wife and I developed an exhibit of eight posters depicting the career of Dr. King. This exhibit has been widely displayed and recorded with my comments on a video shown on local television. I have addressed a variety of community groups, including the Kiwanis Club, federal postal workers, university students, and parents on topics such as "Kids and Crime," "The Legacy of Dr. King," and other subjects relating to troubled youth.

This is my third year as community representative to the University of Michigan's Office of Minority Affairs Advisory Committee, on which I serve to assist the Vice-Provost in the process of implementing the Michigan Mandate regarding recruitment, retention, and support for minority students at the university.

I am presently recording secretary for the Ministers Alliance of Washtenaw County, a group representing twenty-five black churches in the area. This group networks area churches and community groups to address such problems as substance abuse, school failure, minority business needs, and politics as it relates to community needs.

I have received several awards as a result of my public speaking and public service in the Washtenaw County area. Among them are State of Michigan House Resolution No. 381, dated January 13, 1982 commemorating my part in the Tenth Annual Ann Arbor Community Martin Luther King Birthday Celebration; a certificate of recognition from the Washtenaw County Community Service Agency; an award from the Hikone Community Center for my volunteer work; a certificate of appreciation from the Community Action Network of Ann Arbor, and two certificates of appreciation from the W.J. Maxey Boys Training School for volunteer work. In my continuing work at Maxey I am developing a curriculum of biblical literacy for youth who want to apply Christian principles to their lives.

## V. Philosophy of Teaching

I believe the saying that, if you give a hungry person a fish, that person will come looking for you each time the hunger returns; if you teach a hungry person to fish, you have solved their hunger problem for life. I apply this to my teaching almost unconsciously. When a student asks a "feed me" kind of question, such as, "How do you spell ... ?" I try to teach that student how to fish. I do this because being able to spell is a function of literacy, and comprehension is the doorway to knowledge.

My philosophy and methods of teaching evolved along with my own development. I have always been a student as well as a teacher. My own hunger for finding ways to help youth with special needs was fed by reading David Elkind, William Glasser, Robert Coles, Piaget, John Holt, and many others. Blending my classroom experience with the issues and answers presented by these masters, I began to see the emergence of my own unique style.

As a result, I operate on these principles and beliefs:

- The classroom experience is a dialogue between myself and the student, and among the students. This dialogue takes place as we develop relationships that lead to mutual trust.
- This dialogue always reveals a variety of learning styles and an array of experience and knowledge already possessed by the students, which allows me to plan activities which build on the students' strengths and to challenge their areas of weakness.
- I must give my students real skills and knowledge. I must expect some meaningful performance and involve them in the pursuit of significant knowledge which causes them to be engaged as thinking and doing persons, despite handicaps or prior failures.
- Self-esteem follows performance. It will not result from merely trying to understand the student or from allowing the student to perform rote exercises, but by actually leading the student to higher levels of performance.
- The student must be challenged to examine not only his knowledge, but his values. Education, particularly of troubled youth, cannot take place without relating it to the student's own life and the world around him. Young people today must be helped to formulate their own philosophy of life. To expect students to know what they believe and who they are is to relate to them as persons of integrity and value.

I believe that an outstanding teacher is one who has the courage to learn with students in a process of inquiry grounded in such principles. The teacher's methods, materials, evaluation

**(Section V. continued - Philosophy of Teaching)**

procedures, and discipline strategies must be consistent with his convictions about the value and purpose of education. A teacher who has come to terms with his or her own integrity and that of the student has the clarity and confidence to uphold the best connotations of the name "Teacher."

My personal teaching style, methods, and materials reflect my beliefs. I always try to communicate clearly that the performance level I will accept from students conforms to an agreed-upon standard, and I always make a record of performance that we can review together later.

Many of my students have had long records of failure. It is easy for them to identify with other students in the room who are uncooperative and negative. I do not ignore these important aspects of the learning milieu. I recognize that fear of failure is the major cause of uncooperative behavior.

It is important, I believe, to carry on a kind of negotiation with students who become behavior problems. If the behavior is loud and disruptive, I have the responsibility to maintain order; yet I am always willing to hear the student's complaint. I do this one-to-one, explaining to the noisy student why I need his cooperation. We agree on a compromise which avoids my taking an authoritative position. I listen to the student and learn the reason for the negative behavior.

I would characterize my teaching style as intense and personal. I seek to bring ideas to life, and I tell my students in the detention school that I am "at war with ignorance." The greatest reward I find in teaching is the hope I feel when students begin to change during my work with them. I find the underachieving student to be the source of exciting discoveries and continual personal challenge. (Recently I experienced a unique reward when one of my former students, who has become a TV comedian, published his first book and dedicated it to me as a teacher "who made a difference." Learning of his success, and his belief that I contributed to it, were tremendously gratifying.) Even though my students have many problems, each one deserves to have a "day in the sun." When they experience such a day, without threats of failure or punishment or embarrassment, it may be the very first day of their lives in which they have really wanted to have an education. My reward comes when they ask me for another assignment, or to bring them a book from the public library. To me, this is the ultimate reward of teaching "underachieving" youth.

## VI. Education Issues and Trends

"Educational reform" is the topic of the day. Nearly all national reform leaders feel that in the last two decades students were allowed too much freedom, resulting in performance declines even as schools were expected to broaden the range of services and curriculum offered to students. At a broader level, the concept of "choice" has manifested itself in "schools of choice" and the proliferation of private schools.

Racial separation in our society continues to be a significant issue. "Forced integration" has been replaced by a concern about "reverse discrimination," with a resulting lack of straightforward attention to the minority achievement gap. The inclusion of minority history and culture in the curriculum has lost popularity without the impetus provided by the civil rights movement. The current attempt to give "equal time" to a number of social groups has resulted in a curriculum which seems to water down and thus "rewrite" the contributions of significant persons and groups. Consequently, the curriculum is less effective and relevant to students. Some suggest that teachers have not been prepared to teach knowledgeably about diverse cultures, so that the possibilities for social healing through education are lost.

A similar situation seems to exist regarding education for competence in a technological age. Our schools seem ill-equipped to produce the kind of skilled and creative thinkers that are the foundation for the technological superiority of our global competitors.

Drugs, crime, sexual permissiveness, unemployment, and the erosion of family life seem to haunt our educational system, eating away at the foundational assumptions of the past about the purpose and value of education. Our students seem sophisticated, yet are often unmotivated to espouse the values upon which reform depends.

The most pressing issue relating to the students with whom I work in the detention school, in my volunteer work in the community, and in minority programs at the university can be expressed with a question: Is the young black male an endangered species? Scholars in the fields of education, psychology, literature, social policy, and juvenile justice report that the African-Americans from environments that breed crime, substance abuse, and unemployment are at risk. Many have a hostile and mistrustful view of life, including school. In particular, such students reject much of the subject matter presented to them in school and find no meaningful connection between school and the rest of their lives. The suspension and dropout rate for African-American males in middle and high school are much higher than in the rest of the population.

*Responsibility*

The causes of this situation are complex. They involve factors at work in the home, in the classroom, and in society, and are inseparable from the history of racial isolation and poverty of many of these families. The absence of a father in the home of many of these boys deprives them of a primary source of affection, modeling, life-training, and discipline. Male identity must be

**(Section VI. continued - Education Issues and Trends)**

fashioned from extended family members, or from peers, associates, teachers, and media models or popular heroes. Education at this most basic level - the formation of patterns of relationship, self-discipline, and appropriate social roles - is severely impacted by what is basically experienced as abandonment.

Neighborhood and community norms may likewise inhibit a healthy preparedness for school learning. Peer group attitudes and negative, sometimes violent, behaviors modeled on the street contrast sharply with values required for performance in school. The lack of environments which reinforce academic learning makes it difficult for such youths to be motivated to develop skills necessary for rewarding employment, and the lure of the drug culture and "macho" media images pull youths further into acting on the deep anger and frustration they feel. Failure and fear of potential failure situations prevent such boys from reaching out for help in positive ways. Rather, uncooperative and disruptive behaviors are used to mask discomfort and may escalate into open conflict with peers and teachers. Challenges to fragile self-esteem seem to abound.

Schools can't succeed unless they provide much more than the usual basic academic programs to such students. Young, failing students need avenues by which to communicate their frustrations. I also believe that their greatest asset for survival is found in their resilience. Many of them respond to adults who care enough to see through their bravado or break through their depressed silence. In my lessons on life skills, I have challenged the "macho" model of the male role and helped students to analyze the "media myths" of wealth and success. I have found that such students can be helped to identify their fears and face their needs in a supportive group experience. When basic trust is built through the efforts of a caring teacher, hope awakens in these young people and hunger for personal answers begins to be expressed in subtle ways.

If teachers are to play this critical kind of role they, too, will need support, special training, and a variety of concrete possibilities in the community to which they can point their students. Teachers alone cannot build partnerships with parents and other caring adults in the community, provide job opportunities, or solve complex social problems which impact on our black youth. The social will must be found at a larger level. But teachers and schools are critical to the solution.

## VII. The Teaching Profession

I recommend teaching to someone who feels excited about the possibility of influencing the development of young minds, and doesn't mind hard work, both physical and mental. I do not recommend to my students that they enter the teaching profession just to get a job with fringe benefits and long summer vacations. The satisfaction of public school teaching does not lie in these things. I say "yes" to one who is willing to grow into the job, because on-the-job training is an inevitable part of the challenge. Education courses may not, and in many ways cannot, prepare one for the realities of managing the learning of a group of young people. The expectations and needs of students can overwhelm an idealistic new teacher. Only with experience does one learn of the great responsibility entrusted to the teacher and the great respect that is afforded to a truly committed teacher. I believe there can be no greater honor than that felt when a student says, "You're a good teacher!"

I attempt to strengthen and improve the teaching profession on a personal rather than political level. I use my building and my classroom as a base for influencing all those I encounter. The most obvious role I have in this respect is as a supervising teacher. The student teaching experience is a critical opportunity to help future teachers come to terms with their inner aptitude for teaching. Teaching requires, before any other quality, the capacity to be sensitive to the personal integrity and value of each learner. To help the student teacher experience the "spark" that is ignited when a child senses their acceptance and enters into a learning relationship with them is to help that student teacher experience the moment when their teaching career really begins.

I believe that I strengthen the teaching profession when I challenge student teachers in the detention setting to become professional in their thinking and behavior. One important area of professionalism is the sense of authority which is expected of a teacher. I help my student teachers recognize that authority is conveyed not by assuming a controlling manner, but by active listening and by developing the ability to interpret student listening and by developing the ability to interpret student behavior (for example, fear of failure expressed as resistance) as they interact with students. The student teacher can be helped to avoid no-win situations by learning to give mature, constructive responses to challenges of authority.

Another important aspect of professionalism which I stress to those entering the field of special education is visionary leadership. I believe it is important, as a professional educator, to have a personal vision and to encourage each student teacher to have a vision of their own and to set a tone for their class which conveys their belief about learning. (For example, I believe that every child can become an independent learner, and I convey this by giving my students a theme such as "Knowledge is power; the more you know, the more you're worth." I have students write

**(Section VII continued - The Teaching Profession)**

this theme, recite it as a group rallying cry, and remind them of it as I encourage learning behaviors that push them to think for themselves and search out answers to their own questions.) As student teachers practice such principles, they develop professional attitudes.

Likewise, I strengthen respect for teachers and teaching when I invite volunteers into my classroom. They become part of the "dialogue" of learning and are held up as models and mentors. They bring the real world into the classroom better than any audio visual resource can, and they carry away an image of education, of students, and of the teaching profession that is communicated throughout the community. These people, young and old, scholar or common folk, are some of our best advocates.

Finally, I strengthen the teaching profession when I keep my own knowledge of the field current and reach out to share what I am doing and learning with my colleagues. Stress and isolation are all too common in the teaching profession; we need support networks and refreshing opportunities to see and meet national figures such as Marva Collins and Robert Coles. We need to develop mentors within our own ranks. In our detention school we have strengthened our effectiveness as teachers by developing a mutual support system within which we can struggle to master skills, work through problem situations, and brainstorm possible approaches to the curriculum and to particular students.

Accountability for effective public school education is based on a combination of factors at many levels. I believe that most teachers want, and need, to be accountable for certain professional practices, while they are not necessarily willing to be held solely accountable for student achievement.

The teacher operates within an educational system that is a framework for the practices which are associated with the term "accountability." The state establishes special education guidelines, for example, and these "rules and regulations" ensure students' safety and certain educational parameters (hours of instructional time, teacher certification requirements, etc.). The larger system does not set professional standards beyond requirements for teacher certification, yet individual teachers must function in the environment created by the funding and policy decisions made at this level.

At the local district level accountability becomes more personalized in the school board and administrative staff who determine policies and curriculum that directly affect the work of the individual teacher. The district determines many of the conditions within which professional teachers function. The district sets up relationships both of support and of critical evaluation. It is at this level that a balancing and blending of district goals and policies and the teacher's own goals for individual students take place, and where accountability takes places within a working

**(Section VII continued - The Teaching Profession)**

relationship between administrative and educational personnel.

The teacher's day to day job is also affected by the family and social context of the students. Though traditionally we know that education begins in the home, many students today do not have dome conditions supportive to academic success. Students who are in a lockup situation are preoccupied with their confinement and often uncertain future. They may be experiencing separation from various abusive habits or relationships. Although ideally, parents should be informed and incorporated as much as possible into the plan of learning for the unit, term, or day, this is not the reality for many students from troubled backgrounds.

It is in the classroom, at the personal level, that my accountability as a teacher really comes into focus. It is directly to the students. I am responsible for creating an atmosphere in which students can trust that the goals we develop together are for their personal enrichment and academic progress. I am accountable for bringing a sense of integrity and enthusiasm to each area of study and to each lesson, by providing a variety of attractive learning materials and activities to engage the student in independent thinking and the development of the student's point of view.

Accountability requires that I learn as much as possible about each student so that appropriate expectations are developed. I must discover, as part of the teaching process, what lesson work or do not work for a particular student. And I must hold to the fact that there is more to the success or failure of a student than a grade on an assignment or even a single course I teach. The cumulative files and behavior records that arrive on my desk before I meet the student may be accurate indicators of that student's present readiness for learning. I must recognize that past problems and other complex factors impact on achievement potential, but they do not determine future outcomes.

In the classroom I, the teacher, can bring to bear all the professional skills I have within a context that is impacted by numerous factors - systemic, societal, and personal. Accountability is a complex issue.

### VIII. National Teacher of the Year

As the National Teacher of the Year, I would feel a responsibility to communicate to the public and to my profession the importance of teaching. A "Teacher of the Year" is in a unique position to observe and to influence both individuals and the society at large.

It is important to make a distinction between social-political idealism about the teaching profession and the practical realities of daily life in the public school. Teachers are showered with rewards and appreciative recognition when students are successful; likewise, they are often blamed for students' failures or low achievement. What I would most want to communicate to the public is that the teaching profession cannot exist or succeed in isolation.

The teaching experience involves real students, the development of curriculum and learning activities, evaluation experiences, and relationships that should work together toward the end of producing a confident graduate. When this happens, teaching becomes a work to be cherished. A relationship can develop between teacher and learner in a kind of "private trust" that involves an appreciation of one another's uniqueness, a cooperative give and take, and the building of an emotional bond. By virtue of the time spent together in learning, the classroom group assumes the feel of an extended family, characterized by excitement, creativity, and mutual affection.

On the other hand, the best efforts of a teacher can be undermined by negative attitudes of students, by a lack of administrative support, by an inadequate physical environment, or by problems arising with parents, students, colleagues, or community groups. The impact of a crisis situation can be the destruction of the cohesiveness of the group. When teaching becomes stressful and energy for creativity must instead be channeled to resolving systemic issues, the romance of teaching fades.

The dedication and competence of teachers is constantly being questioned in our society at all levels by politicians, administrators, parents, students, and by fellow teachers. Yet the commitment of many teachers seems to go unrecognized. This arises in part from the false assumption that the teacher is almost solely responsible for the quality education. The fact is that all of the above persons and groups are partners in the educational process, and the best teacher cannot succeed without the accountability and responsibility of all.

I would tell America that this generation of young people is too valuable to lose. I would challenge responsible citizens in every community to come together to develop a plan of action based on a set of principles akin to a declaration of educational rights for our youth. This would be a commitment to secure for them the life, liberty, and happiness which can only be enjoyed by an educated populace.

Washtenaw Intermediate School District

# F O C U S

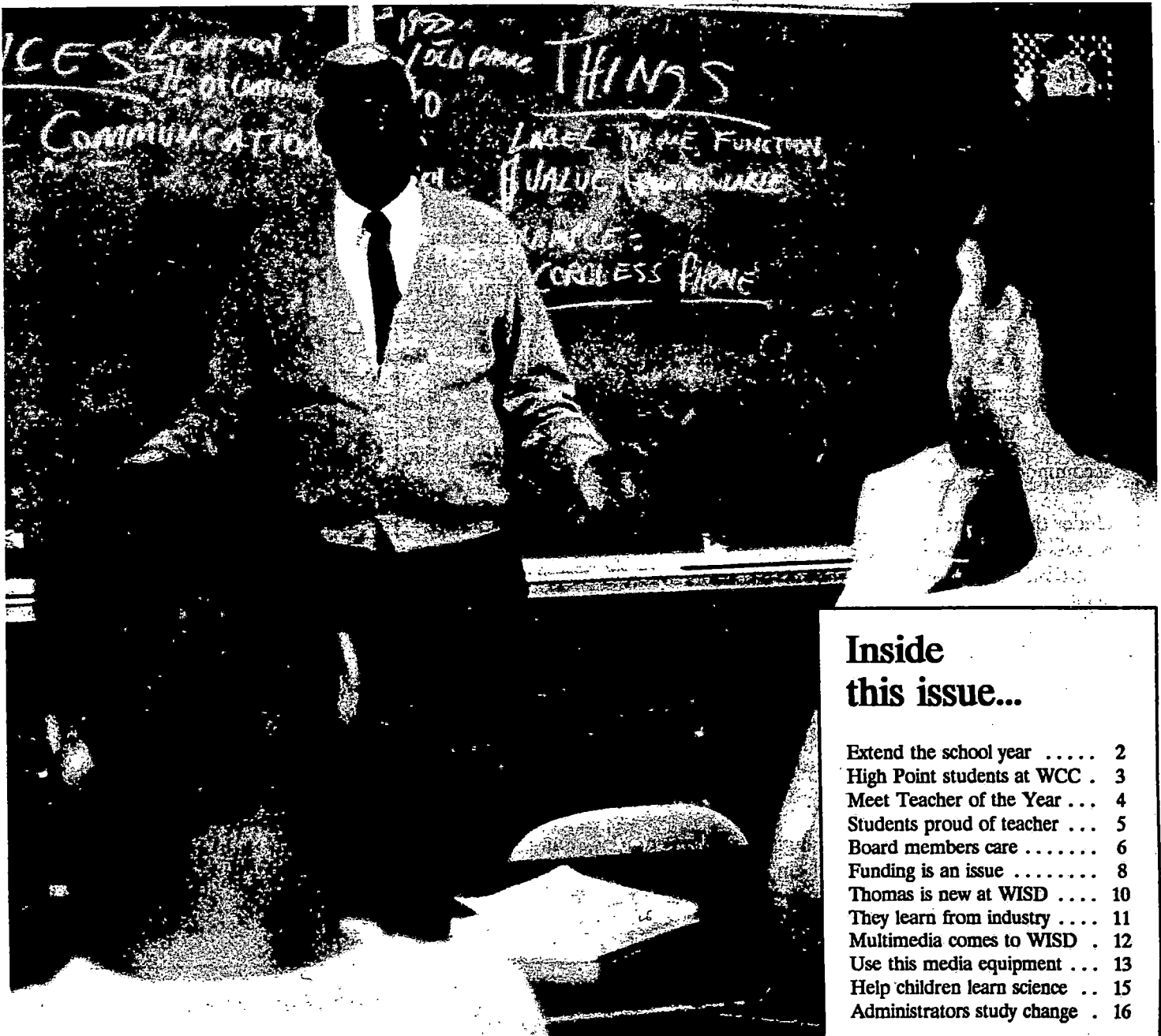
on area education

Vol. 24 No. 1

Winter 1992

## WISD teacher is National Teacher of Year finalist

Page 4



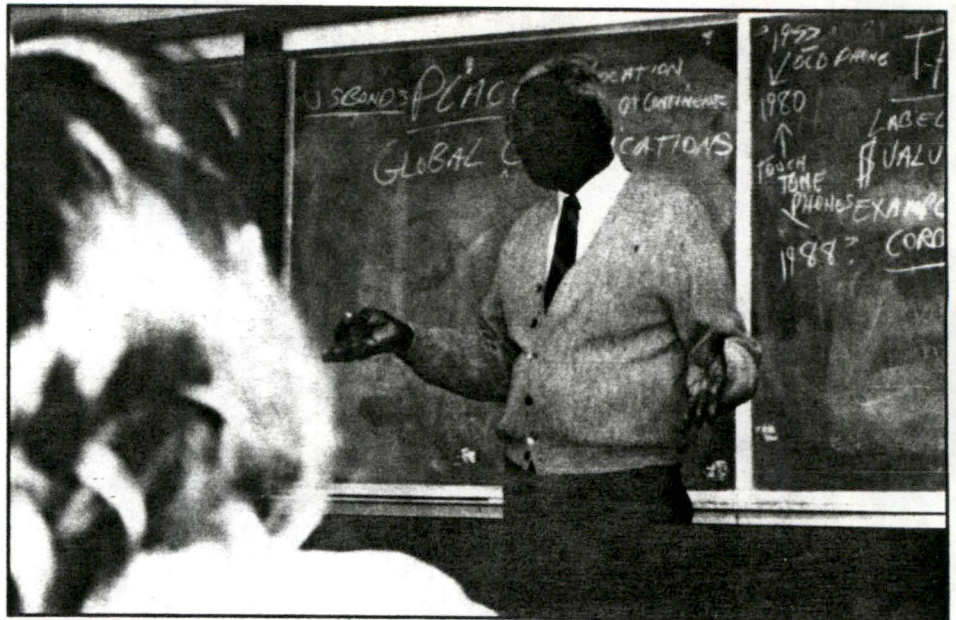
### Inside this issue...

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# WISD teacher is Michigan Teacher of the Year ...

Tom Fleming, a teacher for Washtenaw Intermediate School District's (WISD) Juvenile Detention Program, is one of four finalists for National Teacher of the Year. Named Michigan Teacher of the Year in September, Tom will interview in Washington, D.C. in February for the nation's top-teacher honor. The White House will announce the winner in April.

In the meantime, as Michigan's 1991-92 Teacher of the Year, Tom is spending six months traveling around the state talking about the rewards of teaching. He is the Michigan Department of Education's ambassador for education.



Tom Fleming, a finalist for National Teacher of the Year, has spent most of his career teaching incarcerated youth in WISD's Juvenile Detention Program.

---

"The kids are my greatest enjoyment," Fleming said. "The success I see them make in class is exciting."

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Even though he is away from teaching, his heart is still in the classroom. "The kids are my greatest enjoyment," he said. "The success I see them make in class is exciting."

A teacher for more than 23 years, Tom has spent the last 20 of them at WISD as the lead teacher in the Juvenile Detention Program. He teaches history, government and geography to youths who have been placed in confinement by the courts.

Tom and the two other teachers in the program, Pat O'Connell and Deb Hanewich-Duranczyk, see about 200 students in the Juvenile Detention Program every year.

"We are seeing younger students now. We are getting 12- and 13-year-olds into the program. Before, they were older, ranging up to 16 years old," Tom said. "I think it's more communication breakdown in families. There are more single parent homes now than there were before."

Tom and his co-workers have the students anywhere from 30-60 days. "During that time, we try to instill in all of them an enthusiasm and curiosity for learning," Tom said.

He tells all his students that their situation is a matter of choice. "You made some bad choices and so you are here. You're young, you can change your mind. There is still time to make good choices."

He has touched the lives of hundreds of young people during his teaching career." One such former student is A. Whitney Brown of "Saturday Night Live" fame, who dedicated his book to two teachers, one of whom was Tom, for making a difference in his life.

---

"... we try to instill in all of them an enthusiasm and curiosity for learning."

---

Tom sees a little of himself in his students. "I was labeled a slow learner in elementary school. I had a rough youth and dropped out of high school. It wasn't until I was in the service that I realized I

wanted to teach and needed more education to do it."

When Tom was discharged from the service, he went to night school and then college to get his teaching certificate. He has a bachelor's degree in religious education from William Tyndale Bible College and a master's degree in special education from Eastern Michigan University.

Along with his teaching duties, Tom is active in the community.

He is an associate minister at the First Baptist Church of Ann Arbor. He also ministers to senior citizens at Hillside Terrace and Cranbrook Tower. Plus, on Saturdays he volunteers to teach literacy courses at the Maxey Boys Training School.

He is studying to be an ordained minister in the American Baptist Church. He is also recording secretary for the Ministerial Alliance of Ypsilanti, Ann Arbor and vicinity.

Tom is honored by the Michigan Teacher of the Year award and the National Teacher of the Year nomination, but shares the recognition with co-workers O'Connell and Hanewich-Duranczyk.

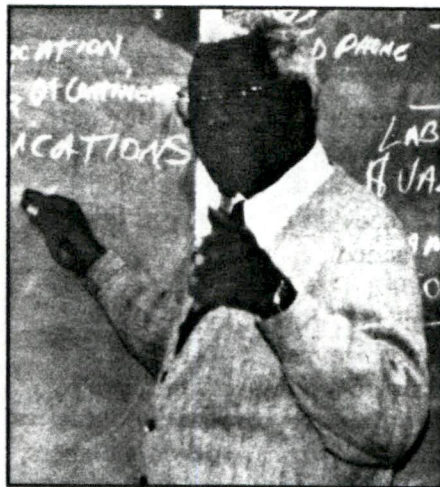
"We work together with every student," he said. "We're like a family here." ■

## ... and finalist for National Teacher of the Year

WISD's Tom Fleming, who teaches at the Juvenile Detention Center, was named Michigan Teacher of the Year in September. In January, he became one of four finalists for National Teacher of the Year. Fleming is honored by the recognition from his peers, but, he still believes his most important critics are his students. We asked his students, "What do you think about Mr. Fleming's award?" Here are their written, unedited comments.

"I'm proud of him. He's a very nice and an understanding man. He deserved the award. He works very well with us kids. He tries to keep everyone on task. When people disturb the class he handles it, better than any other teacher. He is our #1 teacher in the world, not just Michigan."  
-- Keshia

"I feel that Mr. Fleming is perhaps one of the best teachers I have come across and I think he won the award because of his sense of



Tom Fleming makes a point.

humor and the ability to reach the kids in here."  
-- Jason

"Well I think that his award is great because he is trying to tell the people that young men can be taught because he's doing a lot to teach me and I think that he should keep getting awards."  
-- Cedric

"Well I think he earned all of that and he is a very good person and I have learned more in his class room than I've learned in public schools."  
-- Shane

"I think that Fleming works with kids and get along with kids and work with them. and I think that Fleming like working and helping out kids. Fleming is the best teacher that I had."  
-- LaDonta

"I think that Mr. Fleming really deserves to receive the award of Michigan Teacher of the year. I think since I have been attending Mr. Fleming's history class, that it has been beneficial to me, because he has tried to make me aware of my culture, as well as other history. To know that Mr. Fleming has received the award, make you feel pretty good, because you are receiving quality teaching from the best man for the job."  
-- Bobby ■



## COUNCIL OF CHIEF STATE SCHOOL OFFICERS

One Massachusetts Avenue, NW, Suite 700, Washington, DC 20001-1431 • 202/408-5505 • FAX 202/408-8072  
Resource Center on Educational Equity State Education Assessment Center

March 4, 1992

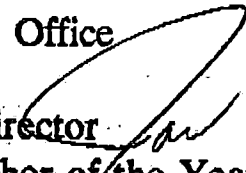
**FACSIMILE TRANSMISSION**

202/456-1647

7 Pages

### MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Lisa Battaglia  
Public Liaison Office

**FROM:** Jon Quam, Director   
National Teacher of the Year Program  
202/336-7047; 202/408-8072 FAX

**SUBJECT:** 1992 National Teacher of the Year Recognition

Attached are copies of the letters sent to the President and to Secretary Alexander inviting their participation in the 1992 Program. Also included is a blurb on the national program and a short bio of the teacher. I will be meeting with the teacher and his state people tomorrow and will have more current information when I return. Please let me know if you need anything else at this time. I look forward to working with you. Thanks.



## COUNCIL OF CHIEF STATE SCHOOL OFFICERS

One Massachusetts Avenue, NW, Suite 700, Washington, DC 20001-1431 • 202/408-5505 • FAX 202/408-8072  
Resource Center on Educational Equity State Education Assessment Center

February 7, 1992

The Honorable George W. Bush  
The White House  
Washington, DC 20500

COPY

Dear Mr. President:

During each of the past three years you have taken time from your busy schedule to honor all American teachers by special recognition of the National Teacher of the Year. The opportunity to recognize the 1992 National Teacher of the Year will occur in the week of April 6, 1992.

We hope once again, as you and your predecessors have done for 40 years, you will recognize and honor the National Teacher at a White House Ceremony. If your schedule permits, the best dates for the ceremony are April 7 or April 8, at a time of your choosing.

This year the fifty states, two of the territories, the District of Columbia, and the Department of Defense Dependents Schools selected State Teachers of the Year. From that group the honorees of California, Michigan, Ohio, and Texas have been selected as finalists. The teacher selected as the 1992 National Teacher of the Year will be notified early in March with the information held in confidence until you make the public announcement at the White House ceremony.

With 40 years of tradition and with the participation of the President, the National Teacher of the Year Program continues to be the most important way to recognize the contributions of the thousands of outstanding teachers who educate the nation's youth. Your participation in this program is an essential part of its success. We hope you will join in leading the celebration of the National Teacher during this 41st year of the Program. We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Gordon M. Ambach



## **COUNCIL OF CHIEF STATE SCHOOL OFFICERS**

One Massachusetts Avenue, NW, Suite 700, Washington, DC 20001-1431 • 202/408-5505 • FAX 202/408-8072  
Resource Center on Educational Equity State Education Assessment Center

February 7, 1992

**The Honorable Lamar Alexander**  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Education  
Room 4181  
400 Maryland Avenue, S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20202

COPY

Dear Mr. Secretary:

I am writing to invite your participation in a splendid event which occurs here in Washington in April each year, recognition of the National Teacher of the Year.

This is the 41st year of the National Teacher of the Year program. This program has always been conducted with close cooperation among the President, the Secretary of Education, and the Council of Chief State School Officers. Each year each of the states selects a Teacher of the Year who then enters the national competition. An independent selection group representing the major education organizations selects finalists and then the National Teacher of the Year.

Events recognizing the National Teacher of the Year and, thereby honoring all teachers in America, will occur during the week of April 6, 1992, here in Washington. We have requested that President Bush, once again, conduct a ceremony announcing the Teacher of the Year at the White House (copy of letter enclosed). We hope that you will be able to participate in the White House ceremony of recognition. In addition, we invite your participation in two other ways. On Wednesday evening, April 8, the Council of Chief State School Officers, together with the program sponsor, Encyclopaedia Britannica, Inc. will host a dinner to introduce the 1992 National Teacher of the Year to the Washington education community. We would be honored by your presence at the dinner and invite you to speak in recognition of the National Teacher following dinner.

President WERNER ROGERS, Georgia Superintendent of Schools • President Elect BILL HONIG, California Superintendent of Public Instruction • Vice President HERBERT J. GROVER, Wisconsin Superintendent of Public Instruction • Directors ROBERT F. BARTMAN, Missouri Commissioner of Education • BETTY CASTOR, Florida Commissioner of Education • H. DEAN EVANS, Indiana Superintendent of Public Instruction • WILLIAM L. LEPLEY, Iowa Director of Education • ALAN MORGAN, New Mexico Superintendent of Public Instruction • EUGENE T. PASILOV, Nevada Superintendent of Public Instruction  
Executive Director GORDON M. AMBACH

**The Honorable Lamar Alexander**

**Page two**

**February 7, 1992**

In past years the Secretary of Education has honored the National Teacher with the opportunity to deliver a formal address to the staff of the Department of Education. We are hopeful that you will host such an event again this year. The nature of the Department of Education's involvement in the program is, of course, not fixed and can be structured in any way you deem appropriate.

This year, State Teachers of the Year from California, Michigan, Ohio and Texas have been selected as finalists. Early in March these teachers will be notified of the selection of the National Teacher. That information will be held in confidence until the public announcement of the National Teacher of the Year is made by the President at the White House ceremony.

With 40 years of tradition, the National Teacher of the Year Program continues to be the most important way our nation recognizes the contributions of the thousands of outstanding teachers who daily educate the nation's youth. We hope that you will join us in celebrating the 1992 National Teacher and the 41st year of the National Teacher of the Year Program.

Sincerely,

**Gordon M. Ambach**

**GMA:djb**

**Enclosures**



## National Teacher of the Year Program General Information

The National Teacher of the Year Program is the oldest and most prestigious awards program to focus public attention on excellence in teaching. The program, now in its 41st year, is sponsored by the Council of Chief State School Officers in partnership with Encyclopaedia Britannica, Inc.

Each year chief state school officers from the fifty states, the extra-state jurisdictions, the District of Columbia, and the Department of Defense Dependents Schools are invited to nominate a candidate from their state (or jurisdiction). The methods and materials used to select the State Teacher of the Year vary from state to state.

Candidates for National Teacher of the Year are expected to be dedicated and highly skilled teachers in any state-approved or accredited school, pre-kindergarten through grade twelve, who are planning to continue in an active teaching status. Since the purpose of the National Teacher of the Year Program is to recognize the contributions of the classroom teacher, supervisory and administrative responsibilities are of secondary consideration. Candidates should inspire students of all backgrounds and abilities to learn. The candidates should have the respect and admiration of students, parents and colleagues and should play an active and useful role in the community as well as in the school.

Since 1980 the National Teacher of the Year has been released from classroom duties during the year of his or her recognition. This has allowed the National Teacher to travel throughout the country, and increasingly throughout the world, speaking before a variety of business, community and education groups. These candidates therefore must be poised, articulate and possess the energy to withstand a taxing schedule.

A National Selection Committee, comprised of representatives of the major national educational organizations, selects four finalists from the nominations received. The four finalists are brought to Washington, DC, for individual interviews with committee. The National Selection Committee then selects the National Teacher.

In each of the forty-one years of the Program the National Teacher of the Year has been introduced to the nation by the President and honored at special events in the nation's capitol. The National Teacher receives an engraved crystal apple and all state Teachers of the Year receive engraved citations from the Program sponsors.

Information may be obtained by contacting the National Teacher of the Year Program, Council of Chief State School Officers; One Massachusetts Avenue, NW, Suite 700; Washington, DC 20001-1431; 202/336-7047 - 202/408-8072 FAX

• • • • •



## **The National Teacher of the Year Program Sponsors**

### **The Council of Chief State School Officers**

in partnership with

### **Encyclopaedia Britannica, Inc.**

The Council of Chief State School Officers was founded in 1927 and since 1948 has been headquartered in Washington, D.C. The Council is a nationwide non-profit organization comprised of the 57 public officials who head the departments of elementary and secondary education in the 50 states, five extra-state jurisdictions, the District of Columbia, and the Department of Defense Dependents' Schools. Because the Council represents the chief education administrator, it has access to the educational and governmental establishment in each state and the national influence that accompanies this unique position. The Council seeks its members' consensus on major education issues and expresses their views to civic and professional organizations, to federal agencies, to Congress, and to the public. The Council creates and coordinates seminars, educational travel and study programs that offer many opportunities for the professional growth and development of chief state school officers and their management teams. In addition to providing professional development opportunities for chief state school officers, the Council undertakes projects which address areas of concern at the state level and are designed to strengthen public education through each state education agency. Werner Rogers, Superintendent of Public Instruction in Georgia, is the 1992 president.

Encyclopaedia Britannica, Inc., publishes the 32-volume *The New Encyclopaedia Britannica*. Introduced in 1768, *The Encyclopaedia Britannica* is the oldest continuously published reference work in the English language. The recent major revision of the landmark 15th edition is considered among the finest reference works of its kind. In addition Britannica publishes *Compton's Encyclopaedia* and other reference works. Encyclopaedia Britannica, Inc., is one of the world's largest producers of education films through Encyclopaedia Britannica Educational Corporation. The film catalog of Encyclopaedia Britannica Educational Corporation includes more than a half century of educational films and is the most extensive of any film producer in the world. Other elements of Encyclopaedia Britannica, Inc., include Merriam-Webster, Inc., publishers of Merriam-Webster dictionaries, and American Learning Corporation, which operates approximately 100 prescriptive learning skills centers in many major metropolitan markets. The company publishes other learning materials, including computer software which like its educational films covers a multitude of subjects. American Learning Corporation's *Britannica Learning Centers* offer both basic math, preschool reading, scholastic aptitude test preparation, college learning skills, and *Evelyn Wood Reading Dynamics* and *Study Dynamics*. Encyclopaedia Britannica, Inc., is headquartered in Chicago, Illinois.

Determined To Be an Administrative  
Marking Per E.O. 12356 Sec. 1.1 (a)

## Professional Biography

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

### Thomas A. Fleming

Fleming is the 1992 Michigan State Teacher of the Year. As a Special Education teacher for over 20 years, since 1971 with the Washtenaw County Intermediate School District, Fleming helps children formulate a personal world view and a sense of belonging to the social environment in which they live. His early experiences as a Baptist minister actively involved him with the youth of Detroit's northwest neighborhoods and led to his interest in adolescents with special needs. He received a Master of Arts in Education with special education certification from Eastern Michigan University and first taught at the W.J. Maxey Boys Training School, a state institution for juvenile offenders. Fleming then served as an educational consultant with *Project Follow Through* for the High Scope Educational Research Foundation and joined the Washtenaw County Intermediate School District to teach in that county's juvenile detention school program in 1971. Five years later he assumed the role of coordinating teacher and continues in that capacity, in addition to his teaching responsibilities, to interact with a variety of supporting agencies including the police department, court staff, volunteers, and school district personnel. His students are from 12 to 16 years of age with third grade to college level ranges in academic performance. He works closely with Eastern Michigan University and the University of Michigan in the training of special education majors. "The student must be challenged to examine not only his knowledge, but his values. Young people today must be helped to formulate their own philosophy of life. To expect students to know what they believe and who they are is to relate to them as persons of integrity and value.

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

DATE: 3-10-92

TO: *Deigh Ann*

FROM: **JANE LEONARD**  
Associate Director  
Office of Public Liaison  
Room 197, OEOB, x7845

Attached FYE is a copy of Thomas  
Fleming's bio. He is the 1992 Teacher  
of the Year. (The first black male  
ever selected)

I need to fill you in on  
more details but wanted you  
to know a few things

(F)

5.

## Justices Ease Restrictions On Altering Court Agreements (Cont.)

### Duty To Foresee Problems

But the High Court warned that courts should not be lenient if the parties in an agreement should have foreseen new conditions.

"If it is clear that a party anticipated changing conditions that would make performance of the decree more onerous but nevertheless agreed to the decree, that party would have to satisfy a heavy burden to convince a court that it agreed to the decree in good faith," White wrote.

Justices John Paul Stevens and Harry Blackmun took issue with the majority, saying federal courts should consider whether modification requests would "undermine the central purpose of a consent decree."

Justice Clarence Thomas did not participate in the opinion, because he was not on the Court during oral arguments in the case last fall.  
--D.S. Onley

Education Daily • January 16, 1992

P-3

## CCSSO Announces Finalists For Teacher Of The Year Award

Four educators have been named finalists for the annual National Teacher of the Year honor.

A panel of educators selected the finalists, said the award's sponsors, the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) and Encyclopaedia Britannica. The finalists are:

- ■ Maria Azucena Vigil, a kindergarten teacher at Las Lomas Elementary School in La Habra, Calif., and a former Head Start volunteer;
- ■ Thomas Fleming, a minister and special education teacher at the Washtenaw County Juvenile Detention School in Ann Arbor, Mich.;
- ■ Marion Lipinski, a musician and athlete as well as a fifth-grade teacher at the Center Street Village School in Mentor, Ohio; and
- Rosa Lujan, the daughter of poor, immigrant cotton farmers who became a fifth- and sixth-grade bilingual instructor at Ysleta Elementary School in El Paso, Texas.

The current Teacher of the Year is Rae Ellen McKee, a Chapter 1 reading specialist at Slanesville Elementary School in West Virginia. White House officials will announce her successor in early April, CCSSO officials said. --Annette Licitra



# National Teacher of the Year Program

March 24, 1992

Jane Leonard  
Associate Director  
Office of Public Liaison  
The White House  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Ms. Leonard:

With great pleasure the Council of Chief State School Officers and Encyclopaedia Britannica, Inc., invite you and a guest to a banquet honoring the 1992 National Teacher of the Year. The banquet, **Wednesday evening, April 8, 1992**, will be held at One Massachusetts Avenue, NW, Washington, DC, in the National Guard Association Hall of States. Cocktails are at six thirty o'clock p.m. with seating for dinner at seven thirty p.m. Attire is black tie.

This is the 41st year the National Teacher of the Year is being honored in a series of events in Washington, highlighted by presentation to the Teacher of a crystal apple, the traditional symbol of teaching, by the President. That event is scheduled to occur Wednesday morning and this gala banquet is the Teacher's first opportunity to meet with the national education and policy making communities.

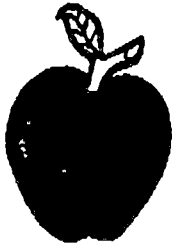
?  
ASK  
John

As the sponsors of the National Teacher of the Year Program, we hope you will attend this dinner celebrating the excellence of America's classroom educators and honoring the 1992 National Teacher of the Year.

Sincerely,

Jon Quam  
Director

RSVP by April 1 to 202/336-7011



# National Teacher of the Year Program

March 24, 1992

FACSIMILE TRANSMISSION  
202/456-1647  
4 Pages

## MEMORANDUM

TO: Jane Leonard

FROM: Jon Quam, *(Signature)* Director

SUBJECT: Organizations involved in National Teacher of the Year

In preparation for a ceremony honoring the 1992 National Teacher of the Year I've attached a list of the organizations involved with the National Teacher of the Year Program. The organizations that sit on the National Selection Committee are indicated with (\*\*). The official delegation from the Teacher's home state and school district number around 30. I have SS# and birthdate information on all of those individuals and will forward that when necessary.

Thank you for all your work and help in arranging this event. I hope we can get the details finalized very soon. Give me a call if you have questions and if you need additional information. I'll talk with you on Wednesday.

**American Association for Higher Education**  
One Dupont Circle NW, Suite 600  
Washington, DC 20036  
(202)293-6440

**\*\*American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education**  
One Dupont Circle, NW  
Washington, DC 20036  
(202)293-2450

**\*\*American Association of School Administrators**  
1801 North Moore Street  
Arlington, VA 22209  
(703)528-0700

**American Association of State Colleges and Universities**  
One Dupont Circle, NW, Suite 700  
Washington, DC 20036  
(202)293-7070

**American Council on Education**  
One Dupont Circle, NW, Suite 801  
Washington, DC 20036  
(202)939-9300

**\*\*American Federation of Teachers**  
555 New Jersey Avenue, NW, 10th Floor  
Washington, DC 20001  
(202)879-4400

**\*\*Association for Childhood Education International**  
11141 Georgia Avenue, Suite 200  
Wheaton, MD 20902  
301/942-2443

**\*\*Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development**  
1250 North Pitt Street  
Alexandria, VA 22314  
(703)549-9110

**\*\*Association of Teacher Educators**  
1900 Association Drive  
Suite ATE  
Reston, VA 22091-1599  
703/620-3110 703/620-9530 FAX

**Council for Exceptional Children**  
1920 Association Drive  
Reston, VA 22091  
703/620-3660 703/264-9494 FAX

**Council of Chief State School Officers**  
One Massachusetts Avenue, NW  
Suite 700  
Washington, DC 20001-1431  
202/408-5505

**Encyclopaedia Britannica, Inc.**  
Britannica Centre  
310 South Michigan Avenue  
Chicago, IL 60604  
312/347-7230

**Michigan State Department of Education**  
P.O. Box 30008  
608 West Allegan Street  
Lansing, Michigan 48909  
517/373-3354 - 517/335-4565 FAX

**National Alliance of Black School Educators**  
2816 Georgia Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20001  
202/483-1549

**\*\*National Association for the Education of Young Children**  
1834 Connecticut Avenue, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20009  
202/232-8777, FAX 202/328-1846

**\*\*National Association of Elementary School Principals**  
1615 Duke Street  
Alexandria, VA 22314  
703/684-3345, FAX 703/548-6021

**\*\*National Association of Secondary School Principals**  
1904 Association Drive  
Reston, VA 22091  
703/860-0200; 703/476-5432

**\*\*National Association of State Boards of Education**  
1012 Cameron Street  
Alexandria, VA 22314  
703/684-4000, FAX 703/836-2313

**National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education**  
2010 Massachusetts Avenue, NW  
Suite 200  
Washington, DC 20036  
202/466-7496

**\*\*National Education Association**  
1201 Sixteenth Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20036  
202/822-7091, FAX 202/822-7482

**National Governors' Association**  
250 Hall of the States  
444 North Capitol Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20001-1511  
202/624-5320

**\*\*National School Boards Association**  
1680 Duke Street  
Alexandria, VA 22302  
703/838-6722, FAX 703/683-7590

**\*\*National School Public Relations Association**  
1501 Lee Highway, Suite 201  
Arlington, VA 22209  
(703)528-5840

**Public Broadcasting System**  
1320 Braddock Place  
Alexandria, VA 22314

**The College Board**  
1717 Massachusetts Ave. NW, Suite 404  
Washington, DC 20036  
(202)332-7134

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AUTOMATIC COVER SHEET

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DATE: MAR- 4-92 WED 17:58

TO:

FAX #: 4561647

FROM: CCSSO

FAX #: 2023931228

08 PAGES WERE SENT

(INCLUDING THIS COVER PAGE)



# **COUNCIL OF CHIEF STATE SCHOOL OFFICERS**

One Massachusetts Avenue, NW, Suite 700, Washington, DC 20001-1431 • 202/408-5505 • FAX 202/408-8072  
Resource Center on Educational Equity State Education Assessment Center

March 4, 1992

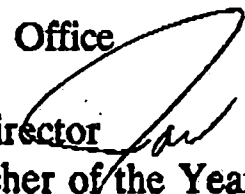
**FACSIMILE TRANSMISSION**

**202/456-1647**

**7 Pages**

## **MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** Lisa Battaglia  
Public Liaison Office

**FROM:** Jon Quam, Director   
National Teacher of the Year Program  
202/336-7047; 202/408-8072 FAX

**SUBJECT:** 1992 National Teacher of the Year Recognition

Attached are copies of the letters sent to the President and to Secretary Alexander inviting their participation in the 1992 Program. Also included is a blurb on the national program and a short bio of the teacher. I will be meeting with the teacher and his state people tomorrow and will have more current information when I return. Please let me know if you need anything else at this time. I look forward to working with you. Thanks.



## **COUNCIL OF CHIEF STATE SCHOOL OFFICERS**

One Massachusetts Avenue, NW, Suite 700, Washington, DC 20001-1431 • 202/408-5505 • FAX 202/408-8072  
Resource Center on Educational Equity State Education Assessment Center

February 7, 1992

The Honorable George W. Bush  
The White House  
Washington, DC 20500

**COPY**

Dear Mr. President:

During each of the past three years you have taken time from your busy schedule to honor all American teachers by special recognition of the National Teacher of the Year. The opportunity to recognize the 1992 National Teacher of the Year will occur in the week of April 6, 1992.

We hope once again, as you and your predecessors have done for 40 years, you will recognize and honor the National Teacher at a White House Ceremony. If your schedule permits, the best dates for the ceremony are April 7 or April 8, at a time of your choosing.

This year the fifty states, two of the territories, the District of Columbia, and the Department of Defense Dependents Schools selected State Teachers of the Year. From that group the honorees of California, Michigan, Ohio, and Texas have been selected as finalists. The teacher selected as the 1992 National Teacher of the Year will be notified early in March with the information held in confidence until you make the public announcement at the White House ceremony.

With 40 years of tradition and with the participation of the President, the National Teacher of the Year Program continues to be the most important way to recognize the contributions of the thousands of outstanding teachers who educate the nation's youth. Your participation in this program is an essential part of its success. We hope you will join in leading the celebration of the National Teacher during this 41st year of the Program. We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Gordon M. Ambach



## **COUNCIL OF CHIEF STATE SCHOOL OFFICERS**

One Massachusetts Avenue, NW, Suite 700, Washington, DC 20001-1431 • 202/408-3505 • FAX 202/408-3072  
Resource Center on Educational Equity State Education Assessment Center

February 7, 1992

**The Honorable Lamar Alexander**  
**Secretary**  
U.S. Department of Education  
Room 4181  
400 Maryland Avenue, S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20202

COPY

Dear Mr. Secretary:

I am writing to invite your participation in a splendid event which occurs here in Washington in April each year, recognition of the National Teacher of the Year.

This is the 41st year of the National Teacher of the Year program. This program has always been conducted with close cooperation among the President, the Secretary of Education, and the Council of Chief State School Officers. Each year each of the states selects a Teacher of the Year who then enters the national competition. An independent selection group representing the major education organizations selects finalists and then the National Teacher of the Year.

Events recognizing the National Teacher of the Year and, thereby honoring all teachers in America, will occur during the week of April 6, 1992, here in Washington. We have requested that President Bush, once again, conduct a ceremony announcing the Teacher of the Year at the White House (copy of letter enclosed). We hope that you will be able to participate in the White House ceremony of recognition. In addition, we invite your participation in two other ways. On Wednesday evening, April 8, the Council of Chief State School Officers, together with the program sponsor, Encyclopaedia Britannica, Inc. will host a dinner to introduce the 1992 National Teacher of the Year to the Washington education community. We would be honored by your presence at the dinner and invite you to speak in recognition of the National Teacher following dinner.

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**The Honorable Lamar Alexander**

**Page two**

**February 7, 1992**

In past years the Secretary of Education has honored the National Teacher with the opportunity to deliver a formal address to the staff of the Department of Education. We are hopeful that you will host such an event again this year. The nature of the Department of Education's involvement in the program is, of course, not fixed and can be structured in any way you deem appropriate.

This year, State Teachers of the Year from California, Michigan, Ohio and Texas have been selected as finalists. Early in March these teachers will be notified of the selection of the National Teacher. That information will be held in confidence until the public announcement of the National Teacher of the Year is made by the President at the White House ceremony.

With 40 years of tradition, the National Teacher of the Year Program continues to be the most important way our nation recognizes the contributions of the thousands of outstanding teachers who daily educate the nation's youth. We hope that you will join us in celebrating the 1992 National Teacher and the 41st year of the National Teacher of the Year Program.

Sincerely,

Gordon M. Ambach

GMA:djb

Enclosures



## **National Teacher of the Year Program General Information**

**The National Teacher of the Year Program is the oldest and most prestigious awards program to focus public attention on excellence in teaching. The program, now in its 41st year, is sponsored by the Council of Chief State School Officers in partnership with Encyclopaedia Britannica, Inc.**

**Each year chief state school officers from the fifty states, the extra-state jurisdictions, the District of Columbia, and the Department of Defense Dependents Schools are invited to nominate a candidate from their state (or jurisdiction). The methods and materials used to select the State Teacher of the Year vary from state to state.**

**Candidates for National Teacher of the Year are expected to be dedicated and highly skilled teachers in any state-approved or accredited school, pre-kindergarten through grade twelve, who are planning to continue in an active teaching status. Since the purpose of the National Teacher of the Year Program is to recognize the contributions of the classroom teacher, supervisory and administrative responsibilities are of secondary consideration. Candidates should inspire students of all backgrounds and abilities to learn. The candidates should have the respect and admiration of students, parents and colleagues and should play an active and useful role in the community as well as in the school.**

**Since 1980 the National Teacher of the Year has been released from classroom duties during the year of his or her recognition. This has allowed the National Teacher to travel throughout the country, and increasingly throughout the world, speaking before a variety of business, community and education groups. These candidates therefore must be poised, articulate and possess the energy to withstand a taxing schedule.**

**A National Selection Committee, comprised of representatives of the major national educational organizations, selects four finalists from the nominations received. The four finalists are brought to Washington, DC, for individual interviews with committee. The National Selection Committee then selects the National Teacher.**

**In each of the forty-one years of the Program the National Teacher of the Year has been introduced to the nation by the President and honored at special events in the nation's capitol. The National Teacher receives an engraved crystal apple and all state Teachers of the Year receive engraved citations from the Program sponsors.**

**Information may be obtained by contacting the National Teacher of the Year Program, Council of Chief State School Officers; One Massachusetts Avenue, NW, Suite 700; Washington, DC 20001-1431; 202/336-7047 - 202/408-8072 FAX**



## **The National Teacher of the Year Program Sponsors**

### **The Council of Chief State School Officers in partnership with Encyclopaedia Britannica, Inc.**

**The Council of Chief State School Officers was founded in 1927 and since 1948 has been headquartered in Washington, D.C. The Council is a nationwide non-profit organization comprised of the 57 public officials who head the departments of elementary and secondary education in the 50 states, five extra-state jurisdictions, the District of Columbia, and the Department of Defense Dependents' Schools. Because the Council represents the chief education administrator, it has access to the educational and governmental establishment in each state and the national influence that accompanies this unique position. The Council seeks its members' consensus on major education issues and expresses their views to civic and professional organizations, to federal agencies, to Congress, and to the public. The Council creates and coordinates seminars, educational travel and study programs that offer many opportunities for the professional growth and development of chief state school officers and their management teams. In addition to providing professional development opportunities for chief state school officers, the Council undertakes projects which address areas of concern at the state level and are designed to strengthen public education through each state education agency. Werner Rogers, Superintendent of Public Instruction in Georgia, is the 1992 president.**

**Encyclopaedia Britannica, Inc., publishes the 32-volume *The New Encyclopaedia Britannica*. Introduced in 1768, *The Encyclopaedia Britannica* is the oldest continuously published reference work in the English language. The recent major revision of the landmark 15th edition is considered among the finest reference works of its kind. In addition Britannica publishes *Compton's Encyclopaedia* and other reference works. Encyclopaedia Britannica, Inc., is one of the world's largest producers of education films through Encyclopaedia Britannica Educational Corporation. The film catalog of Encyclopaedia Britannica Educational Corporation includes more than a half century of educational films and is the most extensive of any film producer in the world. Other elements of Encyclopaedia Britannica, Inc., include Merriam-Webster, Inc., publishers of Merriam-Webster dictionaries, and American Learning Corporation, which operates approximately 100 prescriptive learning skills centers in many major metropolitan markets. The company publishes other learning materials, including computer software which like its educational films covers a multitude of subjects. American Learning Corporation's *Britannica Learning Centers* offer both basic math, preschool reading, scholastic aptitude test preparation, college learning skills, and *Evelyn Wood Reading Dynamics* and *Study Dynamics*. Encyclopaedia Britannica, Inc., is headquartered in Chicago, Illinois.**

March 30, 1992

MEMORANDUM FOR BETH HINCHLIFFE

FROM: MICHELE NIX

SUBJECT: NATIONAL TEACHER OF THE YEAR

On April 7, at 11:15 p.m., POTUS will deliver remarks to an audience of approximately 200 people at a Rose Garden ceremony honoring Thomas Fleming, the 1992 Teacher of the Year. The audience will be made up of representatives of 30 educational outreach associations, students and teachers from the local area, and Fleming's wife, son and mother-in-law.

Jeannie went to an Education briefing with Rae Nelson today. She said they discussed the Teacher of the Year speech and emphasized the following points: flexibility in education training, violence in the schools (a relevant point with Fleming's juvenile detention teaching background); teachers as instruments of change; teachers who buck the system; support of choice in education; role teachers can play in the America 2000 program; applaud teachers while bashing Congress.

We need to keep in mind that this is their suggestion -- the President may not want to go with all these points -- especially a lot of Congress bashing at a Rose Garden ceremony.

This speech needs to drive home POTUS' commitment to education -- his feelings and his actions on the issue -- and the fact that the importance of good teaching cannot be overstressed. The idea is to stress Fleming's achievements and good works while stressing how it all incorporates with the President's America 2000 plan.

After a conversation with John from the Chief State School Officers Association: Fleming found out that he won as National Teach about 3 weeks ago (though it is not being talked up a lot until the ceremony). None of the other finalists will be there. As part of Fleming's national application, he had to write a few essays. These are included in the research file. John from CSSO has the names and numbers of Fleming's coworkers, supervisor, etc. The prob is that they're all on Spring Break -- but he's going to try to rope up some home numbers.