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**DSU College of Education, Arts, and Humanities names Cathy Coleman-Sparks 2024 Outstanding Alumna**

**CLEVELAND, Miss. —** The College of Education, Arts, and Humanities at Delta State University proudly announces that Cathy Coleman-Sparks has been named the 2024 Outstanding Alumna. Coleman-Sparks has dedicated her life to education and community service and was recognized for her exceptional contributions on November 7 during the Kent Wyatt Lecture event featuring guest speaker Dr. Kollin Napier, Director of the Mississippi Artificial Intelligence Network (MAIN).

Coleman-Sparks began her educational journey at DSU, earning a Bachelor of Science in Education in 2006. She continued her studies at Delta State, where she achieved a Master of Education in Elementary Education in 2011 and an Educational Specialist degree in Elementary Education in 2014. Her commitment to professional growth led her to Mississippi State University, where she completed an Educational Specialist degree in School Administration in 2021.

With 18 years of service in education, Coleman-Sparks has been a transformative figure in her field. She dedicated 16 years as an elementary teacher, predominantly at Hayes Cooper Center in the Cleveland School District, before assuming a new role in 2023 as principal of Cleveland Central Middle School. In her brief tenure as principal, Coleman-Sparks has made a significant impact, tirelessly working to enhance the school’s physical environment and academic offerings. Her leadership and unwavering commitment are recognized and appreciated by her students, colleagues, and the Cleveland community.

Beyond her work in schools, Coleman-Sparks has been an active member of the Cleveland and Delta State communities. She has served on several committees, including the Cleveland Stakeholder Advisory Committee, Cleveland High School Title 1 Advisory Committee, Hayes Cooper Counseling Committee, and the Delta Arts Alliance Board. Additionally, she has been a Bolivar County Election Poll Manager and a Bolivar County Chamber of Commerce Volunteer. Coleman-Sparks has also maintained a strong connection with Delta State University, serving on the Graduate Education Program Council (NCATE) and as a current member of the Professional Education Council. As an adjunct instructor, she plays an essential role in shaping future educators.

Coleman-Sparks’ contributions to education and her community have been widely recognized. She has received numerous awards, including two prestigious Delta State University MACTE Awards: Outstanding Educator in 2021 and Outstanding Administrator in 2024. In 2017, her achievements included the DAAIS Teacher of the Year Award, Hayes Cooper Center Teacher of the Year, Cleveland School District Teacher of the Year, and Congressional District 2 Teacher of the Year. Most recently, she was honored as one of Delta Business Journal’s 2024 Top Minority Leaders.

"Mrs. Coleman’s contributions to the education profession, the Cleveland School District, the Cleveland community, and Delta State University are unmatched," said Dr. Merideth Van Namen, Interim Dean of the College of Education, Arts, and Humanities. "We are delighted to recognize her as the 2024 College of Education, Arts, and Humanities Outstanding Alumna."

Delta State University is proud to honor Coleman-Sparks for her dedication to education, her students, and her community. Her exemplary service and commitment serve as an inspiration to current and future generations.

Cutline: Cathy Coleman-Sparks (left) was presented with DSU’s College of Education, Arts, and Humanities 2024 Outstanding Alumna Award by Dr. Merideth Van Namen.

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**About Delta State University:**Delta State University is a four-year public institution whose nearly 2,700 students come from most U.S. states and more than 45 countries. Acknowledging its beginning as a teacher’s college, the University sustains excellence in teacher education while continuing to expand offerings in traditional as well as unique fields of study. Programs such as those available through the Delta Music Institute, the Commercial Aviation Department, and the Center for Interdisciplinary Geospatial Information highlight the University’s commitment to meeting the evolving needs of the students it serves with world-leading, industry-acclaimed programs. Situated in the heart of the Mississippi Delta, Delta State offers top-notch academic programs in business, arts, sciences, nursing, education, and more. DSU Athletics has won 14 national championships, 70 conference championships, and 37 regional titles.