

## 14 of our finest honored

By LAURA HAMPSON

[lhampson@lakecityreporter.com](mailto:lhampson@lakecityreporter.com)

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Every day teachers in Columbia County are working until they see that light bulb of understanding in the eyes of their students.

They are staying up late, reading essays, correcting math problems and writing lesson plans. Often the reward for their tireless work comes only years later, when a former student returns as a successful,

productive adult. Selected by their peers, nominees for the 2013 Columbia County Teacher of the Year represent the high quality educators in the district. They will be honored at the Teacher of the Year program and reception

4 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 2 at the First Presbyterian Church, 697 SW Baya Drive. The public is invited.

Alvin Davis, the 2012 Florida Teacher of the Year, will be the keynote speaker. Davis is a high school music teacher in Broward County.

“It is most important to have this recognition program to showcase our nominees and all teachers,” said Dorothy Spradley, volunteer and education marketing coordinator for the district, “and to let them know how much we truly appreciate their many many contributions, hard work,

dedication, creativity and selflessness and care they give the students in our schools.”

Nominee Chris Dang said being a teacher is most rewarding “when you know you’ve inspired a child to achieve greatness.” Dang said he is now teaching 10-year-olds he first taught as 4-year-olds in prekindergarten. This year students he taught as a first year teacher will graduate from high school, he said. “They’ve been a big part of my life.”

Nominee Deborah Peale said her most rewarding experience is when students return to tell her the impact she had on their lives. Once a former student with a learning disability called Peale from college to say she was the only reason the student stayed in school, Peale said. Nominee Kevin Doyle said teaching is a profession that attracts people willing to get to work early, stay late and pay out of pocket. Doyle said he finds unexpected things students do to be rewarding, such a slipping him an apology note when they are late or disruptive. Nominees for the 2013 Columbia County Teacher

of the Year are: Chris Dang teaches fourth grade at Niblack Elementary and has 11 years of experience.

Denise Nordmeyer teaches Algebra 1A and 1B at Columbia High School. She has 13 years of experience.

Deborah Peale teaches fifth grade at Columbia City Elementary. She has 38 years of experience.

Amanda Martinez teaches third grade at Summers Elementary and has five years of experience.

Mychelle Angstadt teaches elementary students at Melrose Park Elementary and has 11 years of experience.

Kevin Doyle is a media specialist at Fort White Elementary. He has 11 years of experience.

Andy Schrader teaches ESE students at Five Points Elementary and has three years of experience.

Marlo Atkinson teaches fifth grade at Eastside Elementary and has 15 years of experience.

Erin Bailey teaches physical education at Lake City Middle School and has 12 years of experience.

Karen  
Blanchard  
teaches

third grade  
at Fort White  
Elementary.

She has  
20 years of  
experience.

Sue  
Williamson  
teaches ESE  
students at  
Westside  
Elementary  
and has 25  
years of  
experience.

Michele Padgett  
teaches special education  
at Pinemount Elementary.  
She has 19 years of experience.

Ashley Brown teaches  
language arts at Challenge  
Learning Center.

Sherod Keen is the band  
instructor at Richardson  
Middle School.



**Brown**



**Dang**



**Nordmeyer**



**Peale**



**Martinez**



**Keen**



**Angstadt**



**Doyle**



**Schrader**



**Atkinson**



**Bailey**



**Blanchard**



**Williamson**



**Padgett**