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COMMISSIONER SAMPSON ANNOUNCES OUTSTANDING EDUCATOR
Anchorage Teacher Jean Ward Wins \$25,000 Milken Award

Jean Ward, a kindergarten teacher at Chugach Optional School in Anchorage, has won a 2004 Milken Family Foundation National Educator Award, Education & Early Development Commissioner Sampson announced today.

Ward is one of 100 recipients of the award in 47 states and the District of Columbia, and the only Alaska recipient this year.

Ward will receive \$25,000 -- with no strings attached -- from the Milken Family Foundation of Los Angeles, California.

Ward has taught kindergarten at Chugach Optional since 1991. Prior to that she taught at Mt. View Elementary, Anchor Lutheran School and Abbot Loop Elementary School. In the 1980s, she was head teacher for three-year-olds at the Center for Child Development at providence Hospital in Anchorage, and a Head Start teacher.

“Since my own kindergarten experience, I have wanted to be a kindergarten teacher,” Ward once wrote. “I wanted to be the one to win the hearts of young children. I wanted to be the one to welcome them into their formal education. I wanted to be the one who understood them and gave them joy in learning...My greatest accomplishments in education happen in my kindergarten classroom.”

The Milken Family Foundation, in cooperation with the Alaska Department of Education & Early Development, sponsors the awards program. Alaska has participated in the program since 1990. Since then Milken has distributed approximately \$1.5 million to about 60 teachers and principals in the state.

The Department of Education & Early Development sets up a process to identify and evaluate educators for the award, following guidelines established by the Milken Foundation. The department appoints a blue ribbon review team to make final recommendations to Milken, which makes final selections. The program includes neither an application nor a nomination procedure. Predetermined criteria for the award include expert pedagogy; distinguished achievement in developing innovative curricula; outstanding ability to instill students with sound values; and commitment to professional development and excellence.

In addition to the financial award, the recipients of the Milken Educator Award will receive professional development opportunities, participate in ongoing Milken Family Foundation

projects, and be presented with a membership in state and national networks with prior Milken award winners. Through the networks, educators can obtain a variety of professional resources to help them cultivate and expand innovative programs in their classrooms, schools, and districts. They will also receive an all-expense-paid trip to Los Angeles for the annual Milken Family Foundation National Education Conference. Milken pays the expenses.

For more information on the Milken Educator Awards call 310-570-4773 or visit the Milken web site at www.mff.org.

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