



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Ten Teachers Named Candidates for 2023 Arizona Teacher of the Year®

Phoenix, Arizona, July 21, 2022 — Today, the [Arizona Educational Foundation \(AEF®\)](#) named the 10 candidates under consideration for the 2023 [Arizona Teacher of the Year® Award](#). [Desert Financial Credit Union](#) is returning again this year as a presenting sponsor of the 2023 Teacher of the Year Awards ceremony. Considered the “Oscar Awards” of teaching, the educator ultimately selected as Arizona Teacher of the Year becomes our state’s candidate for National Teacher of the Year.

The 10 nominees are:

- **Jamie Camero** (Science/ELA), Douglas Elementary, Flowing Wells Unified School District
- **Zelatrice Fowler** (Gifted Education), Emerson Elementary, Phoenix Elementary School District
- **Amber Gould** (English/Student Council), Greenway High School, Glendale Union High School District
- **Rodney "Scott" Harnisch** (Music), Kyrene del Norte Dual Language Academy, Kyrene School District
- **Erin Henderson** (English/AVID), North High School, Phoenix Union High School District
- **Royd Lee** (Navajo Language), Tuba City Elementary, Tuba City Unified School District #15
- **Christina Musselman** (General Education), Starline Elementary, Lake Havasu Unified School District
- **Ann Shanahan** (History & Government), Maryvale High School, Phoenix Union High School District
- **Ty White** (Chemistry), Willcox High School, Willcox Unified School District
- **Robyn Yewell** (General Education), Winifred Harelson Elementary, Amphitheatre Public Schools

AEF’s annual Teacher of the Year program is the highest honor bestowed upon Arizona’s public school teachers. The annual Teacher of the Year program is the premier event of the Arizona Educational Foundation, a statewide nonprofit organization dedicated to spotlighting and championing the exceptional work of public schools. Desert Financial will serve as the title sponsor the Arizona Teacher of the Year Awards ceremony.

"Along with our efforts to support teachers and students throughout Arizona, it's an honor to continue as the title sponsor of the AEF Teacher of the Year Award. Desert Financial was founded by educators and I can clearly see their persistence and compassion in these ten incredible nominees. We're proud to help recognize their achievements in a time of rapid and constant change." said Jeff Meshey, President and CEO at Desert Financial, the state's most trusted credit union.

Any certified full-time teacher working in an Arizona state-accredited public school or Bureau of Indian Education school is eligible for nomination. Teachers can self-nominate, or, students, colleagues, administrators, family members and friends can also submit nominations.

"We are so grateful to have Desert Financial returning as the presenting sponsor of the 2023 Arizona Teacher of the Year Awards and to have additional support from other Arizona businesses and organizations, all of whom appreciate and value the dedication of educators," stated Kim Graham, Executive Director of AEF. *"Desert Financial was started by teachers who wanted a financial institution dedicated to educators' needs. We see this as a natural partnership as both of our organizations have deep respect and admiration for teachers and public education."*

Now that the ten candidates have been identified, they undergo a final interview process. Following that, five teachers will be named "Ambassadors for Excellence" and finalists for the Arizona Teacher of the Year Award. The remaining five will become "Semifinalists." All ten are celebrated throughout the year at various recognition events.

The 2023 Arizona Teacher of the Year Awards ceremony will take place on October 15th, 2022 beginning with a reception at 4:00 p.m. and the awards ceremony at 5:30 p.m. The event will be held at the Madison Center for the Arts in Phoenix, AZ. To sponsor or obtain tickets, please visit <https://www.azedfoundation.org/teachersrock>.

The prize package for the Arizona Teacher of the Year includes \$15,000 from the Arizona Educational Foundation and travel paid to attend several National Teacher of the Year events including a trip to the White House to meet the U.S. President and a weeklong trip to International Space Camp in Huntsville, AL. They are also considered for an honorary doctorate from Northern Arizona University. The 2023 Arizona Teacher of the Year and four Ambassadors for Excellence also receive professional speech and media training to aid them in delivering hundreds of presentations during their year of recognition. AEF also has generous partners who provide gifts to the top ten teachers including a free membership to Treasures4Teachers, scholarships from the Arizona K12 Center to pursue National Board Certification, on-field recognition during the Fiesta Bowl, and the opportunity to ride on the APS fire engine during the Fiesta Bowl Parade. Desert Financial provides each teacher with an iPad and keyboard case.

Nancy Parra-Quinlan, a STEM/CTE teacher at Kino Junior High School in the Mesa Public Schools District, is still carrying forth the duties of her role as 2022 Arizona Teacher of the Year.

According to Kim Graham, AEF's Executive Director, the Arizona Teacher of the Year program, now in its 39th year, is made possible by the generous support of donors and sponsors. *"The Arizona Educational Foundation is a nonprofit. We exist because of donations we receive from individuals and business partners who value teachers and schools as much as we do,"* states Graham. **To make a donation or for sponsorship inquiries, please contact Kim Graham at kim@azedfoundation.org.**

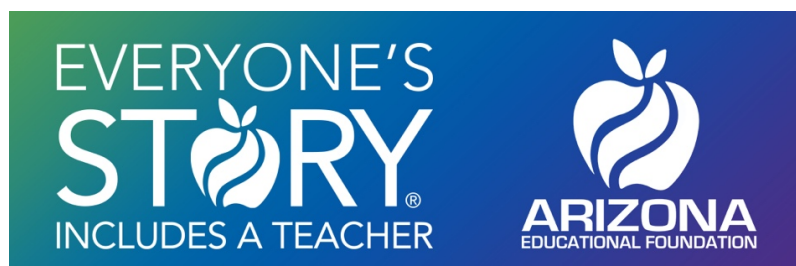
About Desert Financial Credit Union

Celebrating more than 80 years in Arizona, Desert Financial is the state's most trusted local credit union with over \$8 billion in assets, 400,000+ members and 47 branches. Membership eligibility is open across most of Arizona with contactless solutions via eBranch, making it easy to click, call or come in. As a not-for-profit cooperative, Desert Financial takes pride in sharing success. In 2020, members received \$15 million in dividends via the Member Giveback Bonus, and Desert Financial gave more than \$5 million in COVID-19 relief plus donations, scholarships and Random Acts of Kindness to our members, community and team. Learn more at www.desertfinancial.com.

About Arizona Educational Foundation, AEF®

The mission of AEF is to celebrate excellence and cultivate equity in Pre-K-12th grade Arizona public education. This is accomplished through a variety of programs for teachers, administrators, and students. Some programs shine a spotlight on excellence; others provide a stepping stone to help support schools and educators on the road to awesomeness. In addition to the [Arizona Teacher of the Year®](#) program, AEF also coordinates the [Arizona State Spelling Bee](#), the [A+ School of Excellence® Award](#), the [Principals Leadership Academy of Arizona](#), [teachSTEM](#), [Our World](#), and [Take Your Legislator to School](#). AEF was founded in 1983, by then State Superintendent of Public Education, [Carolyn Warner](#), who felt a nonprofit needed to be established to champion public education and recognize the great work of public school educators. AEF annually reaches over 500,000 students, teachers and administrators throughout Arizona.

For more information visit www.azedfoundation.org, or contact info@azedfoundation.org.



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