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University Marketing and Communications

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## Four EIU Alumni Among 10 Finalists for Illinois Teacher of the Year

Oct-09-2009

Four of the 10 finalists for the Illinois State Board of Education's 2009-10 Illinois Teacher of the Year award are graduates of Eastern Illinois University.

The award is to be presented at the Those Who Excel banquet on Oct. 24. EIU is proud to have awarded degrees to four of the finalists:

- **Connie Harling '77** teaches fourth-graders at Witt Elementary School in the Hillsboro school district.
- **Kevin Rutter '97** teaches economics to students in grades 10-12 at Carl Schurz High School in Chicago School District 299.
- **Tim Schnoeker '87** is an industrial technology/vocational education teacher at Coulterville High School.
- **Melissa Sievers '89** is a special education teacher at Brussels High School.

The Teacher of the Year will represent Illinois at NASA Space Camp in Huntsville, Ala., and in the National Teacher of the Year Program sponsored by the Council of Chief State School Officers and ING.

"Good teachers lead their students and themselves to excellence," said State Superintendent of Education Christopher A. Koch. "These 10 Illinois educators reflect the passion and dedication of teachers across the state who strive to make a difference each day and develop successful learners. The 'Those Who Excel' program provides the state with an opportunity to celebrate the achievements of these teachers and thank them for their tireless devotion and exemplary skills."

Four EIU graduates previously have been named Illinois Teacher of the Year:

- **Ruth Hawkins '47, '48** of Charleston, who taught at Oakland's Lake Crest Elementary School (1958-1974) and later served as assistant professor of elementary education at EIU. She was the 1973-74 Teacher of the Year.
- **Peggy Allan '71** of Greenville, who taught at Greenville Junior High School (1971-2005) and was assistant superintendent of Bond County Community Unit #2 (1997-2005). She was the 1988-89 Teacher of the Year.
- **Robert Grimm '84** of Arlington Heights, who taught at Hoffman Estates High School (1978-79) and William Fremd High School (1979-2004) before beginning his current role as assistant superintendent in Township High School District #211. He was the 2002-03 Teacher of the Year.
- **Joe Fatheree '89, '05** of Effingham, an Effingham High School technology teacher who formerly taught and coached at Oakland High School. He was the 2006-2007 Teacher of the Year. In 2009, he won top honors at the National Education Association Foundation's annual Salute to Excellence in Education, an honor for which EIU alumnus **Tim McCollum '73, '77** is now a finalist.