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EASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY
Charleston, Illinois

news

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

EIU GRAD RECEIVES GOLDEN APPLE AWARD

CHARLESTON, IL.--Eastern Illinois University graduate John Figlewicz is one of 10 recipients of the Foundation for Excellence in Teaching's "Golden Apple" Award, one of the most prestigious education honors in the state.

Figlewicz, who is chairperson of the Science Department at Thomas Junior High School in Arlington Heights and a seventh grade science teacher, was selected from among 500 nominees. The awards are presented to the 10 most outstanding teachers in the Cook, Du Page and Lake county area.

Figlewicz, who graduated from Eastern with his B.S. in Education in 1971 and his M.S. in Guidance and Counseling in 1974, has taught at Thomas Junior High School since 1971.

"I was very ecstatic when I learned I had received the award, but at the same time felt apprehensive. Along with the award comes a paid fall quarter sabbatical at Northwestern University and the use of a MacIntosh computer. Although it will be a wonderful experience, it will mean I will have to be away from my students," Figlewicz said.

At Northwestern, Figlewicz said he will attend weekly seminars and classes and develop science programs for schools.

Dr. Paul Overton, Chairman of Eastern's Department of Educational Psychology and Guidance, had Figlewicz as a graduate student. "I remember him as being a highly enthusiastic and motivated individual who was very interested in people and involving them in science both indoors and outdoors," Overton said.

Figlewicz said he enjoys teaching at Thomas because of the positive attitude of the students, parents, teachers and administrators. "I especially love the high energy level of the 30-32 students in each of my five classes."

He said his greatest achievement as a teacher at Thomas has been the development of an outdoor education program for seventh graders consisting of a three-day field experience that allows students to explore a variety of environmental conditions.

He is known among science educators in the state as founder of the Illinois Science Olympiad, a "hands-on" science competition for grades K-12 on the regional and state level. Figlewicz directed the program for three years and now serves on its Board of Directors.

In 1985, he was one of 30 "outstanding" science teachers in Illinois to receive a grant from the the National Science Foundation and Illinois State University to participate in the Honors Science Teachers Program at ISU to develop "hands-on" science activities for schools.

He also received honorable mention in the 1989 Illinois Science Teachers Association Presidential Award for Excellence in Education and Mathematics competition.

Figlewicz is active in many professional organizations including the Illinois Science Teachers Association and National Science Teachers Association.

Peggy Allan, Illinois' 1988 "Teacher of the Year," is also a graduate of Eastern's College of Education, which remains the second largest producer of teachers in the State. That same year, all six departments of the College were reaccredited by the Illinois State Board of Education.