Macy's has sponsored the state-run Teacher of the Year program. Each year the Macy’s Foundation contributes $100,000 to directly reward teacher excellence in Florida. The gift is one of the single largest corporate cash contributions to Florida public schools. Additionally, Macy’s underwrites the gala banquet and ceremony held each year to recognize the state’s outstanding teachers.

Although the company has supported educational projects since the turn of the 20th Century, the seed for its involvement with the Florida Department of Education Teacher of the Year program was planted when the company decided to do something special for teaching professionals who make such a big impact on the lives of Florida’s children. The company wanted to acknowledge educators in a tangible way that directly rewarded their efforts.

The idea initially led to a modest dinner hosted by Macy’s that coincided with the annual Florida Teachers Roundtable in Orlando, at which the best and brightest in Florida education came together to share ideas. At this dinner, the Macy’s Foundation funded cash awards to the outstanding teachers in attendance.

Over the course of 22 years, the awards banquet has evolved into an elaborate gala recognizing the 72 district finalists and highlighting the five statewide finalists for Teacher of the Year.
of the Year through video vignettes. The ceremony culminates with the naming of the Macy's/Florida Department of Education Teacher of the Year.

The event is a total Macy’s production — from stage design, scripting and lighting, to music selection and choosing the talent, including high profile stars who emcee the affair.

Past Teacher of the Year Masters of Ceremonies include actor Tony Randall, television personality Dick Cavett, actor Edward James Olmos, actress Lauren Hutton, and the reunited cast of TV’s “Welcome Back, Kotter,” including Gabe Kaplan. For the sixth year in a row, Emmy Award-winning journalist Deborah Norville will return on Thursday, July 8, 2010 to emcee the event.

Florida Department of Education Commissioner, Dr. Eric J. Smith, and Macy’s Senior Vice President, Regional Director of Stores, Karin Darmanin, will host this year’s banquet.

The Macy’s/Florida Department of Education Teacher of the Year is chosen from more than 180,000 public school teachers throughout the state by a Department of Education-appointed selection committee representing teachers, principals, parents and the business community. The top educator is selected on the basis of superior ability to teach and communicate knowledge of the subject taught, professional development, philosophy of teaching, and outstanding school and community service. The most important qualification is the teacher's exceptional capacity to inspire love of learning in students of all backgrounds and abilities.

Macy's has created a very special way to recognize Florida's top educators that provides them with tangible rewards and memories to last a lifetime. Each District Teacher of the Year - more -
Year receives a cash award of $750 and $250 for their respective schools, funded by the Macy’s Foundation, plus the district winner is awarded a $100 Macy’s gift card. The five finalists for Teacher of the Year each receive an award of $5,000 and a $1,000 grant for their schools, funded by the Macy’s Foundation, and a $500 Macy’s gift card. The Teacher of the Year, selected from the five finalists, receives a total of $10,000, customized mementos for him/her and his/her school and an all-expense paid trip to New York City for the Macy’s Thanksgiving Day parade. To date, Macy’s and the Macy’s Foundation have contributed over $2 million to teachers throughout the state.

Following the conclusion of the school year, the winning teacher is given a one-year leave from the classroom to serve as the Christa McAuliffe Ambassador for Education. He or she tours the state on behalf of Macy’s, the Department of Education and all the state’s teachers to spread the word about educational opportunities and challenges in the Sunshine State — present and future.

The Macy’s/Florida Department of Education Teacher of the Year also is considered a candidate for National Teacher of the Year. Florida’s 2010 winner Megan Marie Allen and the 2006 winner Sam Bennett were one of four finalists for this national honor. Florida’s Tracey Leon Bailey was named 1993 National Teacher of the Year.

**About Macy’s**

Macy’s, the largest retail brand of Macy's, Inc., delivers fashion and affordable luxury to customers at more than 800 locations in 45 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and Guam. Macy’s stores and macy’s.com offer distinctive assortments including the most desired family of exclusive and fashion brands for him, her and home. Macy’s is known for such epic events as Macy’s 4th of July Fireworks® and the Macy’s Thanksgiving Day Parade®, as well as spectacular fashion shows, culinary events, flower shows and celebrity appearances. Building on a 150-year tradition, Macy’s helps strengthen communities by supporting local and national charities that make a difference in the lives of our customers.

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