



For Immediate Release
Kansas Teachers' Hall of Fame
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Ralston inducted into Kansas Teachers' Hall of Fame

Topeka West High School was awarded the U.S. Department of Education National School of Excellence Awards in 1983. That fall, Melanie Ralston began her teaching career there and received a lapel pin representing the award. Concerned that she hadn't been part of the team who earned it, her principal told her that as long as she worked there, she would always strive for excellence in her classroom. That excellence has earned her a spot in the 2018 class of Kansas Teachers' Hall of Fame inductees.

"As I reflect on how this introduction to education has impacted my career, I realize that I do expect excellence from my students every day," she said. "It's been important for me to remember that the definition of educational excellence is as individual as each student. Maintaining that flexibility is what keeps me pursuing that same excellence every day in my classroom."

Ralston graduated from Emporia State University with a Bachelor of Science in Education and an emphasis on Speech, Debate, Forensics, Theatre, and English 9-12. She participated in the National Collegiate Debate Tournament and was a U.S. and Japanese debate participant.

"Melanie is a tremendous advocate for students and is very dedicated to the success of all students she encounters," Principal Dustin Dick said. "Melanie has high standards for their success, but is willing to work alongside them in order for them to reach those expectations."

Ralston earned a Triple Diamond Coaching Award from the National Speech and Debate Association and was a Kansas nominee for National Federation of High Schools Outstanding Speech/Debate/Theatre Education Award after winning the regional award.

“Great teachers strive to place their students first and maintain high expectations while understanding that each student walks through the door with difference talents and skills that must be embraced,” former student and Director of Theatre at Topeka West Ryan McCoy said. “Great teachers stand out by remaining active students while they serve as teachers. Melanie is one of these teachers.”

Ralston is actively involved in her community, as well as in her profession. She has served on the Kansas National Education Association Negotiations Team, was a Girl Scout leader, a Relay for Life Chairperson, and Sheltered Reality Site Coordinator.

“Melanie’s patience, diligence, and dedication makes her a standout amongst her peers,” former student Brittany Bodenheimer said. “Although engaged as a leader in a number of extracurricular activities that demand a great deal of her time and energy, Melanie is the last person you would expect to hear complain about long hours or work that must be done.”

In his letter recommending Ralston to the Kansas Teachers’ Hall of Fame, Harrison Baker noted that he did not focus on her awards, accolades, or personal education.

“Those are known. I want to focus on the person that is Melanie Ralston and how she relates to those she teaches,” he said. “She was a powerful force in my life and she continues to be a powerful one in others’ lives.”

Ralston is being inducted June 2 in Dodge City.