

## 2004 National Teacher of the Year Program Application for:

### Keil E. Hileman, II 2004 Kansas Teacher of the Year

Social Studies, Museum Studies, 6-8  
Monticello Trails Middle School  
6100 Monticello Road  
Shawnee, KS 66226  
913-422-1100

School Size: suburban  
District Student Population: 4521  
Building Student Population: 652  
Years of experience: 10  
Years in present position: 9

## II. Educational History and Professional Development Activities

- A. *Beginning with most recent, list colleges and universities attended including postgraduate studies. Indicate degrees earned and dates of attendance.*
- B. *Beginning with most recent, list teaching employment history indicating time period, grade level and subject area.*
- C. *Beginning with most recent, list professional association memberships including information regarding offices held and other relevant activities.*
- D. *Beginning with most recent, list staff development leadership activity and leadership activity in the training of future teachers.*
- E. *Beginning with the most recent, list awards and other recognition of your teaching.*

### A. COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

Mid-America Nazarene University;	Educational Technology, 21 graduate hours; 1996-Present
University of Kansas	Masters of Science in Education and Curriculum Development; 1995
University of Kansas	Five-Year Teaching Certification Program; 1994
University of Kansas	Bachelor of Science in Education & Social Studies; 1993
Johnson County Community College	Associate in Arts; 1991

### B. TEACHING EXPERIENCE

2003-2004	Monticello Trails Middle School, Shawnee, KS; Museum Connections, 6-8
1995-2003	Monticello Trails Middle School, Shawnee, KS; World History & Research, 7
1994-1995	De Soto Junior High, De Soto, KS; American History, 8; Geography/Politics, 9
1994	KU Graduate Teaching Internship, Perry Lecompton High School, Perry, KS; 9-12
1993	KU Graduate Teaching Internship, Perry Middle School, Perry, KS; 5-8

### *Additional Professional Teaching Positions*

Mid-America Nazarene University; "Turning Your Classroom into a Museum"  
University Missouri-Kansas City, School of Nursing; History of Nursing  
De Soto USD 232 Summer Academy Program; Enrichment Classes  
Johnson County Community College; Summer Talents Program

Stanley Presbyterian Church, Stanley, KS; Middle School Youth Coordinator

*Coaching/Sponsorship Experiences*

1995-1997	Monticello Trails Middle School; Girls Volleyball & Basketball, Track, Math Team
1994-1995	De Soto Junior High School; Girls Volleyball & Basketball, Track, Math Team
1995	Perry LeCompton High School; Weight Lifting, Track Team

C. PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

NEA -National Education Association	1994-Present
KNEA -Kansas National Education Association	1994-Present
NCSS -National Council of Social Studies	1994-Present
NFCA -National Federation of Coaches Association	1994-Present
NCA -National Coaches Association	1994-Present
DTA -De Soto Teachers' Association	1994-Present
KUAA -Kansas University Alumni Association	1993-Present

*Professional Offices and Positions*

District Strategic Planning Committee: Planning Team; De Soto USD 232; 2001-2002  
DLLT -- District Leadership Learning and Technology; Monticello Trails Middle School; 1997-1998  
SIT Team -- School Improvement Team; Monticello Trails Middle School; 1997-1998  
SITE Council --Teachers, Parents & Community Leaders; Monticello Trails Middle School; 1997-1998  
Head Teacher; Monticello Trails Middle School; 1995-1998  
Parent Teacher Organization -- PTO Wolf Pack; Monticello Trails Middle School; 1995-Present  
District Curriculum Representative -- Social Studies; Monticello Trails Middle School; 1995-Present  
District Negotiations Team Representative; Monticello Trails Middle School; 1994-2001

D. STAFF DEVELOPMENT AND TEACHER TRAINING

*Professional Presentations*

2003 - "Creating a Museum in Your Room" -hosted graduate course, "Teaching with Primary Sources," from Ottawa University in the Classroom Museum at Monticello Trails Middle School.  
2000 - "Creating Projects and Hands-On Learning Activities Using a Classroom Museum" -Project Whistle Stop. Independence Public School District, July 24; Lecture/Video/Discussion with 35 Professional Educators.  
2000 - "Creating a Museum in Your Room" -Project Whistle Stop, Independence Public School District. January 22; Lecture/Video/Discussion with 30 Professional Educators.  
1999 - "Creating a Museum in Your Room" -Invited Speaker. Annual Conference of the National Council of Social Studies, Orlando. R.; November 19.

1998 - "History of the Middle Ages" -Guest Speaker (4 hours) for graduate course on the History of Women in the Middle Ages, Baker University-Overland Park Campus; Pat Roberts. Course Director; Summer 1998.

#### *Staff Development*

- 2003-Present Reading Committee Chair -for North Central Association (NCA) and school improvement
- 2001 In-Service Training Session on TVators and connecting computers to televisions for presentations
- 2000-2003 Multiple Staff In-Service Presentations on Microsoft Word Tables, Word Formatting & Word Art. Excel Data Tables. Excel Graphs and Tables, PowerPoint Presentations, Internet Site use of Ditto.com. Lycos.com, Dogpile.com & Biography.com
- 1997-1998 School Improvement Team -representatives from each grade level work to improve our school
- 1997-1998 SITE Council- staff & community leaders focus on school and community improvement
- 1996-Present Reading Committee Chair -for Quality Performance Accreditation (QP A) school improvement
- 1995-1998 Head/Lead Teacher for Monticello Trails Middle School staff
- 1995-1996 Building Graphs and Tables Creation Team -Quality Performance Accreditation (QPA)
- 1995-Present Countless Museum artifact loans to faculty members of several schools and universities for their classroom use

#### *Training of Future Teachers*

- 1994-Present Annual Guest Lecturer, "Teaching Social Studies in the Middle School Setting," School of Education, Undergraduate Studies, Kansas University. Lawrence, Kansas; Dr. Joseph O'Brien. Course Facilitator
- Eight Regular Education Student Teachers in 9 years from the University of Kansas. Ottawa University, Emporia State University, and Johnson County Community College Pre-Education Program.
- Eight Gifted Education Student Teachers in 6 years from Johnson County Community College Summer Talents program.

#### **E. PROFESSIONAL HONORS AND AWARDS**

- 2004 Kansas Teacher of the Year
- 2003 De Soto Secondary Teacher Representative for 2004 Kansas Teacher of the Year
- 2003 Monticello Trails Middle School Representative for 2004 Kansas Teacher of the Year
- 2003 Nominated by students for The Kindest Kansas Citian Award
- 2002 Risk Taker Award. Monticello Trails Middle School. De Soto, Kansas, 1997-PowerPoint Curriculum
- 2001 Nominated by students for The Kindest Kansas Citian Award
- 2001 Nominated by students and parents for FOX 4 Crystal Apple Award
- 2001 Monticello Trails Middle School Representative for Kansas Teacher of the Year Program
- 2001 Nominated by students and parents for Disney Teacher of the Year Award

- 2000 De Soto Education Foundation -Special Museum Projects Grant- 2000
- 2000 Teacher's Touching The Future -EPCOT/Celebration School Tour -2000;  
Awarded by De Soto USD 232 and Sponsored By Hollis & Miller Group -  
Architectural Design Firm
- 1999 Nominated by students and parents for Disney Teacher of the Year Award
- 1998 Nominated by students and parents for FOX 4 Crystal Apple Award
- 1997 Risk Taker Award, Monticello Trails Middle School, De Soto, Kansas, 1997-  
Archeology

### III. Professional Biography

*What were the factors that influenced you to become a teacher? Describe what you consider to be your greatest contributions and accomplishments in education.*

Throughout my life, I was destined to become a teacher. I was consistently helping my friends; with their homework. In the Boy Scouts, I was a merit badge instructor; during church youth group trips, I was a class instructor. I was a confirmation class leader when I was in high school. In college, I was the organizer and spokesperson for most of my classroom work groups.

However, it took me a while to recognize my gifts. While studying Aerospace and Mechanical Engineering for several years at the University of Kansas, I chose to focus on history and education. I decided to try an introductory course in education. It was an eye-opening experience. During this course, I realized I had a natural talent for working with young people because I thrived on their energy and enthusiasm. I was assigned to Central Junior High School in Lawrence, KS, where I was to observe and take notes. I soon found myself asking permission to help with homework, coming back for additional "observations" to work with student groups and begging my cooperating teacher to let me help more than once a week. I was assisting with projects and lessons three times a week by the end of the semester. It was inspiring! I loved sharing and growing with the students in a classroom setting, and I had many ideas about how to present and evaluate the classroom material. I had worked in many different jobs and educational situations, but nothing felt as amazing as teaching. I knew then that I was called to be a professional educator. Teaching was in my heart and soul.

During the University of Kansas five-year education program, I earned a Bachelor of Science in Education for Comprehensive Social Studies Grades 5-12. I immediately pursued and completed my Masters of Science in Education for Curriculum and Instruction. This degree exposed me to many different instructional methods and educational projects that I currently utilize in my classes. I create my own exams, study guides, homework packets, project rubrics and PowerPoint presentations.

Through my student teaching and internship, I had some remarkable teaching experiences in grades 5-12. I taught for two and a half months at Perry Middle School and for four months at Perry Lecompton High School. I was blessed with fantastic mentor teachers! I was originally assigned to teach only 7th and 8th grade classes, but I arranged a new schedule with each building that allowed me to teach on class in each grade level during my student teaching internship. I concluded by teaching one class in grades 5-8 at the middle school and grades 9-12 at the high school. I found the energy level and motivation of middle school students very appealing. A love of coaching emerged while working with the Perry Lecompton High School Track Team during my internship, and this experience convinced me to look for coaching positions, too. Pursuing a job at the middle school level lead me to an 8th-9th grade social studies position at De Soto Junior High School in 1994, where I also coached 7th grade volleyball, basketball, track and the math team.

During my nine years with the De Soto School District, I have thoroughly enjoyed the district, students, parents, fellow educators and the classes I have taught. In my first year at De Soto Jr. High School, I taught the 9th grade Geopolitics course and 8th grade American History. My last eight years of teaching 7th grade World History have enabled me to help students prepare

for the projects and state assessments they will encounter in their academic future. Coaching volleyball, basketball, track and the math team and sponsoring the early morning Christian group Club 121 has allowed me to interact with my students in a variety of settings. I enjoy and flourish at the 7th grade level. The students display unbridled enthusiasm and interest in novel subjects and current events. The middle school student has an open mind and many creative skills. The middle school years are the best time for me to help prepare my students for their academic and athletic pursuits in high school, as this is when most students are taught organization and develop study skills. It is a difficult journey for most students. Many lose their enthusiasm for learning. My job is to teach, but my passion is setting students' minds ablaze with a love of creative learning and the power of knowledge. For me there is no other educational level that holds as much potential for personal and intellectual growth as the middle school.

Over the past nine years, I have found additional outlets for my love of teaching. I served as the Middle School Youth Activities Coordinator at Stanley Presbyterian Church (96-97). I currently teach an archeology class at Johnson County Community College within the Summer Talents Program. In addition I also “team-teach” a History of Nursing Course at the University of Missouri in Kansas City. I use Museum Artifacts to explain history, while we examine nursing in the same time periods, This hands-on class is so popular that UMKC has opened the course to both undergraduate and graduate students. I use my history and archeology expertise to enhance learning by tying the past to the present in my classroom with artifacts, video clips and current event discussions. I teach a Teacher Re-certification Class for Mid America Nazarene University. This course is specifically designed to share some of the successes my students have found with hands- on Learning Techniques. Sharing our Classroom Museum is something I feel very motivated and driven to do through professional conferences, the Museum’s web page and loaning artifacts to other teachers. Yet, I am the proudest of my students’ academic achievements.

The last few years have been very gratifying for me as a teacher and a person. The creation of our hands-on Classroom Museum has led to the development of an artifact collection with approximately 10,000 items. The parents, individually and through my partnership with P.T.O., have been incredibly supportive, and they have never denied a Museum request. I presented at the 1999 National Council for The Social Sciences (N.C.S.S.) convention in Orlando, Florida, which resulted in an invitation to present the Classroom Museum concept at Project Whistle Stop in Independence, Missouri. I have continued to present at the Project Whistle Stop conventions for the past four years. I was awarded a De Soto Foundation Grant in 2000, to purchase dolls from around the world to help teach about cultures, clothes and customs. In May of 2001, I was selected by my district as a Teacher Touching The Future, and sent to tour the innovative Celebration School in Orlando, Florida. I have just been asked to design a New Exploratory Course based entirely on the “Museum Concept” for the Fall of 2003 which will allow me to reach and teach almost every student in the building, grades 6-8. We are all excited about our Museum’s future. Being a professional educator is by far the most rewarding thing I have ever done in my life. I feel called to teach and that Monticello Trails is my second home. I have been fortunate to find so many fantastic ways to use and improve my creative instructional skills. While I have accomplished and continue to pursue many endeavors, first and foremost I am a teacher – My Destiny.

#### **IV. Community Involvement**

*Describe your commitment to your community through service-oriented activities such as volunteer work, civic responsibilities and other group activities.*

I am connected to my community personally and through my school. Johnson County Food Drive: I supported this food drive by collecting canned food after the holiday break when food pantries are low but the coldest weather is coming. Angel Tree Family Sponsorship: My 5th hour class collected food, clothes and toys that fit the individual needs of a family. Toys for Tots: My students collected 1,500 new and wrapped toys for young children across Kansas City. Families in Need: Our staff and students have come together and collected funds and items of need, to help families in our community. Boy Scouts: I am an Eagle Scout, and I have helped with Eagle Projects and spoken at Eagle Courts of Honor. I am also a Merit Badge Counselor for Government, Civics, American History, Computers and The Constitution. I have loaned Museum Artifacts to Cub and Boy Scouts for use at meetings. Medal of Honor Tomb Restoration: I worked with Boy Scouts to restore the tomb of a veteran of The Spanish American War from 1898. We cleaned the site, poured concrete, set posts and attached link chains to protect the tombstone. De Soto Methodist Church Member: I am an active member of my church and the Chancel and Bell Choir. Civics & Government: I have voted regularly and often see current and former students when I do. I stay informed regarding national, state, local and school district elections. Jump-Start Sudan: Through my teaching team, our school is now connected to a school in Sudan. We have raised over \$2,000 for food, clothes and medicine for students in Sudan. Community Guest Speakers in My Class: From: South Africa, Holocaust Survivors, WWII, Korea and Vietnam Veterans, World Travelers, KU students from China and Japan. Monticello Historical Days: I have participated in and advertised these special days when old buildings of Monticello Township are open to the public with reenactments and displays. (i.e. one room school house, Civil War Battles) De Soto Historical Trophies Restoration: I am currently restoring over 250 lost trophies from De Soto Junior & Senior High Schools with the help of three young boys in my neighborhood. Many date back to the 1920's. A local trophy shop has donated missing parts. The City of De Soto will permanently display the trophies at City Hall. My Superintendent is calling me, Our District's Unofficial Historian." Washington D.C. Trip: I sponsored nine annual seventh and eighth grade trips to our nation's capital. Annual Museum Night: The Museum is open for the community, and students dress in historical costumes to act as Museum Ambassadors. Our Museum has become something for our community, to believe in and stand behind. Special Museum Tours: I open The Museum to tours for visiting relatives or parents with odd work schedules. Parent Teacher Organization Member: I help organize and support our PTO projects like the World of Knowledge Fair, dances, and fieldtrips. School Board Presentations: I have presented on two occasions with my students to present our unique school projects to the community: '1800's Archeology Unit" and hands-on learning with "Student Created Projects."

## V. Philosophy of Teaching

- A. *Describe your personal feelings and beliefs about teaching, including your own ideas of what makes you an outstanding teacher. Describe the rewards you find in teaching.*
- B. *How are your beliefs about teaching demonstrated in your personal teaching style?*

A. Explore! Empower! Excel! My duty as a professional educator is to take my students through these three phases of learning. While each student has different needs and abilities, they all have the ability to use the concepts listed above as a measure for success in their academic and social lives. I believe it is the teacher's responsibility to determine what it will take to enable students to explore the world they live in, empower them with useful learning, and excel by applying that knowledge to achieve educational and personal goals in their everyday lives. The profession of teaching touches many lives. It is truly something everyone can believe in and support. I have been fortunate to work in a building, district and community that both support and believe in their professional educators and the students we teach.

I truly believe ALL students can learn. Each student has a unique learning style and pace, and I work very hard to inspire my students in many different ways. I use videos, lectures, guest speakers, projects, our Museum's artifacts and other visual and hands-on activities. Once students are motivated, they can create additional projects and products in the Classroom Museum. This leads them to their own individual sense of accomplishment by learning about the subjects we are studying. The challenges I place before my students help them grow socially, academically and intellectually. I use multi-level or tiered assignments, which allow students to achieve success at many different levels. While some students only complete the initial level of the assignment, other students' abilities allow them to go much farther and accomplish more. I use these assignments to give students an opportunity to foster their creative skills, i.e., custom-designed timelines, charts, graphs, projects, models, or research on artifacts.

My compassion for my students, my empathy for the challenges of adolescence, my creative methods used to motivate and educate, and maybe even my tenacity to never give up and never give in make me an unusual educator. My current and former students will tell me, "You have the most amazing teaching style we've ever seen." I use two Civil War bullets to teach American history. This sparks so much interest in hands-on learning that I ask my students to bring artifacts to share in class. A student named Jason delivered an amazing letter regarding his artifacts that changed my life forever. Jason's grandmother wrote me: "If you promise to never sell them and always use them to teach, they are yours to keep." This was all because Jason had gone home and shared our amazing class discussions. This event marked the birth of our Classroom Museum. I currently teach lessons, surrounded by pieces of history such as a 1790's slave collar, a 1796~ntlock musket, a 1898 brass cash register, a 1920's porcelain barber chair, a 1907 nickel & cast iron stove, a 3000 year-old Chinese coin and countless others artifacts. Because of my partnerships with students, parents, and my district. some nine years and thousands of donated artifacts later, I sit on the threshold of breaking history in our state and nation. In the Fall of 2003, I will start teaching a new class called "Museum Connections," with a curriculum designed by me to support the regular social studies classes by using museum artifacts, Internet searches, hands-on lessons. video clips, discussions and student-created projects. I will be teaching grades 6-8. This will increase my annual number of students from 100 to 550. The Museum will soon move into a new room, approximately twice the size of a regular classroom. Monticello Trails Middle School will become the first public school with its own permanent Museum. My students use all their

senses every day in Museum activities. This leads my students to higher-level thinking skills and problem solving activities linked to real historical events. The unique and creative tool I use to motivate and teach my students has now become a permanent entity that will last beyond me. The Museum is not only a place of learning for me and my students, it has become our community's Museum. I am proud of my work on our Museum. However, it is the learning, productivity and growth of my students, combined with the unending trust my community and district have placed in me, that has made our Museum what it is today and what it will become in the future.

There are many rewards in teaching. The most important lies in the growth that I am allowed to foster in my students with every contact, comment and shared moment I thrive on the look in their eyes when they "get it" or when they are excited to understand a new concept for the first time. These moments are priceless. Students take these learning achievements and build upon them to change who they are as people. These achievements enable them to excel for the rest of their lives. This constantly ignites a commitment and dedication in me that pushes me to excel in all that I do in regard to teaching my students. I enjoy making social studies and world history come alive for my students. I use any and all means to "reach" a student. When students are motivated and inspired to learn, there is no limit to what they can achieve. I ask unusual questions, design projects, explain strange objects and employ a variety of teaching strategies in my classes. I encourage all students to take an active role in my classes. I gain their input and opinions on class projects, and often let each class choose an individual path of learning for different units. This directly motivates them to work with me and learn planning and organizational life skills.

B. Teaching offers me a career to which I can devote all of my talents. I constantly use my education in history, archeology, art, engineering, and mathematics. There is no limit to the creativity, motivation and love of learning that can take place in my classroom. It is all up to me. It is my duty to organize students, parents, and my faculty to help create the most beneficial learning experiences. Student learning and motivation inspire me daily. I simply love working with them. They are my passion. My students learn and grow in our created historical learning environment. They love the hands-on and creative activities I facilitate for them. I am a teacher that keeps them on their toes and occasionally surprises them. They rarely know what new adventure awaits them in my class each day. They also enjoy the real world connections in my classes. I have a responsibility to provide and assure their success in my school and beyond. I model and teach teamwork, compassion, problem solving and critical thinking in all my classes. I would not be satisfied if I did not prepare them for high school, vocational technical institutes, college and their future lives. This is why I will do anything, try anything and create anything that will help my students learn and grow.

## VI. Education Issues and Trends

*What do you consider to be the major public education issues today? Address one in depth, outlining possible causes, effects and resolutions.*

Many issues and challenges face public education today: funding, teacher retention and shortages, teacher education programs, school safety, a growing number of 'at-risk' students, increased diversity of student needs, curricular alignment between states and even a perception of teachers as non-professionals in our society. However, there is one challenge that stands out above all the others, The Information Revolution and Age of Creativity.

The growth of the world knowledge base and development of new technologies have created the largest challenges public education has ever witnessed. 'Faced with the rapid incursion into people's daily lives of a knowledge explosion which sees the world's knowledge base double every eighteen months, largely through technological development, traditional education functions and forms have been fundamentally challenged.' (Dr. Neville J. Scholfield, University of Newcastle) Dr. Lawrence Roberts, one of the inventors of the Internet points out, 'the Internet doubles every six months, four times faster than transistors per each computer chip.... Creating an Internet medium which all other media will travel through by the year 2007.' The leaps and bounds that our educational system has made in the last 100 years are very small compared to what we will have to do in the next 100 years. There is a tidal wave of information and technological change coming that most Americans are unaware of. Dr. Lawrence Roberts states, 'While the Internet keeps growing, faster and larger, the number of users is also growing. When the number of users reaches saturation, the broadband width and high speed of the Internet will continue quadrupling each year, just like it has for the past 22 years.' (ComputerUser.com Inc. - interview) This will lead to a cost-effective medium for every form of communication; Television, Radio, Movies etc. This means every video, radio broadcast and television show, past and present, will be accessible to anyone, anywhere at anytime. Many scholars point out we are on the verge of a new age in human history, 'We have gone from Agriculture to Industry to Information. Now we are entering the newest era: The Creative Age.' (John Kao, Harvard Business School)

If you consider our world to be a river, then times of incredible change would be 'rapids' or 'white water' on the river. I believe we are in the middle of The Technology and Information Age and witnessing the birth of the Age of Creativity. These amazing changes or 'White Water,' challenge us to continually improve our educational systems to meet emerging student needs. This is a time of constant change or 'Perpetual White Water.'

Education will need to become increasingly creative, flexible and adaptable to help students become life long learners in an ever-changing world. We will still need to provide our students with a 'base knowledge' of our culture and history. We must focus on these curriculum outcomes: Research and Communication Skills, Critical Thinking, Teamwork, Information: Gathering, Formatting, Presenting and Creativity.

Our students will need many skills to succeed in The Age of Information and Creativity. For the first time in history, we are seeing wealth created from information and creativity alone. The Microsoft Corporation was not founded on diamonds, gold, land acquisitions, or any other tangible item, but solely on creative ideas that allowed people to manipulate information in novel and unique ways. Access to information allows success to occur.

While technology connects the world in unique ways, our educational system must make every effort to keep students connected to, and prepared for, the real world. Permanent business and community relationships must be established to help schools attain these goals. Education and Business Partnerships will help schools keep their obligation to stay connected to technological changes and current life skills to insure future student success.

Teacher education programs must be dedicated to teaching educators how to utilize current technologies and understand how they will apply to student's daily lives at home and on the job. The concept of being a life long learner must be fostered in professional educators, and passed on to their students and surrounding communities.

The number of credits required for high school graduation increases each year. Yet, the number of student contact days rarely does. Our system adapted to meet the needs of the Agricultural Age by using spring break as a time to harvest hay or plant crops and summer break as a time to harvest the majority of crops. The Information and Creative Ages will require us to reorganize our academic years for increased time to motivate and educate.

The future that 'Perpetual White Water' offers is unclear and uncertain. In the past, schools have been reactive in their attempts to change, leaving students continually behind. However, constant changes ahead may not allow us to predict and be proactive. I believe the answer may lie between reactive and proactive. Education will have to stay connected to current technology. Staying current is not guessing about 'what may be' or settling for 'what was.'" It means working hard to utilize and learn from the technology and information 'that is.'" I see no other effective way to meet the monumental challenges that The Information Revolution and Age of Creativity pose.

Education is not facing these challenges alone. Our nation, local businesses, neighboring nations and every person around the world are facing this 'Perpetual White Water' of technological change, information tidal wave and the need to foster creativity. We must be forever vigilant in our search for creative and unique solutions to help us meet the educational needs of our students and prepare them for the society and world these changes will bring.

Education as we know it today will be challenged in the 21st century. With regards to the challenges presented by 'Perpetual White Water,'" I am committed to keeping myself, my team, faculty and district motivated, inspired, positive, innovative, and productive, for the students we educate and the communities we serve.

## **VII. The Teaching Profession**

- A. *What do you do to strengthen and improve the teaching profession?*
- B. *What is and/or what should be the basis for accountability in the teaching profession?*

A. Doing an exemplary job is my first priority in strengthening the profession of teaching. The respect and professionalism of teachers as a whole must start with each individual teacher. I have worked hard to stay current with instructional technologies and methods in order to demonstrate to those I come in contact with that teachers are dedicated, educated and well trained. Since every student and parent I work with walks away with an impression of teachers as a whole, I endeavor to make sure that impression is a great one that they will never forget. I have always worked very hard to give my students, building, staff and community something great to believe in.

I have taken a leadership role in many different committees and professional organizations related to education and school improvement: District Strategic Planning & Action Teams, District Leadership Learning and Technology, School Improvement Team, Community-School Council (SITE), Head Teacher, PTO, District Negotiations Team, National Education Association, KNEA, NCSS, De Soto Teacher's Association and The Kansas Alumni Association. Each of these has allowed me to stay informed about novel trends and current challenges facing education today. These organizations and committees have also allowed me the opportunity to represent my faculty and building in key decisions. The Negotiations Team is very influential. This team defines our entire district's contract, evaluates teacher and district needs, and strives to improve district salaries and insurance policies to help improve teacher retention.

My energies are directed toward leading and helping those with whom I teach. I have taken computer classes regarding HTML, Microsoft Word, Excel, Power Point and Integrate that allow me to support and lead many in-service sessions in my building and help teachers utilize the tools that De Soto USD 232 has provided for us. I have helped my fellow teachers learn to work more professionally and effectively by delivering in-service sessions to individuals, teaching teams and special services staff.

Helping several teachers in my building put their entire curriculum into PowerPoint presentations, as I have done for my classes, has been very gratifying. This required that I train them in the correct way to connect their computers to television sets via the use of TVators. This allows all students to see the presentations from anywhere in the room, and easily print notes for students who miss class. It also creates outlines and note sheets to be printed for students who may have trouble reading or writing the material being covered.

Through collaboration, Museum Artifacts have been loaned to many of the classrooms in my building, and district. When teachers in my building are teaching specific units, they come to our Classroom Museum to pull artifacts that pertain to their lessons. I have found this to be a highly effective way of informally helping teachers bring hands-on learning into their classes. Many former students check out artifacts to take to their high school and college classes. The educational reputation of the Museum grows more with each artifact checkout and use. I have made every effort to share my student's learning successes with hands-on teaching techniques.

I have mentored eight student teachers who completed their internships and student teaching experiences with me. The University of Kansas, Emporia, Ottawa and Johnson County Community College have each placed student teachers from very different educational backgrounds with me. I helped them learn to inspire and work with the enthusiasm that exists in our middle school, and I involve my student teachers in as many aspects of our profession as possible. The Emporia student intern and I were awarded a grant funded by the De Soto Educational Foundation to purchase the dolls from around the world to teach about cultures, clothes and customs. My student teachers have helped organize fieldtrips such as Camp Wildwood Survival Days and Emergency Services Day, when the local fire, police and ambulance crews visit and share stories about teamwork and being prepared for emergency situations and accident prevention. I have represented De Soto USD 232 on a panel of professional educators at The University of Kansas every year for the last nine years. This panel allows current practicing teachers the opportunity to share their experiences with future graduates of KU's educational program. I encourage and invite these college students to interact with my students and visit our Museum. Many these students have chosen to be my student teachers or worked on special college credit projects with my students in our Classroom Museum.

I have taught archeology classes (grades 5-9) for the past five summers at JCCC. Incorporated within the Johnson County Community College Summer Talents Program is a student teaching program for future gifted educators. This gifted education program is directed by Emporia State University. I have had eight different gifted education student interns during these summer sessions. My focus was teaching hands-on instructional techniques and how to lead gifted students through problem solving activities.

My professional career has led me to present locally and nationally. In 1999, I presented Creating Projects and 'Hands-On" Learning Activities Using a Classroom Museum at the National Council for the Social Studies national convention in Florida. I have shared this presentation at The Independence Public School District the past four years. I am currently helping teachers learn how to teach with artifacts, replicas and student projects in a Teacher Re-Certification Course offered through Mid America Nazarene University. The successes of our building's Classroom Museum can now find their way into many schools and thousands of students' learning and life experiences.

B. The key essential of education is to pass on knowledge. The basis for accountability in education must be student learning and performance. Educators are not succeeding if students are not learning relevant and applicable lessons. We must constantly evaluate if our educational methods are effectively teaching our students. We must also strive to help our students apply what they have learned to the world they currently live in and will live in. While I believe this is a simple and easily agreed upon point, the evaluation of student performance and achievement is unfortunately not. There are so many different student skills and abilities to assess that no single test or performance assessment can truly measure every student's capabilities. The development of improved national and state assessments should always continue. These assessments will allow schools to evaluate and improve their educational programs.

The evaluation of educators must be directly connected to the progress of our students. Educators should continuously evaluate their: Curriculums, Educational Resources, Instructional Strategies and Assessments. This is the only way we can improve our

instructional methods and truly see what our students have learned, how they can perform and what they are able to achieve.

## **VIII. National Teacher of the Year**

*As the 2004 National Teacher of the Year, you would serve as a spokesperson and representative for the entire teaching profession. What would be your message? What would you communicate to your profession and to the general public?*

It has been stated, 'If you want to change the world, start with yourself, and then help your family to grow and change. When this is accomplished, strive for change within your community, city and state. When you are ready, help your nation to change. When your nation is strong enough, it will be able to help other nations grow and change. In this way every person can change the world he lives in.' Teachers know this! Teachers change the world we live in every day. Everything we do affects our students and has a real world effect on all of our futures.

Students, Teachers and Schools are things that everyone can and should believe in. It is our responsibility to capture that belief and use it to make our world a better place one student at a time. When we do this it is not just 100, 1,000, or even 10,000 people we connect with, but every person our students communicate and share with. We are rarely able to see all the lives we have touched as professional educators. Our textbooks, buildings, teaching teams, curriculums and communities are in a constant state of change. Yet, the knowledge and love that we give to our students makes a permanent and everlasting impact on the world we live in. We must strive to reach and teach our students with the hope and faith that they will pass on what we have taught them and make sound decisions. As professional educators, we must Explore new technologies and methodologies that can help us reach our students, as current technology allows for many extraordinary instructional and learning opportunities. School districts cannot do this alone. We must look within our communities and local businesses to Empower our districts and continuously evaluate and improve our Educational Resources, Instructional Strategies, Curriculum and Assessments. This will allow everyone to Excel: Students in their lives, Teachers in their profession, Families and Businesses in their communities and School Districts within their counties and states.

Explore Yourself: Become a risk taker. Go out on a limb. Often, the limb you step out on will act as a catapult and take you and your students to wonderful places you never imagined existed. Empower Your Classrooms: Connect your students to the real world. Your students will remember what you do long after you are gone. Do your best to create and use units that effectively reach every student and make their memories of learning, amazing and wonderful. Excel with your students, colleagues, districts and communities: Inspire a love of learning. Prepare your students and yourself for the future while also honoring our past. Remember All students can succeed. We must remain committed to keeping ourselves, our teaching teams, buildings and districts motivated, inspired, productive, innovative and positive for the students we educate and the communities we serve in. Explore Your World, Empower Yourself and Those Around You, Excel In Everything You Do. You can change the world!

## **Letters of recommendation:**

Dear Dr. Tompkins,

On behalf of the seventh grade Trailblazers teaching team at Monticello Trails Middle School, DeSoto, Kansas, I am very excited and happy to recommend Keil Hileman for the Kansas Teacher of the Year award. As team members at Monticello Trails Middle School, we have had the pleasure and honor to teach with him for several years, ranging from two to twelve. Two of us moved with him from the junior high school in DeSoto to Monticello Trails when we opened eight years ago.

The "team teaching" format has allowed us to interact with Keil on a daily basis and observe him with the students offering us the opportunity to get to know him, his philosophies, his desires and passion for his students, and his great love for teaching first-hand.

Ever since Keil started teaching, he has been known as one of the students' favorite teachers. He has also had the total support and admiration from parents and people in the community. The reasons for this are quite obvious. He has expanded his teaching horizons by sharing his lessons of teaching with artifacts at conferences and teaches a class at one of the colleges in the area. He is involved in the history of his community by retrieving and restoring trophies which had been thrown aside from the high school and are now being displayed in a local museum. Next year he will begin a new adventure at Monticello Trails Middle School by teaching a new Museum Class that will allow him to touch students of all grade levels and allow more students to experience his methods.

His enthusiasm is never-ending; his creativity is astounding; his compassion for his students is inspiring; his love and passion for his subject area is overwhelming. He offers the best "hands on" teaching methods I have ever- seen in the thirty years I have taught. In his lessons he offers the students choices for how they can accomplish the goal of learning the material, making it possible for them to learn in the style most suited to them. His room is a plethora of historical information, artifacts, and stimulating materials that daily peaks their interest in the topic they are covering. At the end of each unit, he ties it all back to the present day by showing a film that coincides with or accentuates the time period or the facts and concepts the students just covered in the unit.

One of the strengths he brings to our team is his overwhelming willingness to teach cross-curricular units. We have tied many of our curricular materials together with close planning and communications at our team meetings. We have coordinated Greek and Roman history with mythology, the Industrial Revolution with Charles Dickens and A Christmas Carol. Civil Rights with African American literature and Martin Luther King Day, African studies with African research projects and literature, and are presently finishing up with Ancient Arabia and a reading of the stories of the Arabian Nights. All these projects make the studies more meaningful and fun for the students.

Keil's love for what he does is apparent every day as he pours himself into the tasks of finding artifacts to add to his classroom museum, and involves the students in the preservation, discovery and study of these artifacts. He is constantly watching for ways to

enrich the areas we are studying by adding field trips and guest speakers from South Africa, China, and a survivor of the Holocaust who are very pertinent, enhancing, interesting and make history come alive for the students.

We would recommend Keil for the Kansas Teacher of the Year program with great enthusiasm. He is an exemplary model of what a teacher should be and would be an excellent representative for our building, our district, and our profession.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Gerri Haake, Mrs. Brittney Geis, Mrs. Donna Ottens, Mrs. Terry Robins, Mr. Roger Bruns  
- Desoto Unified School District 232

Dear Dr. Tompkins:

If there has been one gift to our society, it would have to be teachers. They are people who take young lives and mold them into our future. I am privileged to be able to say that I have had a wonderful teacher in my life. Mr. Keil Hileman, my former 7d1 Grade World History teacher has touched my life and many others. Mr. Hileman has taken a subject that he cares deeply about and changed other people's minds so that they, too, have become passionate about it.

In most respects, he is not a typical teacher and doesn't have what you would call normal teaching methods. He believes that education is a privilege and should be a fun, new, and exciting experience. His classroom in its entirety is a teaching aid. Every corner of the room is covered with an interesting artifact or has some sort of historical value. Many of his items are hundreds of years old. They create an entrancing environment in which to learn.

An especially moving topic we learned about in his class was racial discrimination and the civil rights movement in America and around the world. He shared with us many different items that expressed just how horrible racial discrimination is. Those things included a slave collar used during the time when people were bringing African slaves to America. A World War II Nazi helmet showed that racial discrimination caused the death of millions of people. Then he showed us a heartbreaking but inspiring video containing clips of newscasts during the civil rights movement. The video really got us, his students, thinking, 'How could our country have been that wrong?' And that was his goal, to get us thinking. He knew what would touch us, what would change us and used that to make us learn. Everything he teaches us about the past he connects to our lives present and future. What he wants most is to make an impact on his students so that they walk away from their time in his classroom knowing more about things that happened before our time but still affect us today. But most importantly, he wants to teach his students about life and what values are important as we grow up and go on to make important decisions that will affect our lives and others around us.

Mr. Hileman connects with his students on a different level because he is one of those rare people who care about others on a much deeper level than most. He could just think of his students as students, but instead he thinks of us as people-people who are important, people who are the future. He finds ways to connect and teach each one of his students so they can get the most out of their academic experience. Using all the resources he has available, he will find some means to connect with his students and make them enjoy learning. He can and will do whatever it takes to get through to you and to help you, inside the classroom and out.

He has a big heart filled with compassion. If any teacher deserves this award, it's Mr. Hileman. He teaches us how to love learning. He opens our minds and hearts and frees our spirits.

Sincerely,

Jamie Ferr

Dr. Andy Tompkins, Commissioner of Education  
Kansas State Department of Education

I am very pleased to be able to write a letter in support of Keil Hileman, a candidate for the 2004 Kansas Teacher of the Year. I have been Superintendent of Schools in the DeSoto School District during Keil's 10 year tenure here as a middle school social studies teacher. Keil began his formal teaching career with USD 232, but I don't think he ever was a 'beginner' teacher. He 'hit the ground running' and hasn't stopped in 10 years. He just keeps getting better!

I hardly know where to begin to talk about Keil's creativity in the classroom. He truly mesmerizes his students! He captivates his audiences and classes! He finds the most unique ways of connecting kids to their learning. His museum classroom captures the imagination of even the adults who come to see it with the thousands of artifacts he has either personally collected or which community members and parents have contributed. Historical events, times, dates, places COME ALIVE with hands-on mementos of these very events. Chards of pottery, glass, and metals are pieced together by the students as they re-create historical moments in time. Wringer washing machines, old cash registers, old furniture, antique bottles and boxes and packages that are indicative of how life used to be add to the fascination of his teaching. He even has a chair from the Muehlenbach Hotel that Presidents Truman and Eisenhower sat in, military uniforms, and treasures of wars and battles fought around the world. There is truly never a dull moment in Mr. Hileman's classroom.

Because of his effervescent teaching style and the thousands of pieces of history students can touch, see and manipulate, ALL students learn in his classrooms. He is a most organized and dedicated teacher. Students know what they are to learn; they learn it; and they are then able to tell/write about what they've learned. Students' lives are literally transformed by the opportunity to be in Mr. Hileman's classroom. In addition, he has arranged for a number of extended overnight trips to Washington, DC, as a means of enhancing students' learning.

When closing older buildings in our district, Keil has been there to collect the artifacts. Using his students, they have worked closely with citizens to help the DeSoto City Museum get its start. He has taken old district athletic/activity trophies and awards from storage, and with his students, has reconstructed them. And during various veteran celebrations and/or community recognitions, many of our senior citizens (and those not so old) are able to see their awards, recognitions, and honors placed back in display cases either in their former school buildings or in City Hall.

Keil is the father of a 2 year old and a new baby soon to be born. He is active in the DeSoto United Methodist Church and for many years was an active youth leader. He stays active in community historical affairs.

He has never turned down district responsibilities serving on curriculum writing teams and as his building's DeSoto Teacher's Association rep and negotiations team member. Keil has been a coach of many activities and sports.

I cannot think of a more articulate spokesperson on behalf of Kansas educators. Keil has a wonderful speaking voice and with that twinkle in his eye and his passion for public education

any audience would be captivated by his message. I would recommend Mr. Hileman without reservation for the Kansas Teacher of the Year program.

Most sincerely,

Dr. Marilyn C. Layman  
Superintendent of Schools