

# 30 YEARS

## MILKEN EDUCATOR AWARDS

*The future belongs  
to the educated*



#MilkenAward



“

The excitement that my students and colleagues shared with me over winning the Award was thrilling! Recognition and validation of the teaching profession is an important message of the Milken Family Foundation and the students certainly heard it.”

**JOHN LARY**

2015 Louisiana Milken Educator

Fellow, Lowell Milken Center for Unsung Heroes

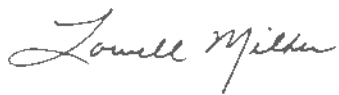
# CHARTING OUR FUTURE

For three remarkable decades, the Milken Educator Awards have led me on a quest to schools across America to seek out and reward a true class of heroes. For whether a school is urban, suburban or rural—whether it represents the affluent or those most in need—within the course of a school day, research confirms that nothing and no one has more impact on student learning than the effectiveness of the teacher in the classroom.

Since presenting our first Awards to one dozen exemplary California educators during the 1986-87 school year, we have seen how focusing the spotlight of recognition on such excellence inspires not only educators, but students and entire communities to new heights of commitment and expectation. In this era of intensifying global competition, the United States must develop students who are not only highly accomplished in the sciences and humanities, but who are creative, motivated and confident. They must be able and willing to think independently and act with integrity.

Milken Educators epitomize those teachers across America who recognize and cultivate such potential in their students. Their legacy reminds us that the power and promise of education must be replenished from generation to generation if we are to sustain our course as a democracy with opportunities for all.

Today, more than any time in our history, no profession could be more essential than that of the talented teacher. For as the watchwords of the Milken Educator Awards proclaim: The future belongs to the educated.



**Lowell Milken**

Chairman and Co-Founder  
Milken Family Foundation



# The Milken Educator Award

## TOUCHING HEARTS AND MINDS

*Since 1987, more than two million students have experienced that special day when an educator was surprised with a \$25,000 award, hailed as a celebrity, and showered with attention from students, colleagues, VIPs, media and community.*

Unlike most teacher recognition programs, the Milken Educator Awards has no formal nomination or application process. Candidates are sourced through a confidential selection process and then reviewed by blue ribbon panels appointed by state departments of education. Those most exceptional are recommended for the Award, with final approval by the Milken Family Foundation.

The surprise announcements are made during all-school assemblies filled with cheering students, respected colleagues, an entourage of distinguished officials, the media—and a stunned new Milken Educator. In a moment's time, these unsung heroes gain a significant, unrestricted financial prize of \$25,000 and experience the unfamiliar but well-deserved acclaim and acknowledgment they rightly merit.

Media multiplies the message of the pivotal role that talented educators play in student achievement. Thousands of headline news stories from coast to coast herald the inspiration and contributions of these newly discovered role models in education.



The Milken Award is a ‘gold standard’ of teaching excellence. I have felt this both internally and from the community and my fellow colleagues. To be publicly recognized and financially rewarded are two of the hallmarks of a professional. The Milken Educator Award does both.

I believe this Award has given me the confidence to share with the public my passion, views and successful teaching practices. It has also given my voice as an educator much more leverage because educators, government leaders, parents and the community respect and validate the Milken Family Foundation—and Milken Educators. Unlike most news stories, the Milken Award is the most positive educational message that our media shares with the world.”

**RICK CROSSLIN**

1998 Indiana Milken Educator



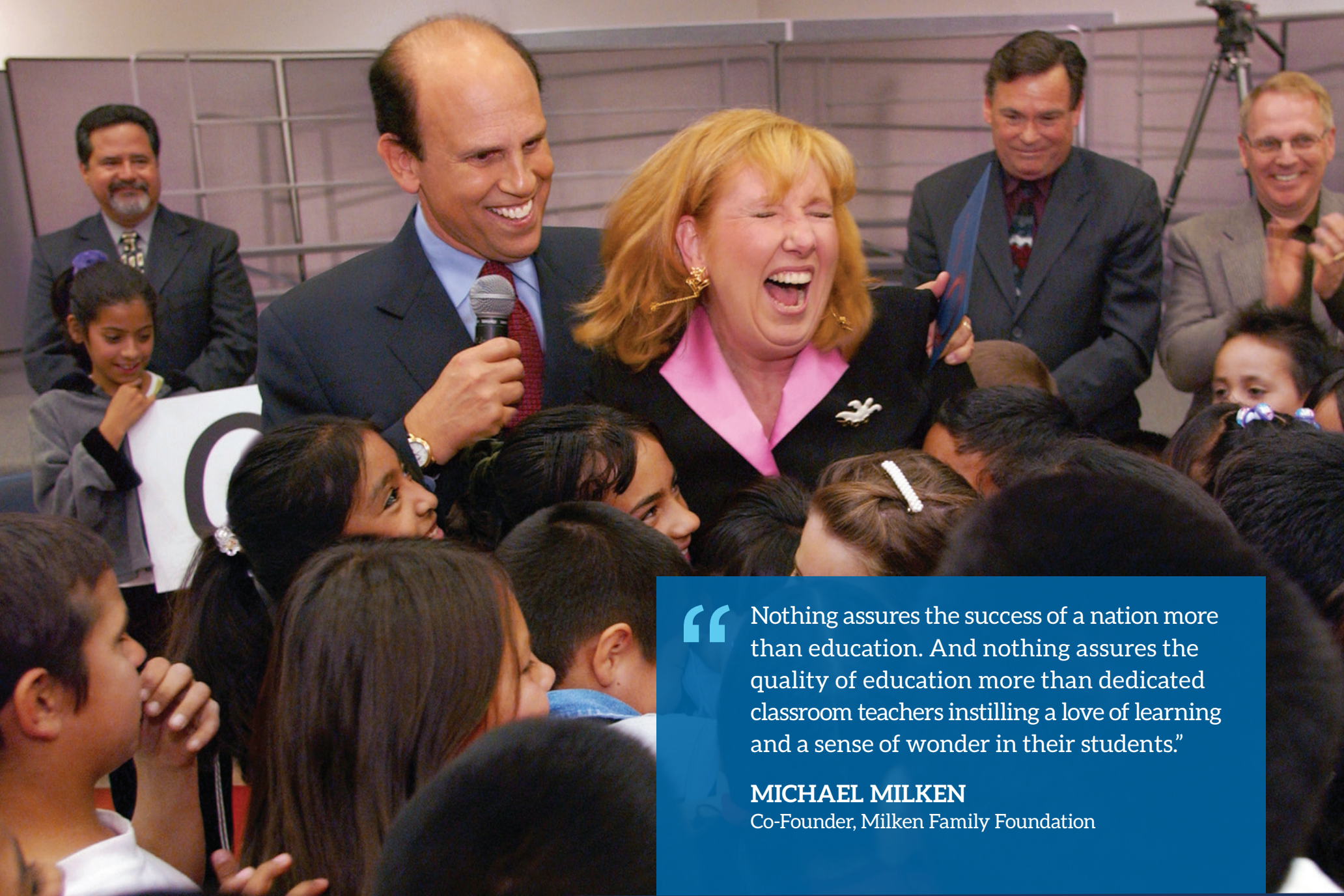
# HELPING TEACHERS AND STUDENTS REACH THEIR POTENTIAL



“ Milken Educators point to their Award as a pivotal professional milestone. They understand that encompassed in this recognition is the responsibility to grow as a leader in and beyond the school level. Encouraged and supported, these outstanding educators discover a renewed passion and purpose as they stretch their professional practices and policy influence to even higher levels. As a 1994 recipient from Indiana, I know firsthand the value I placed on colleagues I met first in my Indiana network and then across the country. To this day, these interactions continue to recharge my batteries and remind me of the importance of our work and why we chose to be educators—to be the catalyst and guide that helps all students reach their potential.”

**DR. JANE FOLEY**

1994 Indiana Milken Educator  
Senior Vice President, Milken Educator Awards



“

Nothing assures the success of a nation more than education. And nothing assures the quality of education more than dedicated classroom teachers instilling a love of learning and a sense of wonder in their students.”

**MICHAEL MILKEN**

Co-Founder, Milken Family Foundation



“ I was quite young, having just started my seventh year of teaching, when I received this awesome, unexpected and life-changing Award. My first response was, ‘They must think I’m doing something really great, so I’d better get started.’

I used the Award money to earn my master’s degree, which launched my career into administration. Many doors opened because of my association with the Milken Family Foundation and I have had an amazing journey.”

**DR. ANGIE BESENDORFER**

1996 Missouri Milken Educator  
Chancellor, Western Governors University  
Missouri (WGU)

## THE CRITERIA:

The criteria for the selection of outstanding elementary and secondary teachers, principals and specialists as Milken Educators include all of the following:

- » Exceptional educational talent as evidenced by effective instructional practices and student learning results in the classroom and school.
- » Exemplary educational accomplishments beyond the classroom that provide models of excellence for the profession.
- » Individuals whose contributions to education are largely unheralded yet worthy of the spotlight.
- » Early- to mid-career and educators who offer strong long-range potential for professional and policy leadership.
- » Engaging and inspiring presence that motivates and impacts students, colleagues and the community.



# GOALS

Outstanding educators who continue to learn are essential to the fostering of student growth, the improvement of schools and the enhancement of the education profession. Hence, the goals of the Milken Educator Awards are to:

- » Honor and reward outstanding K-12 educators for the quality of their teaching, their professional leadership, their engagement with families and the community, and their potential for even greater contributions to the healthy development of children.
- » Focus public attention on the importance of excellent educators.
- » Encourage able, caring and creative people to choose the challenge, service and adventure of teaching as a career.
- » Create national and state networks that:
  - Foster the active professional development and career enhancement of Milken Educators and other professionals.
  - Encourage Milken Educators to help shape the educational policies that influence their classrooms and schools.
  - Connect Milken Educators with the educational improvement efforts of state and federal education agencies, universities, educators, corporate partners and others.
- » Engage corporate and foundation partners in assisting Milken Educators and in supporting policies that advance education.



As educators, we shape the world. In order to do so we must continuously be lifelong learners ourselves. Those who are educated will have the unique ability to continue to break down barriers, find cures, achieve great success in their profession and ultimately impact the lives of those around them. Education is truly power.”

## **DESI NESMITH**

2014 Connecticut Milken Educator  
Chief Turnaround Officer  
Connecticut State Department  
of Education



“ While the money is indeed a benefit, the lasting thing is the significant public recognition, the validation of excellence and the opportunity to join the national network.”

**LOWELL MILKEN**

Co-Founder, Milken Family Foundation

# MILKEN EDUCATOR NETWORK

## Fostering Effective Leadership and Education Reform

The visibility and reputation of a Milken Educator Award results in unlimited opportunities for educators to improve education at local, state national and even international levels. New recipients join the Milken Educator Network, a group of more than 2,700 distinguished professionals whose expertise serves as a valuable resource to fellow educators, legislators, school boards and others shaping the future of education.

The Milken Educator Network fosters effective leadership and education reform through its state and national engagement. Network meetings, discussion forums and online experiences promote collegiality and enhance communication among education stakeholders.



Receiving the Milken Educator Award completely changed my life. It gave me an invitation to a world that was previously unavailable to me—a world where policy makers and educational leaders actually wanted to know what I thought about things.

The Award also provided a family of people who celebrated the success of others and who encouraged and cheered as other educators did innovative things. The work that I do now came 20 years after the Award, but there's a fairly direct line between what I gained from the Award and the opportunity I have to create positive learning experiences for a much larger group of students."

### **CRAIG LINDVAHL**

1989 Illinois Milken Educator  
Illinois State Board of Education

# STATE NETWORKS

Across the country, Milken Educators confer, collaborate and contribute.



## Celebrate

### Hawaii Milken Educators

Aloha State Award recipients from years past travel from the outer islands to take part in the surprise notifications. Their collective support sheds light on the professional possibilities awaiting the newest members of the Milken Educator family. They also stage an annual event to honor their new recipient and present mini-grants to early career teachers.

## Activate

### Kentucky Milken Educators

Roger Marcum (KY '97) was sworn in as a member of the Kentucky Board of Education by Kentucky Supreme Court Justice Daniel Venters. Marcum serves as board chair and represents the Third Supreme Court District. Bill Twyman (KY '93) represents the Second Supreme Court District.



## Elevate

### Virginia Teachers of Promise

In 2001, the Virginia Milken Educator Network, inspired by the Milken Educator Awards, established three goals: to celebrate the teaching profession in Virginia, to elevate the status of the teaching profession, and to activate both future and practicing educators to pursue excellence in teaching. Three years later, they launched the Teachers of Promise Institute ([www.teachersofpromise.com](http://www.teachersofpromise.com)), an annual two-day event that features presentations by master educators from across the nation.

To date, over 2,100 future teachers from three dozen college and university schools of education have been recognized as Teachers of Promise, and more than 50 master educators—including over 30 Milken Educators – have served as mentors and presenters. The Institute is funded by the Teachers of Promise Foundation, a 501(c)(3) established by Wade Whitehead (VA '00) in 2010.



“ We are identifying and honoring the next generation of great teachers and are working to advance their understanding of what teaching and learning really are. Truly, they are our last, best hope for navigating the astounding potential hidden in our schools.”

#### **WADE WHITEHEAD**

2000 Virginia Milken Educator  
Executive Director, Teachers of Promise Institute  
President, The Teachers of Promise Foundation

# MILKEN EDUCATORS AS LEADERS

The Milken Educator Award is an ongoing relationship that provides recipients with additional resources and opens up a world of opportunities.



“ I vividly remember Lowell Milken at my notification telling me that he expected great things from me. I recall him saying that this Award was being given for what I was going to do to make a positive difference in education. I took that to heart! I will remember that day forever because I suddenly had an entire ‘family’ who believed that I had the ability to make a difference. That is extremely powerful.”

## **SHANNON GARRISON**

2008 California Milken Educator  
National Assessment Governing Board

While continuing in her role as a classroom teacher, Shannon is one of three educators on the National Assessment Governing Board that sets policy for the National Assessment of Education Program (NAEP), known as “the nation’s report card.” She was reappointed for a second term.

# MILKEN EDUCATORS IN ACTION

The U.S. Department of Education annually names a select cadre of outstanding professionals to the yearlong Teaching Ambassador Fellowship position. Fellows, including Milken Educator Dexter Chaney II, gain an understanding of federal programs and policies while contributing their own expertise at national and regional levels.



As a 2010 Milken Educator Award recipient, I was charged with the responsibility to be an agent for change in education. I take this opportunity seriously. The ability to remain in a school and still influence the lives of children and educators across our great country is a dream of mine. The Teaching Ambassador Fellowship allows me to fulfill this dream. In a society where many of our children are living our worst nightmares daily, I look forward to working together to create better lives for them and help them to dream.”

## **DEXTER CHANEY II**

2010 Illinois Milken Educator

U.S. Department of Education Teaching Ambassador Fellow



A man in a dark suit and glasses is hugging a young boy in a white shirt. They are in a celebratory setting with confetti falling around them. In the background, a cameraman is visible, and a crowd of people is blurred.

# THE FUTURE BELONGS TO THE EDUCATED

“ A high-quality education gets you into the Super Bowl of life. Without having an education, you’re listening to the game on the radio.”

**ANTHONY WHITTINGTON**

2004 Maryland Milken Educator

Named as the 2000th Award recipient



# Affiliated Initiatives in Education

**Unsung Hero** (n): One who created positive change in history by improving the lives of others, and has yet to be recognized for his or her actions.

# Lowell Milken Center FOR *Unsung Heroes*



The Lowell Milken Center for Unsung Heroes (LMC) discovers, develops and communicates the stories of Unsung Heroes through a unique project-based learning approach. Established in 2007 as a partnership between Lowell Milken and 1992 Kansas Milken Educator and history teacher Norm Conard, LMC collaborates with students and educators across diverse academic disciplines to develop creative projects highlighting individuals who changed the world through their courage and compassion, yet who are not found in history books.

LMC has reached over one million students worldwide virtually via its unique project-based learning, educator resources and student competitions. Meanwhile, LMC's headquarters in Fort Scott, Kansas, has welcomed visitors from over 80 countries. This extraordinary level of interest led to the 2016 opening of the Hall of Unsung Heroes—an inspirational, high-tech space presenting interactive, museum exhibits and expanded opportunities for research.



Real heroes tower and guide. They are the North Star that today's youth can look up to. But their stories need to be discovered and heard. And when we do, we have the opportunity to motivate new generations to aspire to values that are essential during the challenging times we face individually, as a nation and as a world community.

That is the purpose of the Center for Unsung Heroes.”

**LOWELL MILKEN**  
Founder





# LOWELL MILKEN CENTER FELLOWS

The LMC Fellowship brings top educators from the U.S. and around the world to the historic Fort Scott headquarters for a prestigious, merit-based professional development program focused on the unique discovery process rooted in project-based learning.



“The LMC Fellowship was my most intense professional development experience. It was on a completely different plane than anything I’ve experienced in 20 years of teaching.”

**ANNA HULL**  
2010 Florida Milken Educator  
Lowell Milken Center Fellow

# STUDENT COMPETITIONS

Illustrating its motto to **Discover** – **Create** – **Change**, LMC holds two annual competitions offering students more than \$30,000 in cash prizes.

## DISCOVERY AWARD

Uncovering and sharing the impact of an Unsung Hero takes resourcefulness, determination and passion on the part of students, who learn invaluable research, communication and life skills in the process. With financial prizes totalling \$16,000, LMC's Discovery Award recognizes outstanding Unsung Hero projects by students in grades 4-12. Entries can take the form of a documentary, performance, website or exhibit and must include a process paper.



“ History is the connective tissue between generations. It provides the moral fiber. By uncovering these stories, we hope to instill these values in our own generation and our children's generation.”

**CALEB JOHNSON**  
2013 Discovery Award Grand Prize  
Team Member  
Prince George, Virginia

## THE ART EFFECT PROJECT

The Art Effect Project connects art students with history, social studies and STEAM fields. Drawing universal connections and articulating their visions through artist statements, students discover the power of sharing an untold story through art in order to inspire the hero within themselves and their audiences. An international competition with financial prizes of \$13,500, winners are considered for exhibition in the LMC Hall of Unsung Heroes.



ArtEffect grand prize winner:  
“The Old Man and the Cranes,”  
by Liran Hu, 9th grade

[www.LowellMilkenCenter.org](http://www.LowellMilkenCenter.org)



**The Milken Scholars Program** was founded in 1989 by Lori and Michael Milken to honor exceptional young men and women based on scholarship, leadership, service, character and triumphs over obstacles. Scholars are graduating high school seniors from New York, Washington, D.C., and Los Angeles who go through a rigorous nomination and interview process.

Each receives a \$10,000 scholarship, but what makes the program unique is the access to a lifetime of resources including mentorship throughout their college careers and beyond. The annual three-day Summit in Los Angeles, with presentations by outstanding leaders from diverse fields, allows Scholars to form and renew friendships as they exchange ideas and aspirations. The Program is a joint initiative of the Milken Family Foundation and the Milken Institute.



“Whether they become doctors, research scientists, educators, entrepreneurs or diplomats, the common denominator of Milken Scholars is a genuine sense of service.”

**MICHAEL MILKEN**  
Founder, Milken Scholars



“Milken Scholars are clearly the leaders to effect change and lead from a position of personal experience about topics such as education gaps, healthcare disparities or environmental issues.”

**DR. JOELLE SIMPSON**  
1995 Milken Scholar  
Medical Director of Emergency Preparedness  
Children's National Health System, Washington, D.C.



# MISSION STATEMENT

The Milken Family Foundation's innovative initiatives continue to forge new pathways in the realms of education, medical research and public health.

Founded by Michael and Lowell Milken in 1982, and directed by Chairman Lowell Milken, the Milken Family Foundation strives to discover and advance inventive, effective ways of helping people help themselves and those around them lead productive and satisfying lives. Since 1982, MFF has pursued this mission through its work in education, medical research and public health.

## EDUCATION

The belief that young people are not only our greatest natural resource, but our greatest national resource has been the guiding philosophy behind our groundbreaking education reform initiatives. Whether founding the nation's preeminent teacher recognition program, highlighting the importance of early childhood education, advancing the effective use of education technology, or leading the nation's most successful comprehensive education reform system, MFF continues to champion strategies that elevate education in America and around the world.

### Our programs:

- » Strengthen the profession by recognizing and rewarding outstanding educators, and by expanding their professional leadership and policy influence.
- » Attract, develop, motivate and retain the best talent for the teaching profession.
- » Stimulate creativity and productivity among young people and adults through programs that encourage learning as a lifelong process.
- » Build vibrant communities by involving people of all ages in programs that contribute to their growth and well-being.

## MEDICAL RESEARCH AND PUBLIC HEALTH

In medical research and public health, advances driven by MFF are transforming the ways in which research is conducted and connected, while concurrently strengthening awareness of opportunities to improve daily life. From scientific exploration to practical application, we aim to improve the health and well-being of individuals and communities worldwide.

### Our programs:

- » Advance and support basic and applied medical research—especially in the field of cancer—to discover causes, treatments and ultimately cures.
- » Improve public health awareness through education, research and practice.
- » Support public health care programs to assure the well-being of community members of all ages.

**SAKHALIN FINNIE**  
2007 California Milken Educator





## Milken Family Foundation Board of Trustees

Lowell Milken, *Chairman*

Michael Milken

Richard Sandler

Ralph Finerman

Lynda Resnick

Mariano Guzmán

Lori Milken

Ferne Milken

Ellen Sandler

Dr. Thomas C. Boysen

Joni Milken-Noah

Katherine Nouri Hughes

Gregory A. Milken

Roosevelt Grier

## Professional Staff

Lowell Milken  
*Chairman and Co-Founder*

Richard Sandler  
*Executive Vice President*

Lawrence Lesser  
*Senior Vice President,  
Creative Services*

Dr. Jane Foley  
*Senior Vice President,  
Milken Educator Awards*

Ralph Finerman  
*Senior Vice President and Treasurer*

Susan M. Fox  
*Senior Vice President and  
Chief Financial Officer*

Bonnie Somers  
*Senior Vice President,  
Communications*

Joni Milken-Noah  
*Vice President,  
Mike's Math Club*

Gary Panas  
*Vice President of Design*

Dahlia Geilman  
*Program Director,  
Grants*

## Milken Educator Awards Staff

Dr. Jane Foley  
*Senior Vice President*

Greg Gallagher  
*Senior Program Administrator*

Abel Fuentes  
*Program Coordinator*

Jenny Lee  
*Program Assistant*

## Communications Staff

Bonnie Somers  
*Senior Vice President*

Jana Rausch  
*Senior Media and Public Affairs Manager*

Erika Kerekes  
*Social Media and Online Content Manager*

Andressa Rogers  
*Media and Public Affairs Database Administrator*

Andrew Ross  
*Administrative Assistant*



“

It's such an honor. I come from a family of educators and I feel like I'm representing them. I'm representing my mom... representing all of those other teachers who do hard work every day and don't get recognition. This is for them, not just for me.”

**MICHELLE JOHNSON**

2014 Washington, D.C. Milken Educator



“

The Milken Family Foundation seeks you out to let you know that every day your choices are affecting the human capital in the world. To have that acknowledgment not only validates what we do, but it takes us away from a career and moves us into a profession. It restores the nobility of teaching.”

**NADER TWAL**

2003 California Milken Educator



*The future belongs  
to the educated*

**For inquiries, please contact:**

Dr. Jane Foley  
Senior Vice President, Milken Educator Awards  
Milken Family Foundation  
1250 Fourth Street  
Santa Monica, CA 90401  
Twitter: @Milken\_jfoley

Phone: (310) 570-4785  
Media inquiries: (310) 570-4775

[www.milkeneducatorawards.org](http://www.milkeneducatorawards.org)  
YouTube: milkenaward  
Facebook: milkeneducatorawards  
Twitter: milken  
Instagram: MilkenFamilyFdn

#MilkenAward

Ver. 09/16