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Milken Family Foundation

146 U.S. EDUCATORS TO BE HONORED BY \$25,000 MILKEN EDUCATOR AWARDS

***National Notifications Week Commences October 2 in California,
Beginning a Week of Surprise Announcements Across the Country***

SANTA MONICA, CA (September 20, 2000) – One hundred forty-six outstanding educators from 42 states will be recognized with the Milken Family Foundation National Educator Awards during its National Notification Week, October 2-6. Over \$3.6 million in unrestricted funds is attached to this year's program, designed to recognize excellence in America's elementary and secondary schools.

The unsuspecting educators will be surprised with the news of their \$25,000 Awards – which can be used any way they choose – during emotional, all-school assemblies attended by state and local officials, students, peers and community leaders. Past Awards recipients have described the notification events as being “like winning an Oscar and the lottery on the same day.”

Experts agree that the need to attract more quality K-12 teachers is urgent, as the demographics and incentives of the 21st century will make it difficult for the most able individuals to choose teaching as a career. Over the next ten years, schools will need to hire 2.45 million new teachers, but will come up short by 900,000, or more than a third. And, the challenge lies not just in the number of educators needed, but also in the *quality* of those teachers.

As part of the Milken Family Foundation's proactive response to this challenge, education pioneer and reformer Lowell Milken – the Foundation's Chairman and Co-Founder – created the Awards in 1985 to reward, retain and attract the highest caliber of teachers to the profession. Under his leadership, the Milken Educator Awards has become the largest teacher recognition program in the United States, and will have presented nearly \$45 million to exceptional educators across the country by National Notification Week's end.

“By choosing to practice in the most noble and important profession there is, and by doing it with such excellence, every Milken Educator is making a lasting contribution to young people's minds, imagination and character,” said Milken.

“Each one is a sure and steady guide; a timeless hero not just to our young people, but to us all.”

Educators are recommended for the honors without their knowledge by a blue-ribbon panel appointed by each state's department of education. Recipients of the Milken Educator Awards are selected on the basis of numerous criteria, including:

- Exceptional educational talent as evidenced by outstanding instructional practices in the classroom, school and profession;
- Outstanding accomplishment and strong long-range potential for professional and policy leadership; and
- Engaging and inspiring presence that motivates and impacts students, colleagues and the community at-large.

Award recipients are presented with their \$25,000 Awards at the Milken Family Foundation National Education Conference, an all-expenses-paid professional development conference held annually in Los Angeles. They also join the Milken Educator Network, a coalition of more than 1,600 top education professionals who have access to a variety of professional resources to help cultivate and expand innovative programs in their classrooms, schools and districts.

The Milken Family Foundation National Educator Awards were created to recognize excellence among elementary and secondary school educators and inspire young people to become teachers. Established in 1985, the program has presented \$41.3 million in awards to 1,502 educators in 41 states. The 2000 Awards will recognize 146 educators in 42 states.

For more information, including the locations of Notification events in 42 states, please contact the Milken Family Foundation at (310) 998-3009, or visit the Foundation's Web site at <http://www.mff.org>.

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