

Fleetwood named RCSSS 2020 Teacher of the Year

Tony Bolick

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ASHEBORO — Randolph County brought together its five finalists Monday night and announced the Randolph

County School System 2020-21 Teacher of the Year. Dr. Stephen Gainey presented the plaque during the Randolph County Board of Education monthly meeting to Randolph Early College High School's (RECHS) Kathy Fleetwood.

"I could not ask for a better group of finalists (to be part of). Y'all are amazing," Fleetwood said in accepting the award. "I want to say the same about my other colleagues at Randolph Early College High School and,

years past, at Southwestern Randolph (High School)."

The pandemic took a little of the luster, but not the excitement from what is normally an evening of magic, an adjective used to describe Fleetwood's teaching.

The annual announcement usually comes in concert with a joint celebration of the best teachers of the year between Asheboro City Schools and Randolph County School

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System. COVID-19 forced the cancellation of that event and led to the event which took place during Monday night's board meeting.

Public Information Officer Tim Moody presented the five finalists for the honor before the board. Superintendent Dr. Stephen Gainey spoke of the work of the finalists as he announced the winner.

In addition to Fleetwood, the other finalists were Marti Langholtz from Archdale-Trinity Middle School, Denise Nixon from Grays Chapel Elementary School, Rachel Henley from New Market Elementary School and Southwestern Randolph High School's Jamie Kent.

Fleetwood's principal Shea Setzer Grosch praised her teacher, detailing how Fleetwood is not simply an educator who excels at enlightening and empowering her students on the



Randolph County Schools System Superintendent Stephen Gainey announces the 2020 Randolph County Teacher of the Year Monday night. The five finalists were presented to the board during its monthly meeting and Gainey presented the plaque to the winner. [TONY BOLICK]

subject matter at hand, but reaches them on a much deeper, intense level. She sparks an energy daily in her class for students to develop a burgeoning passion for American History and a desire to learn it. She makes her students feel a part of the lessons and builds an infectious sense of worth that spills out of her class and goes with her students throughout the day.

"Magic might be the only term to explain what happens in Room 109 each day," Grosch said. "Ms. Fleetwood

has the ability to draw in each student and not just make them feel valued, but make them feel like they are the most important person in the world."

Fleetwood has spent her entire career in the Randolph County School System, starting out at Southwestern Randolph and now at RECHS.

"I am so grateful to the supportive, encouraging staff, teachers and principals that have always supported me on this journey," Fleetwood said. "I

thank all of you — my home school (RECHS) now, with Shea and her staff, and (Southwestern Randolph) for how they taught me how to be a teacher in my early years. Those were some of the most difficult. To Dr. Gainey and the board, I appreciate it so much."

Fleetwood has developed her own style with American History to reach and teach her charges. Texts, music, theatre and video are all part of her wealth of platforms to bring the topic and the students together. Grosch brought up the show "Hamilton" and a song from it in which the juniors and seniors began jumping, screaming and dancing when it came on at the Winter Dance or RECHS prom.

"That is Kathy Fleetwood," she said. "She teaches students to have passion and to take a stand for their beliefs.

"She inspires them to accomplish any goal they set. On top of that, she gives them the confidence to achieve those goals."



Randolph Early College High School's Kathy Fleetwood holds her plaque as the 2020 Randolph County School System's Teacher of the Year. She was awarded the honor in an announcement and presentation during Monday night's Randolph County Board of Education meeting. [TONY BOLICK]