

fosters a reflective practice and encourages students to also reflect on what they learn and how they learn. She believes that reflection is a habit of mind that must be developed, encouraged and practiced.

Wilma's sense of collaboration goes beyond the classroom. She practices an open door policy that encourages parents to be active in their children's academic life. She strongly believes that in order for parents to be involved in school they need to feel welcomed and belonged. Re-thinking parent involvement may be a way to create stronger partnerships and participation.

Dr. Floris Wilma Ortiz-Marrero credits the Western Massachusetts Writing Project (WMWP) for her leadership role at the local and national level. She is a co-founder of the English Language Learners initiative and board member of WMWP. She is also a board member of the National Writing Project's ELL Leadership Team. Along with other teacher leaders, she provides Department of Elementary and Secondary SEI Category 1-4 trainings to school districts in western Massachusetts. As a clinical faculty member at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst she teaches a masters level course in the program of Language Literacy and Culture. Her passion for learning and teaching, along with her expertise in the area of English language learners, motivates her participation at local, state and national conferences. She has also co-authored two articles in one of the National Council for Teachers of English journals.

Wilma and husband Alberto live in Amherst, Massachusetts with their loving children, Alejandro and Lisa. Wilma, Alberto and Alejandro are UMASS graduates, while Lisa is currently a senior at Isenberg School of Management.



Former Teachers of the Year

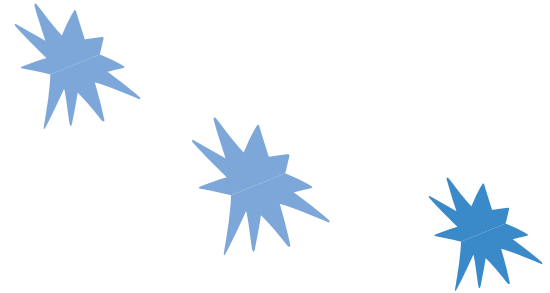
- 2010 Jae Goodwin, Framingham
- 2009 George Watson, Walpole
- 2008 Michael Flynn, Southampton
- 2007 Jessie Auger, Boston
- 2006 Suzanne Wintle, Bolton
- 2005 Nancy Tyler-Schoen, Franklin
- 2004 Melinda Pellerin-Duck, Springfield
- 2003 Jeffrey Ryan, Reading
- 2002 Dawn McNair, Newton
- 2001 Marianne Moran, Methuen
- 2000 David Lussier, Andover
- 1999 Bruce Penniman, Amherst *
- 1998 Mary Ginley, Longmeadow
- 1997 Leonard Swanton, Lexington
- 1996 Kathleen Sherman, Falmouth
- 1995 Jerry Howland, Boston *
- 1994 Virginia Freyermuth, Duxbury
- 1993 Steven Levy, Lexington
- 1992 Ronald Adams, Quincy
- 1991 Charles Sposato, Framingham
- 1990 Molly Murphy, Brookline
- 1989 Marjorie Montgomery, Newton
- 1988 James McDermott, Worcester
- 1987 Margot Desjardins, Westport
- 1986 Donna Viveiros, Fall River
- 1985 Francis Smith, Wayland
- 1984 Cathleen Hughes, Scituate
- 1983 Donald Pottle, Shrewsbury
- 1982 Joseph Kelly, Lexington
- 1981 Margaret Campbell, Longmeadow
- 1980 Marta Valdes, Boston
- 1979 Rita Croteau, Worcester
- 1978 Olive Craigwell, Boston
- 1977 Martin Badoian, Canton
- 1976 Barbara Boschert, Worcester
- 1975 no selection
- 1974 Thais Waldron, Reading *
- 1973 Marcia Hayes, Boston
- 1972 Marcia Fowler, Ipswich
- 1971 Robert Anastas, Framingham
- 1970 Lucille Thimblin, Tantasqua Reg.
- 1969 Ruth Doorly, Westwood
- 1968 Neil Fitzgerald, New Bedford
- 1967 John Moulton, Brookline *
- 1966 Leah Benway, Southwick
- 1965 Vivian Little, Hampden-Wilbraham
- 1964 Edna Penwarden, Arlington
- 1963 no selection
- 1962 Lottie Perry, Norton
- 1961 no selection
- 1960 Edward Frude, Shelburne Falls *

* National Teacher of the Year Finalist

Brochure design: Lynn Boston

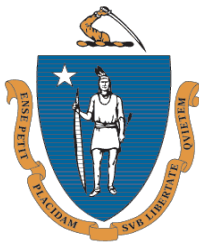


**Dr. Floris Wilma Ortiz-Marrero & her students
Amherst Regional Middle School, Amherst**



2011
Massachusetts
TEACHER
of the YEAR

Massachusetts Teacher of the Year Program
is sponsored by the Massachusetts
Department of Elementary & Secondary
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The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

75 Pleasant Street, Malden, Massachusetts 02148

June 11, 2010

Dear Friends,

Teaching is both an art and science; the most difficult, most rewarding and most important of careers. While all classroom teachers should be recognized on a daily basis, the National Teacher of the Year Program is the oldest and most prestigious awards program that focuses public attention annually on excellence in teaching. Since 1952, the national program has recognized and honored the contributions of classroom teachers by granting one outstanding teacher a year's paid sabbatical. During that year, the teacher travels the nation and meets with a wide variety of audiences to address educational issues. The National Teacher of the Year Program, sponsored by ING, is a project of the Council of Chief State School Officers.

The Massachusetts Teacher of the Year Program is administered by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education in partnership with Hannaford Supermarkets. Each year the program honors a Massachusetts teacher who exemplifies fine teaching in the Commonwealth. The purpose of the program is to select a teacher who is worthy of speaking for and energizing the teaching profession, and representing the positive contributions of all teachers statewide. The Massachusetts Teacher of the Year automatically becomes the state's candidate for the National Teacher of the Year Program.

The selection process for the Massachusetts Teacher of the Year began in the late Fall, with a call for nominations. An independent panel of experts, including past Teachers of the Year, reviewed written applications, interviewed six finalists, and recommended a candidate for my consideration for this year's honor.

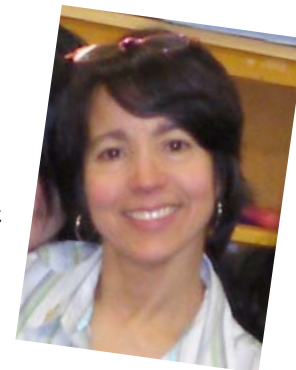
I wish to thank the following corporations and organizations for supporting the 2011 Massachusetts Teacher of the Year Program: Hannaford Supermarkets; Massachusetts Teachers Association; SMART Technologies; Teacher Leadership Academy; and Verizon.

I am proud to present the *2011 Massachusetts Teacher of the Year, Dr. Floris Wilma Ortiz-Marrero, from Amherst Regional Middle School in Amherst.* We wish her much energy and happiness in the year ahead.

Sincerely,

Mitchell D. Chester, Ed.D.
Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education

Meet the 2011 Massachusetts Teacher of the Year



Students at the center is the way to describe the ELL classroom in C12A at the Amherst Regional Middle School: "It is all about kids". The handwritten welcome sign on the door indicates that everyone is welcomed, appreciated, respected and honored. As you enter the room, Dr. Floris Wilma Ortiz-Marrerro's warmth, energy and character can be felt: from the international artifacts and bilingual dictionaries, the word wall and student's work to the relaxing "cozy corner." This inviting atmosphere permeates in the classroom. She has intentionally organized the room to facilitate academic work while nurturing the social and emotional development of early adolescents.

Mrs. Ortiz, as everyone calls her, is an ESL teacher in the 7/8 Sheltered English Instruction classroom as well as in the inclusion model. Her students are not just English Language Learners (ELL), they are all the students in her team and those that attend her ELL Homework Club- "everyone is welcome to study, eat a snack and even hang out with friends as long as they do their work". Students under Wilma's tutelage are encouraged to do the best they can, think deeper, and push themselves while they are expected to strive and have dreams.

Wilma believes in students' ability and capacity to learn and in their desire to do well. Children are good by nature, but circumstances in life and other factors may negatively affect their attitudes toward school and learning. When students are given opportunities to explore, be challenged, and are able to display their wealth of knowledge and experiences, while their academic and emotional needs are met they can achieve higher academic levels. For this reason, her philosophy of teaching is based on hope, love, high expectations and equity, and far removed from a deficit model.

When it comes to home language, life experiences and literacy, Wilma believes that all students come to school with a rich background knowledge that often times is incongruent with that of the school context. She sustains a critical pedagogy philosophy that helps students take ownership for their learning. Students in her class are allowed to use their language for pre-writing and writing to learn activities as part of the thinking process. Wilma and her students use technology as a tool for communication, inquiry and to participate in the global world. She

(see back for more)

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