

# Vanessa Nelson

Barratt Elementary, American Fork, UT

Intermediate Elementary Education

4th Grade



2005 Honorees



“In an era of high stakes testing, teachers might feel that the best procedure is to drill constantly, but I have discovered in my 47 years that work-

sheets are not the key to good teaching. Creativity is not an occasional idea, it is a restless discontentment with doing the same old thing the same old way each day. Creativity demands that lessons be exciting, and innovative. When they are, students remember better. Often learning from a worksheet does not transfer. I remember once I sent home a worksheet on the use of ‘do, and done.’ A note came back the next day saying ‘Tim done his homework.’ That drill sheet was obviously a failure and, it was boring.”

“Teaching has, for 47 years, given me sentinels to constantly light my way. I am thankful for those students who were ALWAYS prepared, for they taught me to value excellence. I am thankful too for those who struggled, for they taught me patience. I am older now, and frankly, a bit intimidated by that slim, attractive, energetic teacher next door. Sometimes I think I should step down and let the new generation take my place, but then a new sentinel comes along to inspire and re-energize me.” – *Vanessa Nelson*

“Thirty-one years ago I walked into Mrs. Nelson’s classroom as a ten year old facing many difficult changes in my life... Mrs. Nelson was an extraordinary teacher. She had developed individualized educational activities for every child. She conferenced individually with each student on activities on a weekly basis. She developed simulations that made history come alive. I remember being captivated as she taught us about Egypt, Greece, Europe, and the systems of the human body. I learned to become an artist, a historian, a scientist, and a better human being.”

– *Karen Wathen, principal, Foothill Elementary School*



## Other Highlights:

Received 4 Teacher of the Year nominations over the years, including the National Phoebe Hurst Award (PTA)

Excellence in Teaching Award, Instructor Magazine (1984)

Life Time Honorary membership PTA and State PTA teacher vice-president (1984-19-86)

Executive Board, Utah Education Association, and Lifetime member of the National Education Association

Supervisor of student teachers for Brigham Young University (1999, 2002)

Gifted endorsement - Piloted gifted program for Alpine District

Conducted an after school dance club (folk and social) for elementary students for 19 years

**Years Teaching:** 47

**Average Class Size:** 28

**Classes Taught Per Day:** n/a

**School’s Percent of ESL Students:** 0

**School Type:** Public, Medium-Small City

**Type of Class:** Self-contained