



For Immediate Release

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Professional Educators awards dinner April 18

The Professional Oklahoma Educators (POE) Foundation "Excellence in Education" dinner, scheduled for 6:30 p.m., April 18 at the Petroleum Club in downtown Oklahoma City, will honor some three dozen educators who have demonstrated outstanding performance and leadership in the classroom.

Featured speaker at the awards celebration will be Ulle Pope, an advocate for educators to serve as "ambassadors of freedom to their students," according to the POE Foundation.

Ginger Tinney, executive director of the foundation and the affiliated association of teachers, Professional Oklahoma Educators, said 34 teachers from 20 different school districts, will be presented with recognition. In all, there are five award categories: elementary, secondary, special education, non-certified staff (secretaries, aides, bus drivers and other staff) and administrators.

One winner from each category will be announced at the banquet. Each winner receives a \$500 cash award, free membership for one school-year from POE, legislative citation honoring achievements in education, a bouquet of flowers, and their personal award. Excerpts from the winners' letters of recommendation (may include fellow teachers, administrators, parents and students) are read aloud at the event. All nominees are also presented with plaques. Teachers are nominated for these prestigious awards by their peers.

Tinney will serve as master of ceremonies. Concerning Mrs. Pope, a native of Estonia who lived in that country during the era of communist Soviet control, Tinney said, "her freedom was "exchanged for communism. She will be sharing with us some of her experiences from that time, and calling on educators to always teach the love of freedom to their students." Ulle is now an American and has been in the the United States since 1989, Tinney said.

The POE Foundation provides an opportunity for business and community leaders to join with educators to celebrate and encourage excellence in Oklahoma education. Sponsorships for the attendance of teachers and others are available at a variety of levels.

Donor levels for the event range from \$500 to \$2,500. Sponsoring an individual teacher costs \$100 each. Individual tickets can be purchased at \$65 per person. Complete information can be obtained from Marcy Schuermann at Professional Oklahoma Educators, telephone 405-321-3175, fax 405-321-8897 or toll free 888-331-2763. The email address is Foundation@ProfessionalOklahomaEducators.org.

Organizers of the annual recognition for outstanding teachers say those interested in attending or sponsoring the event should respond by Tuesday, April 15.

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