

[Alumni Honors]

2010 Milken Educator

Student success is key for Sharon Dravvorn

BY HALI CHIET ('07)

Sharon Dravvorn ('90) is not your average math teacher. Woodbridge Senior High School has named the 19-year veteran its Educator of the Year twice, and now the



Sharon Dravvorn

Milken Family Foundation has honored her with a prestigious 2010 Milken Educator Award.

"I was overwhelmed, pleased and surprised," says Dravvorn, who

found out the good news during a schoolwide assembly. "It was a great moment not just for me but for the entire school."

The Milken Educator Awards honor exceptional elementary and secondary teachers, principals and specialists who promote excellence in education. There is

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— SHARON DRAVVORN ('90), 2010 National Milken Educator Award recipient



Wade Whitehead (right) from the Milken Family Foundation presents Sharon Dravvorn ('90) with the National Milken Educator Award during the 2010 Virginia Teachers of Promise Institute.

no formal application process; each state's department of education has a special panel that recommends outstanding educators. Award recipients get a \$25,000 reward and are honored at the Milken Education Forum in Los Angeles.

"There is no one more deserving of this award," says David Huckestein, Woodbridge Senior High School principal. "Sharon is the ultimate professional who cares so much about helping her students succeed."

All of Dravvorn's classes comprise students who did

not pass their eighth-grade Standards of Learning. "Most of my students are kinesthetic learners, which means they need to *do* math — it must be a hands-on or full-body experience for them to grasp a concept," she says.

Dravvorn is known for her innovative teaching methods, which include using algebraic tiles so students can physically see an equation being solved; having students use their bodies to graph an equation on a 9-by-5-foot coordinate plane rug; and using sound effects to represent mathe-

matical concepts. "I believe my success is measured by the success of my students," says Dravvorn. Her creative teaching methods certainly pay off. The SOL passing rate of her students is consistently in the 90th percentile.

In addition to the Milken award, Dravvorn has been a finalist for the *Washington Post's* Agnes Meyer Outstanding Teacher Award. She visited campus March 19–21 for the Seventh-Annual Virginia Teacher of Promise Institute and mentored a group of future teachers.

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Dravvorn is the third JMU graduate to receive the Milken Educator Award. Amy Macaleer ('01) was a recipient in 2007, and Alex Carter ('94) was a 2003 award winner. ❧

* Read more about the Virginia Teacher of Promise Institute at www.jmu.edu/milken and learn more about the national Milken Educator Awards program at www.mff.org/mea.



2010 National Milken Educator Award recipient Sharon Dravvorn ('90) pins a student with a "Teacher of Promise" award during the Virginia Teacher of Promise Institute held at JMU in March.