

VFW Announces Top Teachers in National Contest

Each teacher will be awarded \$1,000 for their development and \$1,000 for their school

Mar 27, 2023

KANSAS CITY, Mo. – The Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) is proud to announce it has selected the national top three teachers in its annual Smart/Maher VFW National Citizenship Education Teacher Award contest.

Established in 1999 and named after former VFW National Commander John Smart and retired VFW Quartermaster General Larry Maher, the award recognizes our nation's top teachers for their exceptional commitment to teaching Americanism and patriotism to their students by promoting civic responsibility, flag etiquette and patriotism in the classroom.

Awarded annually, the VFW selects one teacher from the elementary (K-5), middle (6-8) and high school (9-12) levels to receive a \$1,000 award for professional development, and \$1,000 for their school.

Kelly Garey, a retired Navy veteran and second grade teacher at Van Buren Elementary School in Caldwell, Idaho, was named the elementary school winner for her dedication to fostering patriotism, passion for serving her country and local community, and for her continued efforts to organize field trips, activities and services to help her students learn about and recognize America's veterans and their military service. Garey was sponsored by VFW Post 3886 in Caldwell, Idaho.

Selected to represent the middle school level, Susan Allgood, a seventh grade language arts and eighth grade ELA teacher at Stephens County Middle School in Toccoa, Georgia, was chosen for her dedication to ensuring her students understand their duty to our country while honoring the service and memory of America's veterans. Allgood was sponsored by VFW Post 4346 in Toccoa, Georgia.

Javier Martinez, a Marine Corps veteran and high school history teacher at Kaneland High

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School in Maple Park, Illinois, was chosen to represent the high school level for the passion and innovation he brings to his classroom, his efforts toward the development and enrichment of his student's character, and for his dedication to bringing history to life. Martinez was sponsored by VFW Post 5819 in Lemont, Illinois.

"Teachers are the foundation of a free and just society, and teachers like Kelly, Susan and Javier play a vital role in helping shape today's youth into the strong and passionate leaders our country needs in the decades to come," said VFW National Commander Tim Borland. "The VFW is proud to recognize these teachers, and those like them across our nation who help promote the importance of patriotism and civic responsibility."

Each of the three national recipients will be presented with a \$1,000 award for professional development and \$1,000 for their school during the 124th VFW National Convention in Phoenix, Arizona, July 22-27, 2023.

Find out more information on the [Smart/Maher VFW National Citizenship Education Teacher Award](#).