

Kim Stefansson
Escambia County School District
Public Relations Coordinator
kstefansson@escambia.k12.fl.us
850 469-6219 (Office)
850-393-0539 (Cell)

NEWS RELEASE
May 27, 2016
For Immediate Release

Molino Park Says Farewell to Principal Woodward ***How Do You Thank Someone for 30 Years of Service?***

Pensacola, FL: In the 1960's hit movie, Lulu sang, "How do you thank someone, who has taken you from crayons to perfume? It isn't easy, but I'll try." Well, how do you thank someone who has taught local children for 30 years? That's what the staff at Molino Park Elementary School asked themselves last year as they entered what would be Principal Alice Woodward's last year in education. How would they thank her for all she has done throughout her career?

Woodward is proud of her connection to the local community and her connection to three local schools. She started her teaching career in 1986 at Barrineau Park Elementary School. She moved into administration as the Curriculum Coordinator and then served as a Principal Intern going back and forth between Barrineau Park and Molino Elementary while the new Molino Park Elementary School was being built. Molino Park opened in the fall of 2003 and Alice Woodward stepped into the role of Principal in the fall of 2006.

"It's very rare to have a principal who has worked in a single school and then ended up principal in that same school," Woodward explained. "This is our world and it is wonderful to be in the same community for 30 years. I was very fortunate to have that door open for me."

During the last five years Woodward has had parents come into the school, who used to be her students. "As a matter of fact, I signed a yearbook yesterday for a little girl and she was so sweet she came up and said, 'I love you, Mrs. Woodward, and thank you for teaching my daddy.' So I signed her yearbook, I love you and you are very special, just like your daddy was."

She will happily talk about how much she enjoys crossing paths with her students and their families, outside of school at Jimmy's, or church, or the ballpark where she would go to watch her kids or her grandkids and get to watch students as well. "I think I was a coach's nightmare," she says with a laugh. "I walked up and the kids were all hollering, 'Hey. Mrs. Woodward,' instead of watching the ball game."

"It's been a lot of fun. I enjoy getting to see them other places then just the schoolhouse. It makes us a family and a community."

When she looks back at the beginning of her career, Woodward smiles and says, "I was so happy to be a teacher! I couldn't believe they were going to pay me to do this job. I remember telling my sister, this is so much fun I can't believe they pay me to do this!"

When Woodward was first hired by the school district, her first assignment was to teach second grade at Barrineau Park Elementary School. Her daughter was going into second grade and there was only one homeroom. "She was going to have to be in my classroom and I made a promise to myself, and my students' parents, that I would treat their children like they were mine, instead of treating my child like she were theirs. That means you have to get onto them sometimes, but you love them all the time. I have tried to stay true to that promise."

"That's the same thing I told my parents when I became a principal in 2006. By then I had grandchildren here, so I told them I would treat their children like they were one of my grandchildren, instead of treating my grandchild like one of theirs."

For today's new teachers Woodward has some words of advice, "Number one you have got to love what you do, and if in your first few years of teaching you don't love it, go find another job. If you don't, it will wear you out."

For teachers who are considering whether or not to make the move into administration, she says, "If you begin to look around and see that you want to affect more people and more children, and you want to hone your leadership skills, then going into administration is a great idea" Woodward explained. "But, if you don't like to be the leader and be the listener as well, don't go into administration. It's a team effort and leading and listening are equally important."

"Alice Woodward is well respected in the north end of our county, and specifically, at

Molino Park Elementary School. Her devotion to her faculty and staff, her students, and to her community has never been questioned. She will leave a void as someone else will do her job but no one else can take her place,” stated Superintendent Malcolm Thomas.

Woodward was selected last year as the Escambia County School District’s Principal of the Year. Sara Calhoun, a Molino Park teacher, and parent, contributed to the nomination package. She describes Woodward this way, “Although she is quick to always celebrate and recognize the accomplishments of others, she never seeks any recognition for herself for the tremendous gains our school has made. Her desire to strive for excellence as we educate these young minds, while never neglecting to gently shape each precious heart, makes her an exemplary leader. I know that I am eternally grateful for the ‘fingerprints’ she has left on my own children.”

So how did the Molino staff decided they would recognize Woodward’s accomplishments? How would they thank her? – With gifts of crayons or perfume?

If you visit Molino Park Elementary you will see art on the walls, not hanging on the walls, but painted on the walls. One hallway, in fact, it is painted floor to ceiling with an underwater scene. So, it is not a surprise that they decided to show their thanks in a way that would honor her professional history with a mural.

“We commissioned Loren Miller to create a mural that shows Barrineau Park School, where Mrs. Woodward started her teaching career; Molino Elementary School, where she became a leader; and Molino Park Elementary School where she has served as principal since 2006,” explained Assistant Principal Quinn Evans. “She was involved in every detail when the two older schools were closed and all of the students transferred into the new school.”

“It is humbling,” Woodward says of their gift.

If Woodward had a chance to talk to her community she would like to tell them, thank you. “Thank you for trusting me. Thank you for supporting me. Thank you for supporting your children and helping them be the best they can be and learn, and thank you for making this community what it is.”



Woodward stands below the mural created in her honor in the cafeteria at Molino Park Elementary School on the last day of school, May 27, 2016.





The two schools closed when Molino Park opened are included in the mural -- Berrineau Park(IMG_7058) and Molino School(IMG_7059)



A Molino Park student shares the photos he has taken on the last day of school with Principal Woodward. Woodward made the rounds that day to be sure to say good bye to every student before leading the fifth graders out the door at the end of the day.

Media queries about any event listed on this release should be directed to Kim Stefansson, at 850-469-6219 or kstefansson@escambia.k12.fl.us.

Like ECSD on Facebook at www.facebook.com/ecsdfl

Go to Escambia Schools Public Relations on www.facebook.com/ecsd.public to see pictures of recent events.

Visit ECSD's web page at www.escambiaschools.org

ECSD prc 682 /2016