

A Brief History of the Swan Award (compiled through interview and board minutes)

May 1994

The history of the Swan Award dates back to the early 1980's, when Kathy Harwell was the gifted coordinator for CFBISD. One of the consultants she hired, Ann M. Cooper, assisted teachers in their gifted training sessions, and often talked about two types of teachers...the ducks and the swans. The swans were the teachers who rose above the problems and tribulations that accompanied teaching and kept their elegance, grace, and professionalism as they helped to educate gifted and talented students. Mrs. Harwell often used this analogy when she spoke with both g/t teachers and parents. The C-FB Gifted Parent Association decided to award deserving individuals the Swan Award, and designated that it would be awarded annually, if merited, to honor teachers, administrators, parents, or other individuals who made a strong contribution to the area of gifted education in the Carrollton-Farmers Branch District. Nominations for this award may be submitted by any member of the organization, and the Swan Award need not be awarded every year.

The first Swan Award was presented to Kathy Harwell. Mrs. Harwell was honored in May of 1984, when a "star" was named in her honor.

The association swan logo was later designed in 1986 by Janet Wickam, and was adopted as the organization's logo by the Board of Directors at the February, 1986 meeting of the Carrollton-Farmers Branch Gifted and Talented Association. At the April, 1986 board meeting, President Barbara O'Donnell asked Benita David to also design a swan certificate that could be given, in addition to the Swan Award, to g/t teachers and g/t facilitators to thank them for their work with gifted students. This certificate would incorporate the organization's logo, and would be awarded as the association board deemed needed.

Although a Swan Award Committee was mentioned in the board and general minutes of March, April, and May, 1986, the next mention of an award recipient is in the minutes of the March, 1987 meeting. The Swan Award in 1987 was presented to Marion Carroll, a parent and original g/t association board member.

The 1988 Swan Award recipient was Jane Bidlack, primary LEAP teacher at Country Place. The award was presented to Mrs. Bidlack at the December 1988 meeting.

The minutes of the board of November 6, 1989 indicated a request that the Swan Award recipient(s) should also be recognized at the next school board meeting.

There were two Swan recipients in 1989. Brad Newton, intermediate LEAP teacher, was recognized at the December 1989 meeting, and Barbara O'Donnell, g/t teacher at Perry Junior High and a former g/t association president, was honored at the next meeting, held in February of 1990.

There is no indication of Swan Award activity in the 1990 minutes, and, although there is a notice of Swan Award nomination forms being placed in the newsletter (board minutes, April 15, 1991), the minutes do not indicate any recipients honored in 1991.

The recipients of the Swan Award in 1992 were Jane Larner, former ACE facilitator in several schools and current lead g/t facilitator for the district, and John Tepper, a past president of the g/t association.

In April 1993, Pat James was honored with the Swan Award. Mrs. James was the sixth grade LEAP teacher at Country Place that year.

Respectfully submitted,

Janeth Waggoner, Secretary