
National History Day Recognizes Two Outstanding Teachers with its 2026 NHD Teacher of the Year Award

COLLEGE PARK, MD – June 18, 2026 – National History Day® (NHD) is proud to announce the two teachers selected as the 2026 National History Day Teacher of the Year Award winners. Ms. Ann Jackson from B.R. Miller Middle School in Marshalltown, Iowa, is the junior (middle school) division winner. Mr. Josh Elders from Peters Township Middle School in McMurray, Pennsylvania, is the senior (high school) division winner. Each winner received a \$5,000 cash prize.

Ms. Jackson has taught National History Day in the classroom for 13 years. When asked what winning the NHD Teacher of the Year Award means to her, she said, “I am so honored to be named the 2026 NHD Teacher of the Year. National History Day requires students to think critically, ask bold questions, and engage thoughtfully with the past. I am grateful to be acknowledged by a program that empowers students to see themselves as historians and engaged, informed citizens.”

Mr. Elders has taught National History Day in the classroom for 26 years. When asked what winning the NHD Teacher of the Year Award means to him, he said, “Being named the 2026 NHD Teacher of the Year is a deeply humbling honor. Many of my best professional practices, friendships, and memories are because of NHD. For 26 years, the passion and efforts of my students have continued to drive my belief in this program and the skills it teaches its participants. I've seen students who have competed multiple years in our program transform from anxious middle schoolers into confident high schoolers; that is the true value of NHD in my mind, the opportunity to grow in your historical thinking and research skills while maturing into a productive member of society who possesses skills that will help define the success of the next generation.”

Teachers from all [NHD affiliates](#) could self-nominate or be nominated by community members for the award. NHD staff worked with local programs to select up to one middle school teacher and one high school teacher to represent each affiliate for this prestigious award. Each nominee for the National History Day Teacher of the Year Award is a teacher who demonstrates a commitment to engaging students in historical learning through the innovative use of primary sources, implementation of active learning strategies to foster historical thinking skills, and participation in the National History Day Contest.

“We are thrilled to celebrate the accomplishments of our 2026 Teacher of the Year Award winners,” said National History Day Executive Director, Dr. Cathy Gorn. “Ms. Jackson and Mr. Elders showcase the creativity, dedication, and passion that leave a profound impact on every student they teach. National History Day is proud to support these educators and the frontline work they do to advance civics and history education.”

78 educators [were considered](#) for the 2026 award, and the two winners were selected by a committee of experienced teachers and historians. Ms. Jackson and Mr. Elders were awarded the National History Day Teacher of the Year Award on Thursday, June 18, 2026, during the National History Day National Contest Awards Ceremony in College Park, MD.

About National History Day (NHD)

NHD is a non-profit organization based in College Park, Maryland, that seeks to improve the teaching and learning of history. Established in 1974, NHD currently engages more than half a million students each year in conducting original research on historical topics of interest and supports teachers through professional development opportunities. Students present their research as a documentary, exhibit, paper, performance, or website. Projects compete first at the local and affiliate levels, where the top entries are invited to the annual National Contest at the University of Maryland at College Park. NHD is sponsored in part by the Joyful Noise Charitable Foundation, The Better Angels Society, Bezos Family Foundation, Library of Congress, Dr. Scholl Foundation, Behring Global Educational Foundation, and the National Park Service. For more information, visit nhd.org.

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