

LAURA BIRD MEMORIAL BEACON OF HOPE AWARD

Background Statement

Board Policy 1: District Mission Statement, Values and Beliefs, Goals and Objectives stresses the importance of celebrating staff who are mentors of faith. The Board believes that the ultimate celebration of staff mentorship is to recognize one who is an active and articulate witness to the One for whom Catholic schools exist – Jesus Christ. The Laura Bird Memorial Beacon of Hope Award recognizes that the best way to demonstrate witness to Jesus Christ is to do so to the most needy in the most selfless manner possible.

Laura Bird was a teacher in St. Albert in the 1960s and early 1970s who was passionate about prioritizing service to students in the area of special needs education. At the time, the only option for St. Albert families who needed special education supports was to have their children bused to Edmonton.

Through Laura Bird's pioneering work, special education started its gradual evolution to the inclusive, diverse learner based model that our District supports today. In October 1960, Mrs. Bird initiated the establishment of an Opportunity Room, which was opened within Vital Grandin School. As a teacher within this program, Laura's efforts provided hope to her students and their families that an environment dedicated to addressing a broad spectrum of learning needs can be established in one school community. Her initiative enabled our schools to learn that students best realize their God given potential within a community where they are known and nurtured by all community members.

This award has been established to celebrate any staff member who through any realm of service within a Catholic faith community has in the most selfless manner possible, dedicated personal service to further the hope and future of others.

Procedures

1. Any staff member in the District may receive this award on the basis of a recommendation by a Trustee, Parish Priest, member of the GSACRD community, or a local, provincial, national and / or international Catholic faith community affiliate.
2. The Board will request nominations for the award beginning in March of each year and will make its decision prior to June 30 of that year.
3. Nominations for the award may be submitted by any member of the Greater St. Albert Catholic School Community to the Superintendent in writing.
4. Nominations will be reviewed by a Board Selection Committee for recommendation to the Board.

5. All nominations must include a description of the service or contribution made by the individual being nominated according to the following criteria:
 - 5.1. How the individual has endeavored not to bring honor to oneself but to others;
 - 5.2. How the individual has been self-sacrificing through Christian service, and has prolonged this dedication through time;
 - 5.3. How the individual has accepted demanding challenges and set new standards for the rest of us to follow.
6. While a letter addressing these criteria will suffice, a nominator may choose to submit the form provided in Appendix A to complete the nomination process.
7. The award will include two aspects of recognition: 1) a personalized, etched glass trophy keepsake, and 2) a nameplate on a permanent plaque, designed for all recipients, current and future, displayed in the Boardroom.
8. The successful nominee will be notified prior to the public announcement.
9. The announcement of the award recipient will be made at the opening school year district mass. The presentation of the award may be made at the same time or at a mutually agreed time in the future.
10. The award may be presented posthumously.
11. In the event that there are no nominations accepted by the Board, the Board may determine the need to issue a nomination itself for that year.
12. If there are no nominations for the award, the Laura Bird Memorial Beacon of Hope Award may not be awarded in that year.
13. The selection committee may advance any current nomination to a future year for reconsideration.

Implementation Date: November 2, 2016
Revised: June 26, 2017, February 27, 2019

Describe how has the nominee endeavored not to bring honor to oneself but to others:

Describe how the nominee has been self-sacrificing through Christian service, and has prolonged this dedication through time:

Describe how the nominee has accepted demanding challenges and set new standards for others affiliated with the District to follow:

Other information that you would want to share about the nominee: