



## 2024 HASTI Award Recipients

### Georgia Everett

Each year at the annual HASTI Conference we have an opportunity to recognize some amazing Science educators. Each year the awards committee accepts nominations for Elementary, Middle School, High School, and College Science Educators for their respective level award. The committee also accepts nominations for distinguished service to HASTI as well as Environmental Science Teaching. On February 19, 2024, we were able to recognize 7 outstanding educators from across the state of Indiana. Here, I will introduce the winners and include the words of support their colleagues offered during the nominations process.

#### Edward Frazier Distinguished Service Award

This prestigious award is given to a HASTI active member who demonstrates distinguished service and leadership as seen through participation in committees for HASTI and serving on the HASTI Board of Directors. The 2024 Ed Frazier Distinguished Service Award Winner was **Shannon Hudson**.

*Shannon has been steadfast in her love of HASTI since she joined the board over 10 years ago. Shannon has stayed consistently involved in HASTI and always ready to step in and help however she is able. When it comes to HASTI, I have not ever heard Shannon express not having time to complete a task or volunteer to help with a new endeavor. Instead, she asks how she is able to help, often taking the role of spearheading a committee or task and tackling the entire project on her own. Shannon does all this while being a prepared middle school science teacher, mom, wife, dog mom, daughter, author, quilter, board member of several other boards, tour guide, friend, and so many more roles! Her passion is unmatched and allows her to tackle the biggest of issues, head on! (K. Poindexter)*

*Shannon has held the top 3 Executive offices of HASTI and during her service had to face the challenge of keeping HASTI a viable active force for teachers during a time when COVID prevented HASTI members from meeting in person. Her creativity not only helped HASTI survive but also set the stage for HASTI to emerge a stronger organization, ready to meet the challenges that rebuilding in the face of a non-supportive political climate for teachers in Indiana would throw in front of her. (G. McCurdy)*

*Students are the source of her inspiration, and she wants to share her passion for science teaching through her leadership, support for HASTI and professional development opportunities at state and national conferences. She is a great role model regarding what it means to be a professional, a leader, and a lifelong learner. (C. Hayes)*



HASTI President, Craig Williams, gives Shannon Hudson her award.

Full listing of authors and contacts can be found at the end of this article.



Published by the Hoosier Association of Science Teachers, Inc. (<https://hasti.org/>) ISSN 2475-451x

© Everett, 2024. **Open Access** This journal is distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution NonCommercial NonDerivative 4.0 International License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction without revision in any non-commercial medium, provided you give appropriate credit to the original author(s) and the source, provide a link to the Creative Commons license.

### Gene Stratton-Porter Environmental Science Award

This award is given annually to an Indiana science teacher who exemplifies the spirit of the great Hoosier naturalist and author, Gene Stratton-Porter. The candidate exemplifies curiosity, independence, love of nature, and appreciation of the importance of science and the natural world. This year the Awards Committee celebrated two Environmental Science Educators, **Robyn Embry** and **Mike Hanback**.

*Robyn Embry embodies the spirit of the namesake of this award. When Robyn's nominator told her that she would like to nominate her she responded that she "admired Gene Stratton Porter for a long time and [she] could remember—[her] mom was also a fan." Stratton Porter's books inspired Robyn's love of and curiosity about nature which she, in turn, inspires her students. (T. Phillipson-Mower, nominator)*

*Mrs. Embry becomes so involved in her students and their success in her class. Here are some of the things she has done with her students: Youth Environmental Leadership Summit at IU, Annual field trip to Crane with a focus on forestry, wildlife and water quality, Raising, tagging and releasing monarchs (they did butterfly wing replacement surgery this year) and Project based learning school campus projects. These PBL projects include planting and maintaining the pollinator garden on campus, planters for the new football courtyard, solar panels for the school roofs (which was approved by the school board in the last meeting!). She is partnering with Baxter for a PBL for this year. She takes the environment and brings it to her students in the most fascinating ways. She instills in them a desire to learn about and to protect what we have. (R. Mason, coworker)*

*In 2010, I sat in her classroom, desk closest to the window, reading Sand County Almanac. By anyone else's standards, this was taking away valuable time to study, but not for Robyn. She encouraged me to go beyond our textbooks and standard curriculum - because learning was so much more important than the test scores. Her environmental science class was when I started observation journals, plant phenology records, and really opened my eyes to the natural world. She gave me the words to describe my observations and the space and time to do so. She gave me permission to be curious about what I was seeing and challenged me to see differently. She allowed me to be independent, creating my own hypotheses and ideas. She really took the idea of the scientific method from a theory on the page, to a living system for me (E. Phelps, former student).*

*Mike's teaching style is exceptional. He possesses a unique ability to engage his students and make complex environmental concepts accessible and relatable. He goes above and beyond to create innovative lesson plans that incorporate hands-on activities, field trips, and real-world examples. I have witnessed firsthand how his students become more environ-*



Janet McCabe recognizing Robyn Embry with her award.



Craig Williams and Janet McCabe recognize Mike Hanback before giving him his award.

*mentally conscious and develop a genuine passion for preserving our planet under his guidance. (R. Coffman, nominator)*

*Mr. Hanback embodies the very essence of Gene Stratton-Porter's spirit and values, particularly curiosity, independence, a profound love for nature, and a deep appreciation for the significance of science in understanding and preserving the natural world. These qualities are manifest in every aspect of his teaching, and he has a remarkable ability to inspire students to share in their enthusiasm. His environmental science courses fill because of his love for the subject and his students. (A. Evans, Principal)*

*Mr. Hanback's approach on teaching Environmental Science has not only helped me find interest in the subject, but a multitude of other students. With projects such as collecting soil samples for pH and nitrogen tests, building terrariums, and going on walks to identify processes in the carbon cycle, I can tell my peers are enjoying this fun approach to science. His classroom is designed in a manner that allows for students who want to succeed to be able to grow past just the basics and dive into much more than just introductory materials. His class is challenging in a way that allows us to flourish and grow beyond what we may have thought our previous capabilities were. (H. Thomas, student)*

### Clyde Motts Award for Outstanding High School Science Teaching

This award is given annually by the Hoosier Association of Science Teachers, Inc, to an outstanding high school teacher who exhibits a passion for innovative science teaching. This year HASTI had two outstanding educators being recognized, **Kelly Book** and **Jenny Veatch**.

*Kelly is an amazing teacher! She is creative in her lessons and brings real world applications into her classrooms. For example, Kelly has sought out grant money to purchase real field notebooks for student use. Kelly uses these notebooks with her students to get them thinking and acting like real scientists. She takes students outside into the 'field' to conduct observations and data collection related to current content being taught in class. Students are journaling and recording both qualitative and quantitative data, in addition to also illustrating their findings. This has been so popular that she was asked to present using "Field Notebooks" at I.U.S, as part of their teacher summer institute. Additionally, Kelly uses extensive hands-on experiments in all her classes. These labs introduce and/or reinforce concepts taught. Students gain valuable knowledge through her upper course labs preparing them to continue their science studies at the university level.*

*Besides all the things that Kelly does for her students in and out of her classroom, Kelly is just as passionate about serving and mentoring fellow teachers. She believes in paying it forward to help train up the next generation of science teachers. She has willingly shared her content knowledge, lessons, and labs to help new teachers get a great start on their careers. She touches base with them weekly, if not daily, to see if there is anything they need or to see how she can help them out. She goes out of her way to research new ideas and lessons for use in class, oftentimes sharing ideas with teachers in other disciplines. She is a fabulous colleague to collaborate with in the afternoons. She and I often will meet after school to discuss our concerns about students or to run ideas past each other on new things we want to try out. She always has time to help out a fellow teacher. Always! (G. Shirley, co-worker)*

*From the first day of school, Jenny challenges her students. She teaches biology and vertebrate zoology to all levels of students and has the uncanny ability to meet students at their level and push them to the next level. She has her students read relevant books (not textbooks) and offer solutions to benefit humankind. Her students all agree that she's "tough", but she deeply cares about them all as students and as persons who will contribute to society. She makes them critically think, solve real-world problems, and apply their knowledge to situations from the past and present so they can think about the future. As an indication of this, she was just awarded Montgomery Chamber of Commerce's 2023 Emerald Educator Award for all of Crawfordsville Schools. (S. Hudson, nominator)*



Craig Williams presents Kelly Book with her Clyde Motts award.



Jenny Veatch was given her award by a former student, Tyler Hudson.

*Mrs. Veatch is a teacher that believes in the power of knowledge. Students learn her subject because they know she values the importance of science and understands the impact that it can have on their lives. Science requires a teacher to explain the subject matter of science, but it is also necessary to teach a love of science. This is a challenge that Jenny does not take lightly. I have had the opportunity to observe her classroom teaching and found myself caught up by her enthusiasm for the subject, along with her students. She has a real passion for the subject matter and her students can sense it. She is always using new and unique ways to enhance learning. These are educational moments that students will never forget, and these are moments that Mrs. Veatch creates often in her classroom. (J. Wentland, coworker)*

### Charlotte Boener Award for Outstanding Middle School Science Teaching

This honor is awarded annually by the Hoosier Association of Science Teachers, Inc. to an outstanding middle school teacher who exhibits a passion for innovative science teaching. **Karen Burke** was this year's middle school science teacher being recognized.

*It is common knowledge that teaching middle school students is challenging. It is imperative that an educator finds ways to engage students in active learning rather than only lecture type classroom exchanges. Karen Burke is an excellent example of how to reach students in today's classrooms. As a parent of one of Karen Burke's former students, I am pleased to recommend Karen for this award. Karen effectively utilizes hands-on activities to engage students in learning. They are often having so much fun with the activity that the learning may not seem as obvious to them. My daughter, Alaina, is an honors student that often found school boring because she was not feeling challenged. Karen provided Alaina multiple challenge opportunities including engineering paper roller coasters for marbles, as well as the excitement of creating water rockets. But Karen's engagement with Alaina did not end with science class, she also provided extra learning options through enrichment classes such as genius hour and passion projects. Knowing that Karen was at school to actively push my daughter to learn and participate in projects that were new and exciting, but also challenging allowed me to know that my daughter was actively learning rather than simply memorizing facts. Alaina was blessed to have Mrs. Burke who spent countless hours working to provide multiple chances to learn by doing and be immersed in the education process. (H. Allyn, Parent)*



Karen Burke receives her award from HASTI president, Craig Williams.

*Karen possesses a remarkable blend of intellect, determination and vibrant personality that sets her apart as an exemplary teacher and leader in our school community. Karen has also demonstrated creativity and innovation in shaping our science curriculum. Her annual projects and lessons, such as the Paper Roller Coaster and Coaster Carnival, have proven to be exceptionally engaging for both students and staff alike. She has taken the helm of our school's science fair and leads a group of students in participating in the University of Southern Indiana fair, showcasing her dedication to nurturing students' academic growth. I must also mention the memorable moments she has created through innovative projects like the bowling ball pendulum and water rockets. Additional projects and STEM challenges she oversees, including windmill power, Oobleck experiments, and fossil studies, have all added depth and excitement to our science program. Furthermore, Karen leads our Genius Hour initiative, promoting student enrichment and encouraging exploration beyond our classroom walls. (M. Hostetter, Principal)*

## Distinguished Award for Outstanding College Science Teaching

This recognition is awarded annually by the Hoosier Association of Science Teachers, Inc. to an outstanding college science teacher who exhibits a passion for innovative science teaching. This year's HASTI recognized **Terri Hebert** for her outstanding work with pre-service teachers.

*Dr. Hebert's inexhaustible ingenuity and genuine enthusiasm serve her well as she promotes science education and collaboration by inviting the educational community and the community-at-large to partner. She is the epitome of a lifelong learner, and an invaluable asset to Indiana University South Bend and teachers in the surrounding community. (T. Slattery, Program Coordinator)*

*Dr. Terri Hebert creates opportunities to incorporate hands-on experiences for all students inviting them to actively engage through real-world experiments and group projects. Establishing a collaborative learning environment encourages positive interaction among peers as they deepen their critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Promoting inquiry-based learning opens the space as students are expected to ask questions, conduct research, and investigate topics. Encouraging students to reflect on their own learning progression through journaling and discussion improves metacognition while nudging them to set goals for personal improvement. (Nomination Submission, self)*

*Although assigned a traditional classroom, it was often more likely to find Dr. Hebert and her students building skills and knowledge at the local zoo, in the county parks, or alongside the St. Joseph River. She wrote grants, like the long-running Earth Day Every Day series to support science instruction for area in-service teachers, and she was at the forefront of the South Bend Community School Corporation Federal Teacher Quality Partnership grant that led to a year-long residency program and master's degree for new teachers with a STEM focus. Dr. Hebert's dedication to making science learning both practical and fun, while also knitting together the larger, more theoretical concepts for educators is inspiring and laudable. The joy that she has in teaching in this area is infectious, and we are grateful to have her working again so closely with the future educators in our program. (H. Smith Daves, Dean)*



Craig Williams, HASTI President, presents the award to Dr. Terri Hebert.

**HASTI is extremely proud of all of the work that science educators do each and every day and looks forward to celebrating all of your accomplishments.**

**If you know of someone who deserves to be recognized for their work, be sure to nominate them this fall!**

**You can find more information about the awards and how to nominate someone at our HASTI webpage.**  
[\(<https://hasti.wildapricot.org/awards>\)](https://hasti.wildapricot.org/awards)

**We look forward to reading your award submissions this fall.**

### Author

Georgia Everett (everettg@frankfort.k12.in.us) is HASTI's Secretary and the Director of Career and Technical Education, Frankfort High School, Frankfort, Indiana, USA