

Beyond the Brush: Mrs. Parker



Miranda Rojas
Staff Reporter

On November 14, Ms. Parker was officially recognized as

“High School Art Teacher of the Year for the state of Mississippi.” Ms. Parker will then go on to represent Mississippi at the National level for “High School Art Teacher of the Year.”

Ms. Parker was nominated by Elise Payne, the head of the Art Department at Mississippi College. Winning such a big award has been an honor for Parker, especially since she didn't know how many people she was competing against.

“I'm very surprised that I was the one who won. I was not expecting to win,” Parker said.

She has been teaching ceramics for 10 years and has been a teacher at Tupelo High School for 20 years. Not in her 28 years of teaching did Parker expect to win something like this.

This award gives art teachers the ap-

preciation they deserve since it's not an easy job. Having a reason, a motivation to do what you love to do, is an essential part of continuing to do what you love. Ms. Parker's motivation is the students.

“I want other people to see that they can make something beautiful, especially those people who don't think they have the ability,” Parker said.

Parker is really good at her job and knows she is doing what she was meant to do.

“When I was in the first grade and the art teacher came into the classroom, I knew right then what God put me on this earth to do,” Parker said.

Winning a big award can impact both as a person and your career.

“Knowing some of the people, the past winners, I am humbled that I'm considered at their level of artistic ability,” Ms Parker says.

Her advice for anyone who wants to create beautiful things.

“Do it, just do it and just keep trying because as long as you're making something, it counts,” Parker said.

How would her students describe her?

“Ms. Parker is very sweet, and she interacts with her students,” Spate said.

Another of Ms. Parker's students, Aubriella Jefferson, described her as “fun, kind, sweet person.”

Both girls said that Parker has inspired them to travel. Jefferson said she inspires her to “go explore, because she does a lot of traveling.”

“She makes me want to travel the world and go explore everything and live life,” Spate says.

Having a positive impact on students as a teacher is important. In her own words:

“In a world where you can be anything... Just be kind.” Pat E. Parker.

Shaping the Slab

Kabriunna Cummings
Staff reporter

Students in Ceramics 1 and 2 are discovering that working with clay is more than just creating art; it's about connecting history, creativity, and more. Through hands-on projects, they learn how ceramics continue to hold meaning in both art and culture.

Mrs. Parker said the class is now focusing on creating tiles looking at the importance of design through low and medium relief projects. Students also explore how illuminated manuscripts and letters from ancient history influence today's art, showing that even the written word has artistic value. "I think it's important because I want students to learn about creating flat surfaces, to create low relief and medium relief," Parker said. "It's a sculpture and it's got significance in basic history, and I want them to experience that."

While students develop their skills, they also face challenges that push them to think more deeply about their work.

Parker explained that many students must overcome hesitation and learn to put more effort into their creations.



"The challenges would be limiting themselves to trying to take the easy way out, not cutting too deep or not having enough texture to work with color," Parker said. "When they give it thought, they realize it's not that hard and that they can create something meaningful."

Beyond technique, ceramics encourage communication and creativity among students. One project even inspired classmates to connect across language barriers.

"I had a student who did not speak English, who wrote his name in Chinese characters," Parker said. "It made other

students want to talk to him and learn how to use their phones to translate so they could communicate and learn about where he was from."

Parker believes that ceramics help students find beauty in simple things and teaches valuable life skills that extend beyond the classroom.

"It helps with your fine motor skills," Parker said. "It shows people that they can make things that might be more meaningful as a gift than anything they could just go out and purchase."

Ceramics not only helps students improve their artistic ability but also teaches them patience and pride in their work. Each finished piece represents effort, creativity, and personal growth.

"It teaches people to find beauty in something as basic as an alphabet letter and to create something pretty that they'll be proud to show others when it's finished," Parker said.



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All photos courtesy: PatE Parker