

2017 CSCTFL Founders Award

Phyllis Farrar



Phyllis Farrar epitomizes leadership and advocacy for the teaching and learning of languages. She has dedicated her career, which began in 1975, to the instruction of World Languages.

Phyllis has demonstrated her excellence in the promotion of language learning and international studies and leadership in the language teaching profession with the roles she has held in the state of Kansas. Until her retirement, Phyllis guided other language teachers in her role as Education Program Consultant for World Languages and ESOL Assessment at the Kansas State Department of Education (KSDE). Through this role, she was active in professional development to support the teachers of the standards of World Languages in the State of Kansas. Phyllis led efforts to establish the Kansas World Language Standards, holding standard sessions across the state for current teachers from all languages to revise these criteria for World Language teaching.

Most recently, Phyllis, working with an Advisory Council composed of World Language teachers at all levels in Kansas, successfully garnered a path towards a Seal of Biliteracy for students, beginning in the spring of 2017. Phyllis has led many workshops and understands the importance of collaboration. As one member stated, “Phyllis advocated for us when it felt like nobody else would, convincing administration of the importance of observing, and being observed by, other teachers of the same content area.”

Over the years, Phyllis participated in various immersion weekends and presentations because she understood how vital it is for second language learners to maintain their second languages. As the ESOL Assessment Consultant for KSDE, Phyllis served on many committees to help create valid and reliable assessments of English Language Learners’ (ELLs) proficiencies. Phyllis understands the process of learning a second language, so she has been able to advocate within the schools for the ELLs as well.

While serving as the KSDE World Language Consultant, Phyllis served as an ex-officio member of the Kansas World Language Association (KSWLA) Executive Council for many years. Examples of her contributions to KSWLA include guidance for the Executive Council, mentoring first year World Language teachers, as well as presenting sessions at the annual conferences such as: “Linguafolio in Kansas Schools,” in 2010, “Tips and Tricks for Teaching (Mostly) in the Target Language,” in 2011, “World Language Benchmark Assessments,” in 2015, and so many more.

Phyllis began teaching German in 1975 at Eudora High School where she also taught English Language Arts and Geography. She then taught German, Social Studies and Photography at West Junior High in Lawrence, Kansas between 1985 and 2006. While teaching in Lawrence, Phyllis

played an active role in the sister city partnership between Lawrence and Eutin, Germany. In 2007, she began working at KSDE and remained there until her retirement in 2016. Phyllis also made contributions to classes at the post-secondary level as an instructor from the University of Kansas.

Phyllis exhibits a strong work ethic, as she is always available to share ideas, listen to concerns, celebrate teacher and student achievements, and collaborate. Phyllis treats each individual as an equal, and no idea is unimportant. Phyllis encourages us to get involved with other language organizations as well, and is a member of many organizations, including but not limited to the Kansas Chapter of the American Association of the Teachers of German (KATG) and the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL). Phyllis has served as Assistant Program Chair (2009-2010), Program Chair (2010-2011), and Director (2011-2015) for the CSCTFL Board of Directors.

Phyllis is truly a humble individual. She is genuinely interested in what you have to say, and she is compassionate in her response and support. Phyllis has achieved much in her career towards the promotion of language learning. She is the first to say that **we**, the language teachers, have achieved the goals together.