

Emerson Excellence in Teaching Awards Program Backgrounder

About the Program

The Emerson Excellence in Teaching Awards program, sponsored by St. Louis-based Emerson, annually recognizes approximately 100 outstanding classroom educators from elementary and secondary schools and higher-education institutions in the bi-state St. Louis metropolitan area.

History of the Program

This awards program traces its origin to 1989 as part of the VP Fair, which was held in downtown St. Louis during the Fourth of July holiday. During that time, the focus of the Fair was education. Emerson, the primary corporate sponsor of the Fair that year, was given the opportunity to sponsor the program. A recognition ceremony was held on the grounds of the Jefferson National Expansion Memorial (the Gateway Arch), followed by a reception at a downtown hotel.

In 1991, the focus of the Fair moved from education but Emerson made a commitment to continue sponsoring the program because of the tremendous goodwill it generated among educators and the community at large. Emerson adopted the program and hosted the recognition event at the downtown Adam's Mark Hotel until 1993, when it was moved to the Ritz-Carlton in Clayton.

The program is held annually and Emerson has established an advisory committee comprised of representatives from local public, private and parochial schools to provide counsel and assistance on the awards program and recognition event.

Excellence in Teaching Awards Process

Emerson sends letters of invitation to all educational institutions, both private and public, and colleges and universities in the St. Louis metropolitan area. Award recipients are selected by their employing institutions. Neither Emerson, nor its awards advisory committee is involved in the selection process. All honorees and their school's administrators are invited to participate in an awards ceremony held on a Sunday afternoon in November each year.

Emerson Gold Star Grants

In 2006, Emerson launched the Emerson Gold Star Grant Program, competitively awarded cash grants to support the professional and personal development goals of elementary and secondary school teachers in the St. Louis area who are current or past recipients of the Emerson Excellence in Teaching Award. Each cash grant awarded to a teacher, or team of teachers, is matched with a grant to the teachers' employing educational institution. The application deadline is in early February and grant recipients are announced in April.