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Ethics Commission to honor middle school teacher tomorrow

The Miami-Dade County Commission on Ethics and Public Trust will pay tribute to Miami Lakes Middle School teacher **Lisa Deyarza as the 2016 Ethical Governance Day Teacher of the Year** during a ceremony tomorrow, **Tuesday, October 25, 2016, at 10 a.m.** The special assembly will be held in the unique Mock Courtroom inside the school at **6425 Miami Lakeway North, Miami Lakes, 33014**. Ms. Deyarza oversaw the building of the Mock Courtroom, which opened in 2014, and initiated a school wide annual Mock Trial Competition – the first for a middle school.

Among the other many accomplishments in her efforts to help her students become better citizens, Ms. Deyarza created the Legal Studies Magnet Program at Miami Lakes Middle School a dozen years ago and opened the Biliterate Program in Social Studies. The 2006 “Teacher of the Year” for her school has led her students to win multiple awards in civic competitions including “We The People,” “Model United Nations” and “Project Citizen.” In fact, her students were state winners six years in a row in Project Citizen and also earned a Superior National Rating. Participation in the competition requires youngsters to create and defend a public policy in response to a problem in their community. One year, Ms. Deyarza’s students were so determined to help lower speed limits near school zones in response to a child’s death that they were recognized by the Miami-Dade School Board and met with state lawmakers to present their issue.

A political activist in her own right, Ms. Deyarza has volunteered on many campaigns, been active in several community service organizations and has been a member of the school’s Educational Excellence School Advisory Council for more than a decade. Prior to joining the faculty at Miami Lakes Middle, Ms. Deyarza taught fifth grade, where she served as department head, Science Fair coordinator and as sponsor for several clubs. She also taught in high school for ten years, where she led her students to similar awards, coached speech and debate and was named “Rookie Teacher of the Year” by her colleagues.

Joining Ethics Commission Executive Director Joseph Centorino in presenting the award will be Miami-Dade County District 13 Commissioner Esteban Bovo, Jr., and representatives of the Miami-Dade County School Board and Superintendent’s office and Miami Lakes Middle School Principal Dr. Manuel Sanchez.

The award is part of the Ethics Commission’s 5th annual **Ethical Governance Day**, which was held last Thursday. More than 200 civic activists spoke in government and economics classes in dozens of Miami-Dade senior high schools to share with students the importance of civic activism and ethics in government.

The Ethics Commission was created in 1996 as an independent agency with advisory and quasi-judicial powers. It is composed of five members, serving staggered terms of four years each. Through a program of education, outreach and enforcement, the Commission seeks to empower the community and bolster public trust.

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