

Education Advocates Feted with VEA Awards at Convention Dinner

VEA holds an Awards Dinner at each convention to honor individuals and organizations that have done outstanding work on behalf of our public schools and those who learn and work in them. The 2022 awards and honorees are:

Friend of Education Award. This is VEA's highest honor, and there were two recipients this year: Former State Superintendent of Public Instruction **Dr. James Lane** and former Spotsylvania County Superintendent **Dr. Scott Baker**. Both were recognized for their student-first approach and courageous leadership during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Award for Teaching Excellence. **Dr. Jessica Jones**, a Pittsylvania Education Association member and high school agricultural education teacher, was honored for, among other things, the way she encourages her students in regional, state, and national FFA competitions and her tireless advocacy for PEA members.

Education Support Professional (ESP) of the Year. **Arthur Anderson** is a high school instructional assistant and vice president of the Chesapeake Education Association member known his outreach to students, including running a mentoring program, and for his fierce advocacy before the city's school board.

Fitz Turner Award for Outstanding Contributions in Intergroup Relations. **SERV (Standing for Equity in the Roanoke Valley)** is this year's honoree for becoming a major player in the fight for racial and social justice, despite being in existence for less than five years.

Robley S. Jones Political Activist Award. The honorees this year are UniServ Directors who took time away from their work to represent members as lobbyists at the 2022 General Assembly: **Donald Cash, Jay Deck, Vickie Kitts, Bekah Saxon, Lisa Staib, and Boaz Young-El.**

Martha Wood Distinguished Service Award. **Dorothy "Dot" Walton** of **Charlottesville** is this year's winner, in recognition of her many years of Association leadership at the local and state level and her avid involvement in political action.

A+ Awards for Membership Growth. The **Albemarle Education Association** and the **Blue Ridge UniServ Council** were honored for membership growth.