NASP Announces 2021 School Psychologist of the Year and Lifetime Achievement Award Recipients

Bethesda, MD—The National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) is pleased to announce its highest awards for 2021. Congratulations to Julia E. Szarko, PhD, NCSP, the 2021 School Psychologist of the Year, and to Deborah Peek Crockett, PhD, NCSP, the 2021 Lifetime Achievement Award recipient. These individuals represent the best in school psychology and outstanding commitment to the profession and to improving the lives and learning of children and youth.

NASP’s School Psychologist of the Year is awarded for excellence in the provision of school psychological services by a field-based practitioner and is selected from nominations by states across the country. Dr. Julia Szarko is currently a school psychologist in the Central Bucks School District in Doylestown, PA. Throughout her 25-year career as a school psychologist, Dr. Szarko has served as a clear example of service to children, families, schools, and the profession as both a practitioner and an advocate. Her leadership has been evident through her work implementing multitiered system of supports (MTSS), suicide prevention and intervention, crisis response, early intervention, gifted education, staff development, supervision of graduate students, and advocacy for effective policies and practices in her district. She is also a passionate, effective advocate at the state and national levels for increased school mental health staffing, including being instrumental in the drafting and introduction of the federal Mental Health in Schools Excellence Program Act of 2019 to address the shortages in school psychology.

NASP’s Lifetime Achievement Award is NASP’s most prestigious award and recognizes school psychologists who have made a significant and lasting contribution to the field of school psychology and who have at least 25 years of service in the field, 20 years membership in NASP, and 10 years or more of leadership service to NASP.

With a career spanning nearly 40 years, Dr. Deborah Peek Crockett has been and continues to be a substantial force within the profession of school psychology through her exemplary work as a practitioner, professor, consultant, expert panelist, and volunteer leader at the local, state, and national levels. Dr. Crockett is known as a child and family advocate for appropriate education of all children; development, promotion, implementation, and training of tolerance and diversity issues; parent education and school involvement; assessment; and professional issues. She is a widely published author and renowned presenter on these topics. Among her many accomplishments as a school psychology leader, Dr. Crockett served as the first African American President of NASP and of the Georgia Association of School Psychologists. She also has been a seminal advocate for increasing diversity in the field of school psychology and in NASP. Perhaps her greatest legacy in this regard is her role in founding and growing NASP’s Minority Scholarship Program, which supports the graduate training of traditionally underrepresented groups pursuing careers in school psychology while seeking to lower financial barriers to training and to highlight the accomplishments of promising future professionals. One of Deborah’s colleagues described her as a “… trendsetter and pioneer in the world of school psychology.”
The 2021 School Psychologist of the Year and Lifetime Achievement Awards will be officially presented during the NASP 2021 Virtual Convention. Information on the convention program and registration are available online at www.nasponline.org/2021registration.

NASP is a professional association representing more than 24,000 school psychologists, graduate students, and related professionals throughout the United States and an additional 25 countries worldwide. As the world’s largest organization of school psychologists, NASP works to advance effective practices to improve students’ learning, behavior, and mental health. Our vision is that all children and youth access the learning, behavior, and mental health support needed to thrive in school, at home, and throughout life.

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