

# news



3106 Joseph Howe Drive  
Halifax, Nova Scotia B3L 4L7  
www.nstu.ca • pr@nstu.ca  
Tel 902.477.5621  
Fax 902.477.3517

N O V A S C O T I A T E A C H E R S U N I O N

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## **Valley teacher wins 2016 Lieutenant Governor's Teaching Award**

Theresa Pelley, an English, Canadian Families, Healthy Living, and Mi'kmaq Studies teacher at Horton High School in Wolfville is the 2016 recipient of the Lieutenant Governor's Teaching Award. In a ceremony held today at Government House, Lt.-Gov. J.J. Grant presented Pelley with her award, a specially designed NovaScotian Crystal® sculpture and a framed certificate to recognize this achievement.

"Teachers are leaders in our communities who generously give their time, energy and skills to help make our province a vibrant and caring place to live," said Lt.-Gov. Grant. "It is my great honour to recognize Ms. Theresa Pelley, whose commitment to fostering an inclusive environment where every student is valued for who they are has made a profound difference in the lives of many."

Pelley has been teaching at the Annapolis Valley Regional School Board's Horton High School for five years, teaching a variety of subjects including initiating the school's offering of Mi'kmaq Studies. In a career that spans 35 years, Pelley was a music educator for 25 years, has been with the AVRSB for 20 years, and has taught at all levels, including teaching assignments at West Kings High School, Coldbrook and District School, and Hantsport School.

She is an active advocate for all of her students with a strong sense of social justice, which she brings to her classroom, school, and community. She knows the importance of supporting and building up her students in any way she can so they can become successful.

In thinking about her teaching career, Pelley is reminded of a quote by science fiction writer Robert A. Heinlen - "When one teaches, two learn."

"My students have taught me the greatest lessons in how to teach them. They have taught me that sometimes the breakfast program is in fact the supper program," she said. "They have taught me that sometimes poverty and circumstances are so overwhelming that even when they want to learn they can't. They have taught me that support and love can go a long way to enhance learning. My teaching practice continues to be shaped by what I learn from my students."

Pelley values the connections she makes with her students both inside and outside the classroom. She draws great inspiration from her mother, June Jain, who retired from a 43-year teaching career, but still volunteers at Somerset and District School. "My mother is a caring, nurturing teacher, and I have tried to continue her legacy throughout my teaching career," added Pelley.

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“Theresa embodies this award,” said NSTU president Shelley Morse. “Through her devotion to her students—especially those who have difficult lives, her support as a mentor and leader in encouraging others to improve their teaching practice, and her community work in promoting the arts—she is an inspiration to all. She is a true credit to her profession, an outstanding example of the important work teachers do every day.”

Pelley has gone above and beyond in her call of duty to students. She has an open door policy in her classroom, providing a safe and welcoming place for all students. She works closely with the Glooscap First Nation to ensure she brings authentic and meaningful experiences to her classes and school community. She ensures students have what they need to attend school events and engage in learning. This includes opening her home to students in crisis. Her teaching colleagues at Horton nominated her because, *“We believe she is truly extraordinary: her energy, commitment and talents have made our students, community and the profession richer in more ways than we can say.”*

An Annapolis Valley native, Pelley received her B.A. in Music and B.Ed from Dalhousie University, and a Master’s of Education from Acadia University.

Former Lieutenant Governor Myra A. Freeman, CM, ONS, MSM in partnership with the Nova Scotia Teachers Union instituted the Lieutenant Governor’s Teaching Award in 2005. His Honour, Brigadier-General the Honourable J.J. Grant, CMM, ONS, CD (Ret’d), Lieutenant Governor of Nova Scotia re-established this award in 2013. Each year a teacher is selected to represent the teaching profession in Nova Scotia. To be eligible, the teacher representative must be a member of the NSTU and be a currently active teacher or administrator in the public school or Community College system. The Lieutenant Governor’s Teaching Award is generously sponsored by Johnson Inc.

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For more information contact:

Angela Murray  
NSTU Public Relations Coordinator  
479-4708 cell: 497-0194  
[amurray@staff.nstu.ca](mailto:amurray@staff.nstu.ca)  
@NSTeachersUnion