



ACADEMIC SPOTLIGHT

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Athens Academy Faculty and Staff Have a Long History of Distinguished Service

Each year since 1985, the Georgia Independent School Association (GISA) has recognized individuals—both faculty and staff members—who have served 25 years or more in independent schools with the Distinguished Service Award. The association, which now includes approximately 160 schools throughout our state, has presented more than 2,100 of these awards to date. A quick exploration of school records shows that 57 Athens Academy faculty and staff members have earned the Distinguished Service Award over the last 36 years.

Fittingly, the school's first recipient was Bob Chambers during the 1988-89 school year. In the ensuing years, many other life-long educators and staff members whose work influenced generations of students at Athens Academy have followed. Many have since retired, but their names remain fondly in the memories of countless colleagues and alumni. Several have been the inspiration for special awards for academics, athletics, and the arts presented to students each year at Honors Day. Some have even become the namesakes of buildings, classrooms, and other spaces across our campus.

Perhaps the most impressive statistic revealed by Athens Academy's history of Distinguished Service Award recipients is the fact that 23 of the school's 57 winners—each with 25 years of experience, and counting—are *current* faculty and staff members. Moreover, that experience is balanced throughout all areas of the school: five of these 23 veteran educators work in the Preschool or Lower School, five in the Middle School, three in the Upper School, four in the administration, and six on the staff.

Not only does this fact demonstrate the dedication and depth of experience of Athens Academy's faculty and staff, but it also shows how closely connected so many of today's current teachers and staff members are to the early years of the school. While supporting their current students, advisees, and players, these veteran independent school educators and staff members continue to influence their fellow teachers in positive and lasting ways.

Recipients can qualify for the award based on years served at other independent schools. Nevertheless, more than half of the recipients in the last ten years are individuals who have served all 25 of their years at Athens Academy. This level of commitment and expertise is not always present in schools, and we don't take it for granted.

With at least two more award recipients expected next year, and several more after that, Athens Academy's tradition of being very well represented in the GISA awards ceremony is likely to continue for many years to come.