

FOUNTAIN AWARD APPLICATION

The Fountain Award is named after Mr. Monty Fountain. Mr. Fountain, a teacher and coach at Alexander High School in Douglas County, was State School Superintendent Dr. John Barge’s Civics teacher and coach. Mr. Fountain taught Superintendent Barge that the road to success is paved with persistence, hard work and a strong work ethic. As most teachers do, he helped Superintendent Barge write a better story for himself.

We invite you to recommend a deserving educator. Incomplete forms will be eliminated.

**Return completed application via email to Keisha Ford-Jenrette at [kford@gadoe.org](mailto:kford@gadoe.org).**

*THIS IS A CONFIDENTIAL PROCESS.*  
*INDIVIDUALS SHOULD NOT BE AWARE OF THIS RECOMMENDATION.*

NAME OF EDUCATOR: Elizabeth Upchurch SUBJECT TAUGHT: Physical Science

SCHOOL YOU ATTENDED (if applicable) : Clarke Central High School COUNTY: Clarke

SCHOOL WHERE EDUCATOR CURRENTLY TEACHES: Chase Street Elementary School  
COUNTY: Clarke

YOUR NAME: Rachel Kulikoff TITLE (College) Student

PHONE: (706) 818-2468 EMAIL: [rkulikoff@uchicago.edu](mailto:rkulikoff@uchicago.edu)

Describe how the educator influenced you or another student to write a better story. Include specific examples of academic achievement, accomplishments outside of the classroom and student impact.  
(500 WORDS OR LESS)

I remember the first time I met Mrs. Upchurch was during our Freshman Day Back, over four years ago. As I talked to her about the physics of electricity and magnetism, Mrs. Upchurch readily admitted that she didn’t know very much about the topic, and asked me to share anything I had learned. This respect of others, even those supposedly “under” her characterizes Mrs. Upchurch perfectly.

In my years as a student, I haven’t had a single other teacher who is as dedicated to *all* of her students as Mrs. Upchurch is. Ms. Upchurch was in every day before school – she offered to tutor students, but more importantly, gave us a place to relax, be ourselves, and be heard by an adult. Physical science was Ms. Upchurch was my first block class first term of freshman year, and I remember marveling at how many students were in

her classroom early, hanging out, talking to each other and to her. In return for this safe haven that Ms. Upchurch provided, her students uniformly respect her.

Relatedly, Ms. Upchurch strived to make her class interesting and accessible for all students. This meant that she slowed down in class when need be, always trying to give personal attention to those who were lost. However, it also meant that when I was learning Algebra 2 as a freshman and wanted to explore the relationship between logarithms and half-life but didn't know how to do it, she stayed after school to investigate topics like this far beyond the high school curriculum with me. I'd like to once again stress her dedication to and care for each and every student who passed through her class – from those who were on the road to dropping out to those on the road to elite colleges.

To me personally, Ms. Upchurch has been a teacher, guru, and, most recently, friend. As a college freshman, I write frank letters to her, and will continue to keep in touch. Because of her teaching, I am in the process of getting a job with the Neighborhood Schools Program here at the University of Chicago, which gives UC students a chance to give back to the Chicago community through teaching, tutoring, and mentoring. After being president of the Environmental Club with Ms. Upchurch as sponsor, I care about the health of the earth on which we live, and I plan to be involved with the sustainable campus initiative here.

It is unquestionable that Mrs. Upchurch has inspired me – to become a better student, perhaps (though I've always been a high-achieving one). More importantly, she encouraged and inspired me to grow into a better person, to give back to my community, and to care about the world that we live in: our natural habitat, but also the people with whom we share the world. Ms. Upchurch showed me through example what it means to care, and instilled in me the will to do the same. What more can we ask from teachers?