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Pierson receives Distinguished Alumni Award from University of Minnesota College of Education and Human Development

Her company has helped more than five million students learn math nationwide

MINNEAPOLIS – (Dec. 8, 2010) – Caryl Pierson, the only woman in the 1957 graduating class of math educators, is a 2010 recipient of the University of Minnesota College of Education and Human Development Distinguished Alumni Award.

Pierson was honored by her alma mater for her pioneering work as a math educator and impact on math education. After 20 years as a math teacher, she founded Math Teacher's Press, Inc., today a leading publisher of supplemental materials designed to help students succeed in math.

"I am honored to receive this award from the College of Education and Human Development," said Pierson. "The wonderful professors I worked with at the U of M inspired my love of math and my love of teaching. The foundation they gave me has enabled me to reach out to students of all ability levels and help them succeed."

In 1980, while Pierson was teaching at Southwest High School in Minneapolis, a large group of Southeast Asian students from five countries, aged 12 to 20, with no formal schooling or English language skills, arrived in the school. When her principal asked her to prepare these students for Algebra I, she asked Dr. William Bart, head of educational psychology at the U of M, for advice. He told her that she should develop a test to find where the students were and then teach every objective with manipulative activities.

Pierson took his advice to heart, teaching by day, and reading Jean Piaget and writing math curriculum by night. Her students learned three to four years of math in just six months. Pierson later developed the first benchmark tests for the Minneapolis Public Schools, an experience that helped her see that, if she continued teaching math in an abstract way as she had for 20 years, she would never reach students in the bottom quartile.

Both of these experiences were the pioneering underpinnings of Math Teacher's Press, which develops and distributes her *Moving with Math* curricula nationwide. Today, with a staff of 45, statistically significant improvement rates, and long-term working relationships with some of the nation's neediest public school districts, Math Teacher's Press can proudly lay claim to helping more than five million students learn math.

Pierson's ultimate dream is that *all* students in the U.S. learn the math necessary for a productive life.

“In recognition of Caryl’s educational and business career in math education, and her support of at-risk students, we are pleased to confer upon her our Distinguished Alumni Award,” said Jean K. Quam, dean of the College of Education and Human Development at the U of M.

This year, there were 37 recipients of the College of Education and Human Development Distinguished Alumni Award, out of the more than 70,000 living alumni from the college. Given for the first time this year, the award honors alumni who have distinguished themselves in their careers and communities, and have made a positive difference in the lives of children, youth, families, schools, institutions and organizations, according to the college.

For more information about Math Teachers Press and Pierson’s *Moving with Math* programs, visit <http://www.movingwithmath.com/> .

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