



## GEORGIA COMMISSION ON THE HOLOCAUST

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### 2014 DISTINGUISHED EDUCATOR OF THE YEAR

16 APRIL 2014 -- Lesley McClendon has been named the 2014 Distinguished Educator of the Year by the Georgia Commission on the Holocaust. The award recognizes outstanding educators whose work ensures that future generations are prepared to become engaged citizens, make good choices and take responsibility for their own actions by connecting students to the history and lessons of the Holocaust. A Distinguished Educator of the Year award is presented annually to a full-time Georgia educator of grades 5, 6-8, or 9-12.

Lesley McClendon is a 7<sup>th</sup> grade Special Education and Language Arts educator at Shiloh Middle School in Gwinnett County where she has been teaching for four years. She was nominated by Assistant Principal Jay Barbour.

In addition to teaching at Shiloh Middle School during the academic year, Ms. McClendon is a Language Arts teacher for middle school students in the Reach for Excellence program, hosted by The Marist School. This rigorous academic and leadership enrichment program provides learning experiences and educational resources for underserved middle school students, preparing them for the challenges of competitive college-preparatory programs.

In 2014 Ms. McClendon was among one hundred educators selected from across the nation to participate in the PBS Learning Media Digital Innovator program, in which she will serve as an ambassador for integrating best practices in digital learning in classrooms across the country.

McClendon received a B.A. in English from Rhodes College, and is presently completing a M.Ed. in Reading, Language, and Literacy at Georgia State University.

“The knowledge students gain from learning about the history of the Holocaust provides an invaluable context through which they may better understand the world around them. Students also develop a deeper understanding of responsibility, as it relates to both the individual and the community. When they realize the positive impact that even one determined individual can make, students feel more empowered to make good choices when faced with challenging situations and are inspired to actively contribute to the development of their communities.”