

For Immediate Release

EDUCATION PROFESSOR EARNS ACM'S OUTSTANDING TEACHER AWARD

CUMBERLAND – Maureen Brown, associate professor of education, has been recognized as Allegany College of Maryland's outstanding faculty member for 2018.

Brown received the Sanner Award for Outstanding Teaching, which is based on teaching excellence, guidance to advisees in pursuit of their goals and demonstrated human relationship skills.

Faculty members submit nominations for the college-wide award and selection is made by the Faculty Status Committee, a peer group that represents ACM's more than 100 full-time faculty members.

Brown, who joined ACM in 2001 after more than a decade as an elementary school teacher, is recognized by colleagues as a model of how to guide students toward their goals at the community college.

She draws praise for her commitment to the teaching profession and for her ability to boost confidence in her teacher education students from their first campus visit through graduation.

Wrote one colleague of Brown: "She has touched the lives of countless children by preparing enthusiastic, compassionate teachers who are thoughtful, attentive and ready for the challenges ahead. She is a teacher, mentor, coach and a role model."

Observed another: "Maureen's dedication to the program has come full circle as we see the many faces of former students teaching in our local schools and others teaching in classrooms around the country."

As Brown came to teaching late in life and, she can empathize with students of all ages who have doubts when they decide on a career in the classroom.

"Sometimes new students are very apprehensive about whether they are going to succeed," she says. "And they turn out to be wonderful students."

She credits encouragement from her colleagues and ACM's many academic support services for the success of her students. An average of two-dozen complete her program annually.

"To see growth and confidence is very rewarding," she said. Some of her students blossom to the extent that they volunteer to be chosen to speak at fall or spring commencement exercises. "That is even more gratifying," she added.

Brown was herself a community college student, in Charles County, before transferring to Frostburg State University in her late 30s. “I was a late bloomer,” she says.

After earning a bachelor’s degree in 1990, she embarked on a teaching career in the primary grades, first in the Berkeley County, W.Va., school system, then in nearby Mineral County.

Although she worked as a specialist in reading and special education (she had earned a master of education degree along the way), Brown was mostly a first-grade teacher.

“Traditionally, that’s when children begin reading,” she explained. “To see a child reading for the first time is life-changing – an incomparable moment.”

Brown wasn’t really seeking to make a career change when, quite by accident, she read the college’s classified ad seeking a director of its teacher education program.

The new job reflected ACM’s commitment to strengthen the preparation that students receive toward transfer to a bachelor’s degree at a four-year school.

“During my years in the public schools,” she said, “I had seen many wonderful teachers.”

She concluded that the difference between those who excelled and those who fell short was insufficient field experiences during their preparation, and she made building field experience into a student’s first semester a priority.

Brown has overseen a great increase in the number of education courses woven into the transfer programs’ three areas of concentration: early childhood, elementary and secondary.

Since arriving on campus, Brown has augmented the courses required by the major from three to 10 or more. She also guided the development of a fourth pathway for education majors, the associate of arts in teaching.

The curriculum is designed for elementary education transfers to a Maryland four-year program, such as FSU, which receives the great majority of ACM teacher education majors who continue on.

“Our early childhood majors, by the time they graduate, will have from 70 to 80 hours working in the classroom,” she said.

Although many who knew her were surprised by her move to higher education years ago, Brown said the transition was more natural than they might have imagined.

“Whether they are 6 or 26, students have many of the same needs – they want to succeed and reach their goals,” she said. “They just come in different sized packages.”

After 17 years at ACM, Brown is preparing to retire and will do so before the summer is out. Robbin Seddon, associate professor of education and the program's field placement coordinator, will become director. A new education faculty member has been hired.

Brown said she is greatly honored to be named the college's outstanding teacher in her final year of employment.

"ACM is a community of faculty and staff who dedicate themselves to helping our students achieve their goals," she remarked. "It's been such a privilege to have served alongside such talented and dedicated professionals."

Brown, who is the mother of two, the grandmother of five and the great-grandmother of three, is looking forward to travel and to spending more time with family, all of whom reside in other states.

She is the 32nd recipient of the award, which was established by Miriam Sanner, a former ACM Board of Trustees chair and ACM Foundation board member emerita.

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Allegany College of Maryland named Maureen Brown its top teacher for 2018. Brown, associate professor of education, was presented the Sanner Award for Outstanding

Teaching. Also pictured are Dr. Kurt Hoffman, senior vice president for instructional and student affairs, and Dr. Cynthia S. Bambara, ACM president.