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NEWS RELEASE

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**Scott Daniel Is Georgia Gifted Teacher of the Year
WRHS Teacher Honored for Outstanding Contributions**



HOUSTON COUNTY, GA – **Scott Daniel**, a **Warner Robins High School** gifted English teacher, has been selected as the **Georgia Association of Gifted Children (GAGC) Gifted Program Teacher of the Year**. The award was announced on Thursday, March 8, in Atlanta at the GAGC conference.

[Daniel was named the Gervaise Wynn Perdue Gifted Teacher of the Year \(TOTY\) on Dec. 4, 2006, at the Houston County Association for Gifted Children \(HCAGC\) meeting. As the system's Gifted TOTY, he was nominated for the state-level award](#) by fellow teachers and current

and former students. Former student Karen Bemis, who is now a senior at Yale University, submitted a letter of recommendation. An excerpt from her letter follows.

“It must have been quite a challenge for Scott Daniel to teach my 1999-2000 ninth grade honors literature class. There were typical trials that could be expected given an overfull class of hormone-crazed know-it-alls... Through song, skits, and flexible assignments, Scott Daniel succeeded where our other high school literary teachers had failed: he got us to read. Gifted students know how to use Spark Notes, an encyclopedia of common biblical allusions, and a vocabulary of literary devices to make it look like we meticulously analyzed a novel that, in fact, we never even opened. Mr. Daniel's class activities made us feel as if we had something in common with authors and their characters. He opened our minds, and in turn, we opened our books.

How do you measure the effect of a teacher? Is it in the academic success of his students? I earned an A in my ninth grade honors literature class, but then again, I earned A's in all of my high school classes. It was only in Scott Daniel's literature class that I thought about what I was reading, and

MORE

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WRHS Teacher Scott Daniel Selected Georgia Gifted Teacher of the Year

truly, the only high school class in which I bothered to do the reading. I didn't need to read the books in a class to receive good grades. In my other honors classes, the teachers' expectation was that I write a good analytical essay, but Mr. Daniel wanted me to reexamine myself and my world through the writing of others. In subsequent high school literature classes, the formulaic essay writing led me to neglect assigned readings, but I, and my gifted classmates, could never lose the excitement for books that Scott Daniel had inspired.

When I was asked to write a recommendation for Scott Daniel for Georgia Gifted Teacher of the Year, I thought back to that messy classroom and the clearest memory I had from freshman year was Mr. Daniel reading *Catcher in the Rye* to the class— a book that is now a treasured favorite among many of my former classmates. Mr. Daniel shared Holden Caulfield with us, a fellow troublesome, gifted child who confessed, 'Almost every time somebody gives me a present, it ends up making me sad.' Mr. Daniel's creative teaching brought books alive, exposing small-town teenagers to people and ideas they would never have come in contact with in their daily lives. I now seek to discover how I can widen the world for others."

To learn more about the GAGC or this award, visit the Web site www.gagc.org or call (404) 875-2284. Daniel may be contacted at either (478) 929-7845 or sdaniel@hcbe.net. Jan Jacobsen, gifted programs director, may also be contacted for more information at (478) 988-6200 or jjacobsen@hcbe.net.

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