

## 2011 Teacher of the Year Finalists



From Left to Right - Dana Berry, Tammy White, Bill Lewis, Donna Marshalko, and Amanda Crist

### Dana Berry

When the last of my *Brady Bunch* crew, six in total, finally boarded the bus for school, I decided it was time for me to go back, too. I'd dropped out of school before the twelfth grade and figured that if I were to get any kind of decent job, I might need a diploma. There have been many a time since then when I sorely wished I'd decided to remain a stay-at-home mom. Nevertheless, I finished high school at Santa Rosa Adult and was offered a two-year scholarship to Pensacola Jr. College. How can you turn down free school? I earned my Associates Degree there and was offered another scholarship to the University of West Florida - more free school! So I did that, too. And now I'm a teacher. Who would have ever guessed?

I ended up teaching in the same classroom where I'd sat only a few years earlier, going on to sponsor the school's first Prom, Yearbook, Newspaper, and Web Site. I was awarded *Teacher of the Year* and also *American Success Story in Education* for the district, not because I was a great teacher, but because I'd managed to become a teacher at all. I think my husband should have received half of the \$20,000 dollars I was awarded for my school because I would have never been able to get through college without his workhorse effort to be both mom and dad on many occasions. That was frowned upon, however, so all he got was a kiss and a hug.

My twin girls both married and moved to Ohio. The scent of grandchildren was in the air, so we sold out and trailed after them. We now have four grandbabies to play with. I also ended up at Southeastern Correctional, teaching offenders.