



## MEDIA RELEASE

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### **SC Virtual Charter School's Julie Phillips crowned 2019-20 Charter Institute at Erskine Teacher of the Year**

**COLUMBIA** – Second grade teacher Julie Phillips of South Carolina Virtual Charter School (SCVCS) was announced as the 2019-2020 Charter Institute at Erskine's Teacher of the Year at an awards banquet held in the Capital City Club on May 3. SCVCS is one of 13 charter schools in South Carolina authorized by the Institute.

"I was very shocked when my name was called," Phillips told WIS-TV following the announcement. "Teaching is all about the students. It's a passion, it's a calling. To receive this award is more than I could have ever imagined. It's a once in a lifetime experience."

The Institute renamed this year's Teacher of the Year award after Nathan Yon, a passionate charter school leader in South Carolina who died in an automobile accident in 2013.

Phillips and 17 fellow teachers were celebrated at the banquet for winning Teacher of the Year from their individual schools. Those teachers were: Danielle Owens (Belton Preparatory Academy); Samson Wanga (Calhoun Falls Public Charter School); Sarah Vicini (Coastal Leadership Academy); Carrie Geimer (Cyber Academy of South Carolina – Elementary); Meiko King (Cyber Academy of South Carolina – Middle); Irma Gomillion (Cyber Academy of South Carolina – High); Deidra Pompey (Gray Collegiate Academy); Deborah Edwards (Mevers School of Excellence – Lower); Kristopher Wilber (Mevers School of Excellence – Upper); Angela Lewis (Midlands STEM Institute – Elementary); Emily Miner (Midlands STEM Institute – Middle); Allen Holmes (Oceanside Collegiate Academy); Cindy Stockman (Odyssey Online Learning); Yonna Porter (Royal Live Oaks Academy); Shelayne Phillips (South Carolina Virtual Charter School – Middle); Holly Dowling (South Carolina Virtual Charter School – High); and Cindy Martin (Virtus Academy of South Carolina).

The Institute also recognized its Students of the Year at the banquet. Those winners were: Blake Jolley (Virtus Academy of South Carolina – Elementary); Cournazhia Sanders (Calhoun Falls Public Charter School – Middle); and Riley Bachmann (Oceanside Collegiate Academy – High). Miranda Bolt of Belton Preparatory Academy was named the Institute's Volunteer of the Year.

Gov. Henry McMaster served as guest speaker for the evening, which featured over 200 guests. During his remarks, McMaster praised the efforts and innovation of the Institute and its schools.

"It takes this kind of outside-the-box thinking to continue moving this state forward, so I want to tell you to keep doing what you are doing," McMaster said. "What you are doing with the Charter Institute at Erskine is fabulous. Not only are you educating these children, but you are setting a pattern and showing others how to do the same thing."

180-year-old Erskine College established the Charter Institute at Erskine in 2017 to improve public education across the state of South Carolina. The Institute currently authorizes 13 charter schools with nearly 10,000 students. Four additional schools are scheduled to open in the fall of 2019. For more information, please visit [www.erskinecharters.org](http://www.erskinecharters.org).

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