

FEATURED TOP STORY

# Kidd's civics approach earns President's Award for Excellence

BY ASHLEY HINSON | THE DAILY IBERIAN Jun 8, 2016 Comments



The Daily Iberian files

Jennifer Kidd, a Westgate High School educator, has been awarded a presidential honor.



Westgate High School teacher and Social Studies Department Chair Jennifer Mestayer Kidd was awarded with the President's Award for Excellence for her hands-on approach to teaching the ins and outs of government.

Kidd emerged the winner over teachers from public and private schools around Louisiana. At first, she ignored the emails she was inundated with about applying for the Louisiana State Bar Association and the Louisiana Center for Law and Civic Education prize.

Her thoughts of, "What are the odds?" changed to "Why not?" and people took notice. LCLCE board member Judge C. Wendell Manning and LSBA President Mark Cunningham presented her with a plaque and funding to purchase law-related materials for her students.

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"Civics is something that's such an everyday part of our lives," Kidd said. "It was more important to give them application and theory. What would happen if you got pulled over? What are your rights?"

The school's block scheduling means 90-minute classes, which are taxing on both teachers and students. Kidd takes students on field trip and provides students with guest speakers, including Speaker of the House and New Iberia native Taylor Barras, Sen. Fred Mills, R-Parks and former managing editor for The Daily Iberian, Jeff Zeringue. She also conducts mock trials and mock congressional hearings, and her students have to provide evidence.

"Anything is relevant if they find it versus if you hand it to them," she said. "They came upon information and feel accomplished. When you do an open forum where they can have research

and each other, it makes more sense.”

Kidd was able to get a day off of school, and enroll in the James Madison Legacy Project, where she spent four Saturdays learning from a Supreme Court judge and law scholars. She also received \$250 and 30 new textbooks, which replace 10-plus years old versions. She said the whole process made her feel like Cinderella.

“It was like a fairy godmother came, and poof! There are my textbooks!” she said.

Unlike Cinderella, Kidd has more work to do. She said in coming years that she wants to collaborate with other high school civics classes with projects and have a tour of the mayor's office next year so her students can understand what the position entails.



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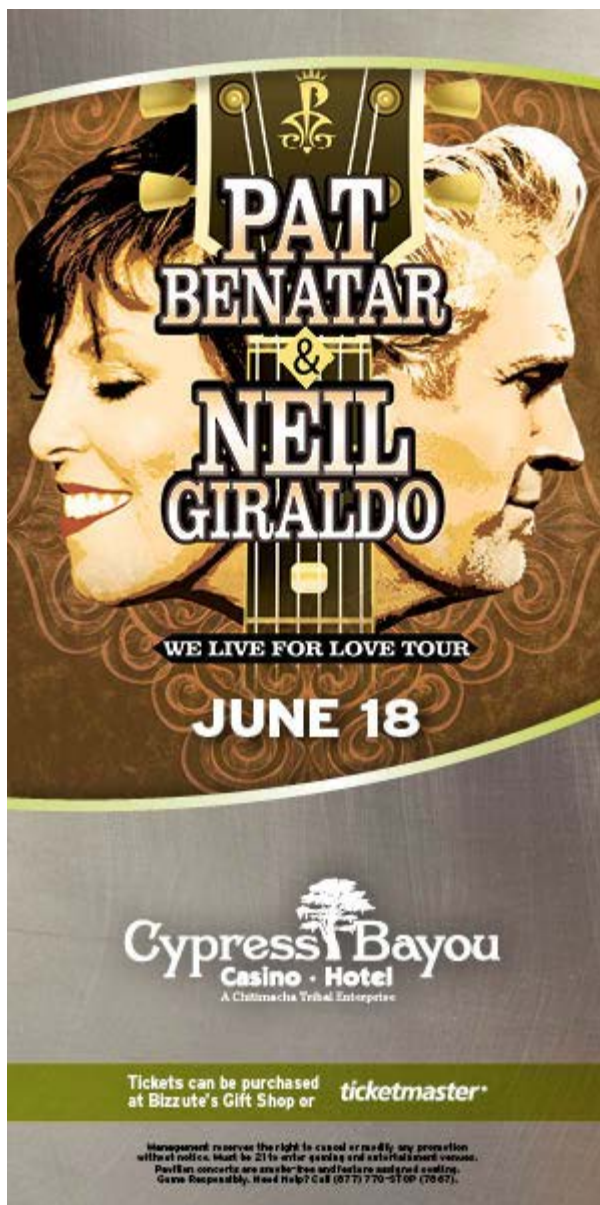
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