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Larrimore is THS ‘Teacher of the Year’



From Barry H. Hendrix

You don't have to talk long to Kay Aldridge

Larrimore, a Career Tech teacher at Thomasville High School, to discover her passion for working with students in Work Based Learning.

“Over the years, businesses have bought into this program,” she said. She began as a cooperative education coordinator with only 20 kids. The number of students now in work based learning is up to approximately 75.

They gain valuable experience on the job.

“If these businesses didn't step up and agree, especially with the economy in the shape that it is in...then it wouldn't work.” The program works by the employers giving the students a chance, and the students being responsible in their dedication to the employer.

There are high schools with 1,500 students who are not having the kind of success with work based learning that THS has, Larrimore said. “...These kids are learning so much in the world that they cannot learn sitting in the classroom.... They are learning how to work.

“...My kids put in this (Thomasville) economy last year a quarter of a million dollars. ... They are helping the community.”

Her students were recently featured in a fivepage spread in the recent issue of Cooperative Farming News magazine, with an article written by Carolyn Drinkard, and students and employers are regularly featured in The Thomasville Times.

Larrimore has been chosen as the “Teacher of the Year” for Thomasville High School for the 2015- 2016 school year.

It is her 10th year at THS. As a Career Technical Education (CTE) business teacher, she has taught the following disciplines over the last decade: Business Technology Applications; Career Preparedness; Coordinated Studies; Accounting; Business Technology Applications- Advanced; Information Technology Fundamentals; Multimedia Design; Personal Finance; and Multimedia Publications.

She currently serves as the Work Based Learning Coordinator (formerly cooperative education).

The CTE program has been offering Microsoft software certification for the last six years. Her coop students used to earn career readiness credentials before it became mandatory for high school students.

She was born in Meridian, Miss. and grew up in Bellamy, Ala. She moved to Grove Hill in her junior year of high school. A graduate of Clarke County High School, she attended college later in life, at age 31, as she and husband Mike Larrimore were raising six kids. “I wasn't your average student,” she said.

She earned a Bachelor's of Science Degree from the University of West Alabama and a Master's Degree from Auburn University. She also has an Associate Degree from Alabama Southern Community College.

The joy of teaching comes when her students have that “ah-ha moment” when they solve a problem. “And my students have taught me, especially with media equipment,” Larrimore said. “They will figure out something and come show me.”

She is constantly amazed at how quickly students can master the new technology. When it comes to problems with new gadgets, “I couldn't have paid somebody to do what those kids did.

“...They have shown me so much,” she said. “They teach me too. It's not a one-way street; it's two ways.”