

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Hoekstra named SC PLT Outstanding Educator of the Year

COLUMBIA — Dr. Lynn Hoekstra of Columbia has been named the 2019 South Carolina Project Learning Tree Jerry L. Shrum Outstanding Educator of the Year. She was selected by the South Carolina PLT Steering Committee in May.

Hoekstra is a professor of education and Teacher Education Program Director at Columbia International University, where she has included PLT Early Childhood curriculum training in her syllabus for the past four years.

In 2018, she became certified as a PLT, Project WET, and Project WILD facilitator, and since then, she has co-facilitated two pre-K-8 curriculum workshops for pre-service educators at Columbia College and an early childhood PLT workshop at CIU for pre-service teachers and local child development center staff members. In a short time, Lynn has already introduced dozens of future teachers and thousands of future students to the quality environmental education provided in the PLT curriculum.

Lynn was born and raised on her family's farm in Illinois, where she first learned to treat the land with respect. As a middle school teacher in Michigan, Lynn developed an appreciation for the habitat and landscape of the Lake Michigan dunes while leading student field experiences. This contributed to the development of Lynn's personal feeling of responsibility toward the environment and a desire to protect the resources of our planet.

Living in southern California for a time helped Lynn become more aware of our need to conserve water and green space. Because of these formative experiences, Lynn is committed to helping students, teachers, and teachers-in-training learn more about the natural world and appreciate the importance of being good stewards of our earth.

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Project Learning Tree is a nationwide, award-winning environmental education program that supplements curricula used by teachers, parents, and community leaders for students from preschool to 12th grade. A program of the Sustainable Forestry Initiative, PLT uses trees and forests as windows on the world to advance environmental literacy and promote stewardship to students while fostering professional development among the educators who use it. In South Carolina, PLT is sponsored by the Forestry Association of South Carolina's SC Forestry Foundation, the SC Forestry Commission and the State Department of Education.



Dr. Lynn Hoekstra