

Florida Virtual School Sweeps the USDLA Awards in All Pre- K-12 Categories

FLVS Executive Director, Julie Young inducted into the USDLA Hall of Fame

Orlando, FL (4/30/03) - Florida Virtual School (FLVS) and two of its staff were recognized today by the United States Distance Learning Association (USDLA) for excellence in programming and teaching, and for individual accomplishment in the field of distance learning. Additionally, Julie Young, founder and executive director of FLVS, was inducted into the USDLA Hall of Fame as a "visionary leader" for her pioneering work in distance learning on the pre K-12 level. The announcements were made at USDLA's annual awards ceremony held today (4/30/03) in Washington, D.C.

Individual awards went to Bruce Friend, FLVS' Chief Academic Officer, for Most Outstanding Achievement by an Individual; Mary Mitchell, developer and teacher of FLVS' online biology course for Excellence in Distance Learning Teaching; and to Florida Virtual School for Excellence in Distance Learning Programming. This is the third time within four consecutive years that FLVS has been recognized by the USDLA for its quality of service and commitment to the distance learning field.

Florida Education Commissioner Jim Horne congratulated the award recipients. "I commend the Florida Virtual School, Julie Young, Bruce Friend, and Mary Mitchell for their accomplishments in distance learning. Their efforts and commitment have allowed Florida's children to be on the cutting-edge of education," said Horne.

In announcing Julie Young's induction into its Hall of Fame, the USDLA wrote, "Julie Young is a visionary leader who took a program from an enrollment of 250 in 11 courses to 12,000 enrollments in 65 courses in a few short years. She guides and advises schools and organizations across the globe on the resources of distance learning, working with many organizations and state and federal departments of education."

Regarding Florida Virtual School, the USDLA wrote, "FLVS is a leader in education and the world of distance learning. Florida Virtual School has changed the way that teachers interact with students. Through their online courses, threaded discussions, synchronous chats, conference calls and even group projects, interaction and communication is the most important ingredient in keeping learners engaged."

In recognizing Bruce Friend, the USDLA wrote that he "fosters the vision and manages the day-to-day operations of a state-of-the-art online school that has become an industry leader. Bruce is a national leader in distance education and is sought out for his counsel, skill and wisdom as a regular trainer, speaker and consultant."

Regarding the contributions of Mary Mitchell, the USDLA said, "Ms. Mitchell developed and teaches the student-centered, standards based, and highly acclaimed online Biology course for FLVS. It is a dynamic interactive, real-world learning environment that gives choices to students and requires that students take ownership of the learning process."

For the complete text of the awards announcement, photographs and biographies of the award winners, contact Heidi Hollowell at: (407) 513-3587.

[See pictures from the awards ceremony and read what usdla.org has to say](#)