

Richard L. Cooley-Chester Huff
Distinguished Social Studies
Award

Grand Valley State University's History Department and The Grand Rapids Public Schools awards the Richard L. Cooley-Chester Huff Distinguished Social Studies Award to up to the three most qualified social studies or history majors. Working with the GVSU College of Education Student Information and Service Center, the winners will be placed in the Grand Rapids Public Schools with master teachers for their teacher assisting and/or student teaching.

Dr. Richard Cooley began his teaching career in 1973 in Upstate New York where he taught 7th Grade U.S. and New York State History and Geography. In 1977 he moved his family to Kansas where he taught U.S. and World History, World Geography and Government until 2001. During his time in Kansas he was named "Master Teacher" for his school district and nominated three times for the "Kansas Teacher of the Year" award. While teaching he completed an M.A. in History from Wichita State University, and largely completed his Ed.D. at Kansas State University in 2002 when he joined the History faculty at Grand Valley State University 2001. There he taught Social Studies methods courses and observed aspiring teachers during their field placements.

Mr. Chester Huff graduated from the College of Emporia in Emporia, Kansas in 1972 with a Bachelor of Arts degree in History. After two years in the military he earned his teacher certification and BS in Education from Grand Valley State University in 1976. Later earning a Masters Degree in Urban Education and Educational Leadership. Beginning in 1976 until 2015 Mr. Huff was employed with Grand Rapids Public Schools as a Social Studies teacher [25 yrs], coach, and Administrator. He taught throughout the SS curriculum during his teaching career. During his tenure, in his various capacities, Mr. Huff taught, trained, and mentored numerous aspiring student teachers from local colleges and universities in the SS curriculum in particular and the teaching profession in general. Dr. Richard Cooley's and Mr. Chester Huff's careers as Master Teachers and scholars provide examples our awardees hope to exemplify.

The competitive awards are based on a process that includes a formal application and interviews conducted by members of the history department at GVSU, and (when possible) a representative of the Grand Rapids Public Schools. The award winners are placed exclusively with master teachers in secondary education. The winners will receive three professional development sessions, as well as close supervision from GVSU faculty with whom they will discuss and gauge their professional development.

Upon successful completion of their internships, the winners will receive letters of recommendation from the Grand Valley State University faculty member(s) in close supervision, the principal, and a GRPS official.

Application Process:

1. A formal letter of application outlining the student's qualifications for the award.
2. A professional resume/C.V.

3. An unofficial transcript.
4. One artifact showing the student's potential to be an outstanding social studies teacher.

Criteria for Selection:

1. Past performance in college course work.
2. Professional disposition.
3. Potential to become a master teacher in the future.
4. Successful interview.

Award Recipients

2020 Adam Cox and Alexis Vlug

2021 Eric Pinder and Carolyn Corey