

April 21, 1967

To: J. O. Chellevoid  
B. E. Gillam  
O. C. Kreider  
R. Neilson  
V. Price  
S. D. Tuttle

Gentlemen:

I wish to report on the action I have taken with respect to the selection of "an outstanding high school teacher of mathematics". From the individual lists submitted to me by five of you, I obtained an amalgamated list of twenty four people which is enclosed. To each of the principals of these twenty four people, I sent a letter and two forms, samples of which are also enclosed. I am very pleased to report that I received 100 per cent response from the principals. All but five of the teachers had been given the forms to complete. One of the five exceptions was not currently teaching.

In selecting an awardee, I had to lay certain ground work, part of which is indicated by the questions asked of the principals and teachers. For further example, I excluded supervisory people who were not now full time classroom teachers; I also excluded a teacher who had taught only one year. On first reading, I narrowed the list to the candidates which have # after their names. These were not obvious selections. With two exceptions, all of the people have very outstanding qualifications.

From the responses, it was apparent that most of the people fell into one of two categories: A - teachers nearing retirement that had served mathematics well for nearly forty years, and B - younger people that were already beginning to prove themselves. It is my opinion that the award should properly go to a person in category B. In fact, if the award had been given for some 15 or 20 years, I am confident that the people in category A would have already received the award and would not now be eligible.

However, one does not casually by pass thirty six years of leadership and imagination. I would have preferred to select a person in each category, and continue to do so for six or seven years in order to delete category A. This not being possible, out of deference to age and respect for long service, I decided on Miss Ethel Cain of Roosevelt High School in Des Moines. Two of you recommended her as # 1, and one of the other teachers included a special letter calling my attention to Miss Cain! The forms she and her principals returned clearly indicate that her career has been exceptional and is one for the younger teachers to imitate.

My recommendations for next year include:

- (1) Organize, develop a methodical process for selecting candidates, preferably coordinating with people making selections in physics, chemistry and biology.
- (2) Have a clearly defined basis for the award. Decide, before seeking candidates, between categories A and B.
- (3) Probably expand the teacher's questionnaires. Limit question 3 to past six years; limit question 5 to past three years. Do not underestimate the value of questions 6 and 7 or similar questions.
- (4) The principal's form was satisfactory; generally, their responses were uniformly glowing, and of minor use for selection. I do not see how to change this.

I invite your comments on this matter. I appreciate very much your prompt responses to my request for names, without which, no award could be given.

Respectfully,

*James L. Cornette*

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