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## Baltimore City College Teacher Mark Miazga Surprised with \$25,000 Milken Educator Award

*Milken Family Foundation Co-Founder Mike Milken, Lt. Governor Anthony G. Brown and State Superintendent of Education Dr. Lillian M. Lowery present “Oscar of Teaching”*

**Baltimore, MD (February 27, 2014)** — During a schoolwide assembly to commend Baltimore City College for being recognized by the Harvard Review as a “school making a difference” and for being named a Best High School in America by Newsweek for five consecutive years, English teacher Mark Miazga received the surprise of a lifetime with the announcement of his selection as a 2013-14 Milken Educator Award (MEA) recipient.

The Award, [www.MilkenEducatorAwards.org](http://www.MilkenEducatorAwards.org), which comes with an unrestricted \$25,000 cash prize, was presented by Milken Family Foundation Co-Founder Mike Milken and Maryland Superintendent of Schools Lillian M. Lowery.

Adding their congratulations to the applause from more than 600 cheering students and colleagues were Lt. Governor Anthony G. Brown and Baltimore City Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake. In a moment’s time, Mark Miazga experienced a fanfare typically reserved for all-star athletes and award-winning entertainers. He will join up to 40 of America’s most outstanding secondary school educators who will receive the honor in 2013-14, and is the only Maryland recipient.

"It's passionate educators like Mark Miazga that make Maryland's schools some of the best in the nation," said Lt. Governor Brown. "By continuing to work together to support our educators and protect critical investments in our schools, we provide the pathway to success for every young Marylander."

State Superintendent Lowery agreed. “Mark is a caring, thoughtful, and inspiring teacher who embodies the best of what Maryland public schools have to offer our students,” she said. “Great classroom teaching is at the heart of everything we do.”

Hailed by *Teacher Magazine* as the “Oscars of Teaching,” what separates this Award from others is that the recipients have no idea that they will be honored. This recognition is not a lifetime achievement award. Recipients are selected in early to mid-career for what they have achieved... and for the promise of what they will accomplish. Encompassed in the recognition is the responsibility for those honored to stretch their professional practices and leadership to even higher levels.

“The idea behind these Awards is that everyone likes to hand out prizes to our heroes,” said Mike Milken. “We give Grammys to musicians, gold medals to Olympians, Nobels to scientists and others. But we give too little recognition to the people with society’s most important job – educators. Nothing assures the success of a

nation more than education; and nothing assures the quality of education more than dedicated classroom teachers instilling a love of learning and sense of wonder in their students.”

“This award represents the extraordinary accomplishments and contributions of Mark Miazga, a teacher we are proud and incredibly fortunate to have here in City Schools,” said City Schools interim CEO Tisha Edwards. “More importantly, it shows our students and parents what they can and should expect of us as we work to prepare them for life success in life. On behalf of the district, and our students in particular, congratulations to Mr. Miazga, and heartfelt thanks for all that you do for our kids.”

Mark Miazga’s English classroom has been described as a place where “students come to understand what being smart and thinking for oneself is about.” Miazga, in his 13<sup>th</sup> year of teaching at Baltimore City College, a college prep high school made up largely of minority students, goes above and beyond to cultivate meaningful relationships with his kids. Lessons challenge students to think beneath the surface meaning in texts and conduct high-level discussions. He gives specific feedback on students’ writing, with room to revise.

A believer in the power of independent reading, Miazga created a free-books library in his classroom that he replenishes by frequenting a local charity. To make sure students benefit from their reading, he devises a quiz for each book. A National Board Certified Teacher, Miazga takes a special interest in kids who have low skills or are underperforming and, as varsity baseball coach, he also works to help all players succeed academically. In addition to his other roles, including English I chair and Outward Bound coordinator, Miazga’s Drama I freshmen staged a successful production of “Death of a Salesman”; he even prepared them to rehearse on their own when he was away coaching baseball games. Last year Miazga and his English I class were featured in the documentary “Experiencing Shakespeare,” produced by the Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington, D.C.

His instructional practices, including seminars, debates and writing workshops, provide students with the skills needed to pass difficult assessments such as the International Baccalaureate English A1 exams. Results have been stellar: In 2010-11, all 55 students who took the IB English exam passed, with three scoring a perfect 7 and an average score of 4.8; the world average is about 4.7. Over Miazga’s three years of teaching IB English IV, 94.5% of his students have received a score of 4 or above.

Miazga’s leadership extends beyond the classroom and stage as he mentors new teachers and shares literacy developments with colleagues. He writes curriculum for the district and has been a presenter at the National Council of Teachers of English conferences. He is a recipient of grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities, including one last summer at the John Steinbeck Institute in Monterey, Calif. In his multifaceted ability to spark a lifelong love of literature and learning, Mark Miazga is a role model.

The Milken Educator Awards story doesn’t end with his surprise notification. New recipients are invited to join the Milken Educator Network, a group of distinguished educators coast-to-coast whose expertise serves as a valuable resource to fellow educators, legislators, school boards and others shaping the future of education.

“Milken Educators point to the Award as a pivotal professional milestone,” said Dr. Jane Foley, senior vice president of the Milken Educator Awards and a 1994 Milken Educator recipient from Indiana.

Since first presented to a dozen California teachers, the program has grown to become the nation’s preeminent teacher recognition program having honored nearly 2,600 K-12 teachers, principals and specialists. More than \$136 million in funding, including over \$64 million in individual \$25,000 awards, has been devoted to the overall program, which includes powerful professional development opportunities throughout recipients’ careers. From local to state to national and even international levels, the exponential impact of Milken Educators strengthens American K-12 education.

Alternating yearly between elementary and secondary educators, the Awards are sourced through each participating state department of education, which appoints an independent blue ribbon committee to confidentially review candidates for recommendation to the Foundation.

### **Award Criteria:**

Candidates for the Milken Educator Awards are selected on the basis of the following criteria:

- Exceptional educational talent as evidenced by effective instructional practices and student learning results in the classroom and school;
- Exemplary educational accomplishments beyond the classroom that provide models of excellence for the profession;
- Individuals whose contributions to education are largely unheralded yet worthy of the spotlight;
- Early- to mid-career educators who offer strong long-range potential for professional and policy leadership; and
- Engaging and inspiring presence that motivates and impacts students, colleagues and the community.

### **For More Information:**

Milken Educator Awards Website: [www.MilkenEducatorAwards.org](http://www.MilkenEducatorAwards.org)

Mike Milken Website: [www.mikemilken.com](http://www.mikemilken.com)

Maryland State Department of Education Website: <http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/>

Baltimore City Public Schools Website: <http://www.baltimorecityschools.org/>

Milken Family Foundation Website: [www.mff.org](http://www.mff.org)

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