

## Mary Kent Whitaker is Watauga Teacher of the Year

Written by Steve Frank  
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It has been an interesting year for Watauga High teacher Mary Kent Whitaker, the 30-year veteran English teacher named teacher of the year for the Watauga County Schools. In a surprise visit early today, Superintendent Dr. David Fonseca and an entourage of family and well-wishers converged on the classroom and presented Whitaker with the designation—her second time for the honor. Whitaker was challenged in her use of *The House of the Spirits* in her sophomore English class in what turned out to be a nationally publicized controversy. The use of the book was allowed in a split vote of the Watauga Board of Education and was returned to her curriculum. It was the second time Mary Kent Whitaker was honored as Teacher of the Year at both the High School and school system.