

Special Education

Dear Friends and Colleagues:

We are pleased to announce the selection of [Dr. Richard Whelan](#) as the 2008 recipient of the University of Kansas (KU) Department of Special Education Field Leadership Award. This annual award recognizes leaders who have had a lasting impact on the field of special education through their contributions as researchers, educators, policy makers, and advocates. In recent years, we have honored Drs. Lou Danielson, Jane West, Dick Schiefelbusch, and Mr. Stan Love. Dick Whelan is a highly-deserved candidate for this honor. For more than 50 years, Dick's visionary leadership, creativity, good humor, and tireless efforts have influenced the lives and educational opportunities of countless children and adults with disabilities. As a scholar, mentor, innovator, and administrator, he contributed to the professional development of hundreds of doctoral students and thousands of teachers and school administrators.

Please join us as we honor Dr. Whelan at the annual KU reception at the Council for Exceptional Children meeting in Boston, Mass., on April 4th; [link here](#) or view the attached invitation for additional [KU reception details](#). A reception also will be held on the Lawrence KU campus on May 2nd at 3:00 p.m. on the Joseph R Pearson Hall patio.

Dr. Whelan is a University of Kansas Distinguished Professor Emeritus. During his special education career, spanning more than 50 years, Dr. Whelan has served as KU faculty colleague, department chair, and dean of education. Early in his career, his innovative research related to emotional disabilities, personnel preparation, doctoral education, and service delivery helped shape public thinking at both state and national levels. He has authored or co-authored more than 100 publications in the areas of emotional and behavioral disabilities, leadership development, and program administration.

KU Special Education colleagues Ed Meyen and Don Deshler praised Dr. Whelan's selection for the Department's Field Leadership Award: "When one thinks of leadership roles, few people in our profession have impacted the field of special education as has Dick Whelan," said Ed Meyen. "Even in retirement he continues to serve the field. He is a superb choice." Deshler agreed: "Dick Whelan is an inspiration to all who work with him. He is a man of vision and great integrity."

A book of letters will be presented to Dr. Whelan at the KU reception in May. We encourage you to submit a letter, note, or card for inclusion in this gift. Please email or send your message to: Kelly Scott, University of Kansas, Department of Special Education, 521 JRP, 1122 W. Campus Rd., Lawrence, KS 66045-3101 (specialeduadm@ku.edu; 785/864-0556).

Best regards,

Chriss Walther-Thomas, Ph.D.
Chair and Professor
KU Department of Special Education