



NEWS RELEASE

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Outstanding High School Counselor Honored with 2006 Arthur Marmaduke Award

RANCHO CORDOVA, CA — The California Student Aid Commission and EDFUND, its student loan auxiliary, announce today that Robin Sroka of Woodrow Wilson Classical High School in Long Beach, California is the recipient of the distinguished 2006-07 Arthur Marmaduke High School Counselor Award. Established by the Commission/EDFUND in 1985, this annual award goes to an outstanding California high school counselor who demonstrates commitment and skill in motivating and helping an exceptional number of graduating high school seniors to receive financial aid for education beyond high school. Sroka, long recognized locally for her extensive and outstanding financial aid counseling practices, was selected from an exceptional field of candidates. She will be honored tonight at Woodrow Wilson Classical High School's spring award night.

Having provided over 20 years of counseling services to students, Sroka is credited with Woodrow Wilson Classical High students earning over \$3 million during 2006 in college scholarships and financial aid to use at universities all over the country. This amount of aid goes to students with backgrounds from virtually every socio-economic group and family situation—students who are traditionally under-represented with low income backgrounds; those from broken families; second language learners; those with cultural barriers unique to the demographics of the school; those from middle class homes just missing the financial need levels for financial aid; and, those with especially challenging individual circumstances.

In addition to millions in financial aid dollars for her students, Sroka's efforts in extending the Career Explorer Workshops, the Long Beach Unified School District's online career information system, to 2,000 Wilson Classical High School students earned the school a \$10,000 cash prize from Perkins funding. The prize allowed the school to purchase additional equipment for the school's Technical Education programs, and the effort acquainted many of the district's instructors and administrators with this career resource, enabling them to integrate career information concepts into their regular instructional activities.

"It is with heartfelt congratulations that the Commission applauds the remarkable contributions of Robin Sroka to the students and families of Woodrow Wilson Classical High School. Ms. Sroka is truly a crusader in making students' dreams a reality," said Diana Fuentes-Michel, executive director

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of the California Student Aid Commission. "With this award, the Commission recognizes the day-by-day, dedicated hard work of California high school counselors as they strive to assist students in reaching their academic and career goals."

Throughout her counseling career, Ms. Sroka's simple philosophy has prevailed: "There are no barriers to attaining your goals." She lives this philosophy treating all students equally and with respect as she helps them create a step-by-step plan to achieve their goals. Planning begins in the 9th grade when Sroka offers each entering student an orientation class on the High School's College/Career Center. She works with more than 75 percent of all the juniors and 50 percent of all 10th grade students. Most students, out of a total student body of 4,204 students, will have worked with Sroka at least three times before their graduation.

In 2007, as a result of Sroka's non-stop daytime, nighttime and Saturday time commitment to students, Wilson High submitted more than 700 Cal Grant applications to the Commission. Over the past five years, 877 Wilson High students have qualified for a Cal Grant and many, many more have benefited from other scholarships, Federal aid and other programs. Sroka works with over 40 community agencies to help accomplish this feat.

"High school counselors are a vital link in encouraging students and helping them navigate various financial aid programs for college," said EDFUND President Sam Kipp. "We're delighted to congratulate Robin Sroka on her outstanding activities that provide financial aid education to Woodrow Wilson Classical High's students and families."

As an advocate for her students, she spoke last year with local and regional scholarship committees to plead with these organizations to amend their eligibility requirements to include undocumented students who have limited access to financial aid. Due to Sroka's efforts, two students received \$1,000 each and were able to attend local community colleges.

"I have never worked with any one who knows more or does more in assisting students through the financial and college admissions process," said Lew Kerns, principal of Woodrow Wilson Classical High School. "Robin Sroka goes so far beyond the call of duty to ensure the future success of every student on this campus."

Arthur Marmaduke served as the executive director of the Commission for 25 years. This award is made in honor of his dedication and commitment to helping students gain access to postsecondary education through the Commission's many grant, scholarship and loan programs. Robin Sroka was presented with a commemorative plaque and a \$1,500 monetary award at tonight's award ceremony. Visit csac.ca.gov and edfund.org for information on programs and services available through the Commission and its auxiliary, EDFUND.

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The California Student Aid Commission is the state's principal provider of intersegmental statewide grant aid to postsecondary students. Founded in 1955 as the California State Scholarship Commission, the Commission's primary programmatic responsibilities include operation of the Cal Grant program, which is distributing about \$900 million to California's college students during the 2006-2007 school year, administration of California's Chafee Grant Program, and several targeted state scholarship and loan forgiveness programs. Headquartered in Rancho Cordova, California, the 15-member Commission oversees the activities of its nonprofit student loan services auxiliary, EDFUND.

EDFUND, a nonprofit public benefit corporation, is the nation's second largest provider of student loan guarantee services under the Federal Family Education Loan Program. EDFUND offers students a wide range of financial aid and debt management information while supporting schools with advanced loan processing solutions and default prevention techniques. Operating as an auxiliary corporation of the California Student Aid Commission, EDFUND processes more than \$7.8 billion in student loans annually (including consolidation loans) and manages a portfolio of outstanding loans valued at \$26 billion. EDFUND is headquartered in Rancho Cordova, California with regional offices located throughout the nation.

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