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U.S. Professors of the Year Program
CASE
1307 New York Avenue, NW, Suite 1000
Washington, DC 20005-4701

Dear U.S. Professors of the Year Program Selection Committee:

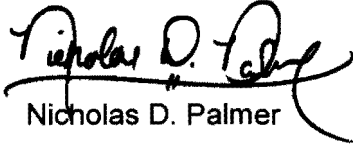
I write this letter in support of Dr. Tracey McKenzie's nomination as U.S. Professor of the Year. As a 2003 graduate of Collin College, I went on to earn a Bachelor of Science degree, *magna cum laude*, from the University of North Texas. I left North Texas with the honor of being named outstanding student of the year in my department. After earning my undergraduate degree, I obtained my Juris Doctorate from Pennsylvania State University's Dickinson School of Law. Upon the completion of my law school career, I published an article on international and constitutional law and earned membership in my law school's Woolsack Honor Society and the National Order of Barristers. Presently, I work as a judicial law clerk for a United States District Judge. I inform you of these details because I owe these accomplishments, in large part, to my time as a student in Professor McKenzie's classroom.

As an educator, Professor McKenzie delivers a *true* education. By this I mean she does more than teach dry facts from a textbook. Rather, she engages her students, leading them to a deeper understanding of the relevant subject matter as opposed to endorsing rote memorization. Through innovative and creative assignments, Professor McKenzie encourages her students to question what they know about the world, not so they will view the world as she does, but so they may build an understanding from their own perspective. As a lawyer and academic, this perspective and inquisitive nature, inspired from her example, has proven invaluable.

I was first introduced to Professor McKenzie in one of Collin College's Learning Community courses. In that course, which focused on the history and evolution of contemporary social issues, we studied the fields of history, government, and sociology. The latter of these disciplines was Professor McKenzie's specialty. She and her learning community colleagues effortlessly intertwined their disciplines, displaying how the issues discussed in the classroom shape our daily world. Indeed, that course is a testament to Professor McKenzie's ability as an educator. Throughout the course, she moderated discussions on controversial issues such as race, sex, poverty, abortion, same-sex relationships, and violence in modern society. A third party witness would have been able to observe many of the students transform from reflexive, overly emotional youths into thoughtful, rational individuals, regardless of their ultimate conviction about the underlying issues. It was this experience, along with the transformation I witnessed within myself, which led me to enroll in every course offered by Professor McKenzie. Ultimately, after studying under her tutelage for three academic semesters, I was inspired to minor in her field of expertise – sociology.

Professor McKenzie is more than an educator; she is an inspiration. One of my ultimate career goals is to, myself, one day become a professor. Should I be fortunate enough to achieve that aspiration, I know that if I impact one student's life to the extent Professor McKenzie impacted mine (and certainly many others), my career will be deemed a success. Upon leaving Collin College and looking towards law school, I knew that Professor McKenzie had prepared me to succeed not only in law, but in life. I can think of none other more deserving of this honor.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nicholas D. Palmer". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Nicholas D. Palmer

Collin College 2003 Alum