

NW principals among top 1 percent

By JEAN BIHN
STAFF WRITER

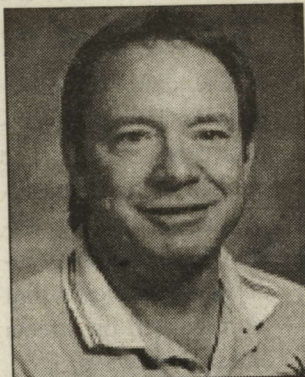
The top 1 percent of principals in the state – at least according to one organization – includes three principals from the Northwest Valley.

AZ LEADS³, a coalition of education and business leaders, inducted 17 school leaders into its Circle of Honor earlier this week.

Administrators from three Glendale schools, an elementary school, high school and charter school, were chosen, illustrative of the group's goal to support principals in all school settings in their efforts to improve student achievement.

State Superintendent Tom Horne initiated AZ LEADS³, which stands for Arizona Leaders in Education for the Advancement and Development of Student and School Success. The "3" signifies three areas of concentration: students, schools, and success.

The organization plans to collaborate on training and support for pre-school

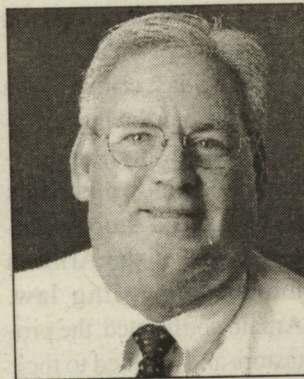


State education officials last week announced Randy Coen, principal of Desert Sage Elementary School in the Deer Valley Unified School District, as one of 17 members of the first AZ LEADS³ Circle of Honor.

through high school education leaders to create school environments that promote high achievement.

Randy Coen, principal of Desert Sage Elementary School; Mark Matheson, principal of Ironwood High School; and Greg Miller, co-founder and principal of Challenge Charter School, were recognized at the Arizona Business Education Coalition conference in Scottsdale.

Coen, 51, has been in administration at Desert



Among 17 principals inducted into the Circle of Honor by state education officials last week are three Northwest Valley administrators, including Ironwood High School Principal Mark Matheson.

Sage for 14 years, the last 11 as principal. He said with so much emphasis today on accountability and test scores, it is easy to lose sight that schools are in the

"people business."

Still, he refused to take credit for student success.

"This isn't about one person, it is about relationships you build with the community and your people," he said.

Matheson, who has been principal at Ironwood for six years, also acknowledged his induction in the Circle of Honor would not have happened without his quality staff.

"It's about hiring great people who become great teachers," the 52-year-old said. "That's what you have to do in this business to be successful. It doesn't matter who gets the credit

MORE CIRCLE ON A10

CIRCLE: Must show academic progress, From A7

as long as things get done."

Greg Miller, 59, left a successful career in an international engineering firm to establish Challenge Charter School with his wife, Pamela, in 1996.

Miller said many things play into effective leadership.

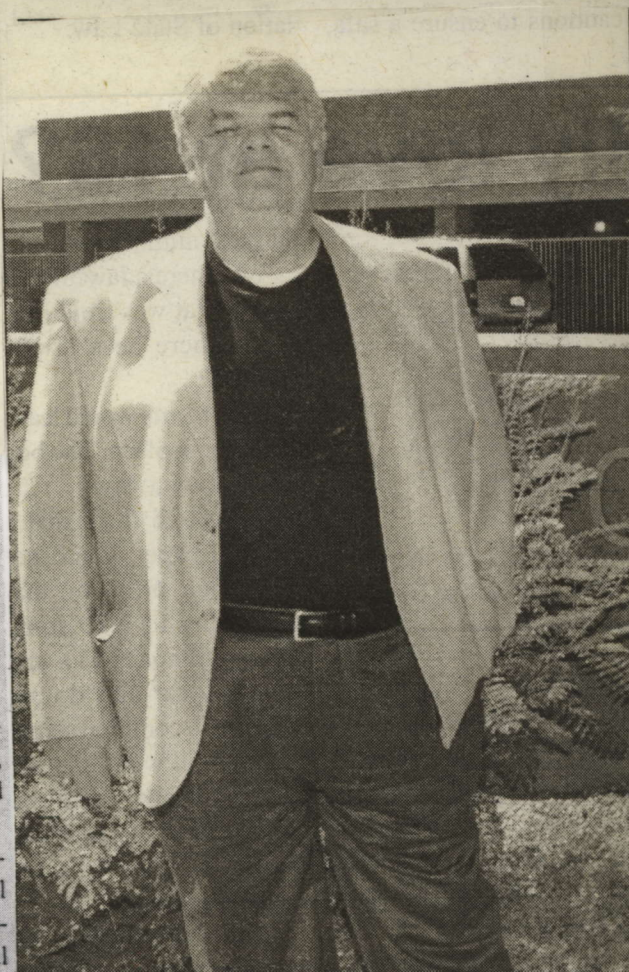
"First of all, set high expectations and provide the support and resources to ensure realization of goals, and continue to motivate," he said.

That motivation can include pats on the back, public recognition or money – or a

ber of the coalition. Candidates must have served at their school for three or more years and were nominated by their superintendents, Garcia-Dugan said. Additionally, candidates' schools must have shown substantial academic progress.

"The committee went through and narrowed it down, and then visited the schools, interviewing community members and teachers," she said.

If officials from AZ LEADS³ are successful, even more Arizona principals will soon be displaying the same skills demonstrated by the members of the initial



principals from the Northwest Valley.

AZ LEADS³, a coalition of education and business leaders, inducted 17 school leaders into its Circle of Honor earlier this week.

Administrators from three Glendale schools, an elementary school, high school and charter school, were chosen, illustrative of the group's goal to support principals in all school settings in their efforts to improve student achievement.

State Superintendent Tom Horne initiated AZ LEADS³, which stands for Arizona Leaders in Education for the Advancement and Development of Student and School Success. The "3" signifies three areas of concentration: students, schools, and success.

The organization plans to collaborate on training and support for pre-school



State education officials last week announced Randy Coen, principal of Desert Sage Elementary School in the Deer Valley Unified School District, as one of 17 members of the first AZ LEADS³ Circle of Honor.

through high school education leaders to create school environments that promote high achievement.

Randy Coen, principal of Desert Sage Elementary School; Mark Matheson, principal of Ironwood High School; and Greg Miller, co-founder and principal of Challenge Charter School, were recognized at the Arizona Business Education Coalition conference in Scottsdale.

Coen, 51, has been in administration at Desert



Submitted photos
Among 17 principals inducted into the Circle of Honor by state education officials last week are three Northwest Valley administrators, including Ironwood High School Principal Mark Matheson.

Sage for 14 years, the last 11 as principal. He said with so much emphasis today on accountability and test scores, it is easy to lose sight that schools are in the

people," he said.
Matheson, who has been principal at Ironwood for six years, also acknowledged his induction in the Circle of Honor would not have happened without his quality staff.

"It's about hiring great people who become great teachers," the 52-year-old said. "That's what you have to do in this business to be successful. It doesn't matter who gets the credit

MORE CIRCLE ON A10

CIRCLE: Must show academic progress, From A7

as long as things get done."

Greg Miller, 59, left a successful career in an international engineering firm to establish Challenge Charter School with his wife, Pamela, in 1996.

Miller said many things play into effective leadership.

"First of all, set high expectations and provide the support and resources to ensure realization of goals, and continue to motivate," he said.

That motivation can include pats on the back, public recognition or money — or a combination of the three, Miller said, but he did not stop there.

"You have to set an example, be willing to do what you expect others to do," he said.

Arizona Department of Education Assistant Superintendent Margaret Garcia-Dugan, a former Glendale Union High School District administrator, is a mem-

ber of the coalition. Candidates must have served at their school for three or more years and were nominated by their superintendents, Garcia-Dugan said. Additionally, candidates' schools must have shown substantial academic progress.

"The committee went through and narrowed it down, and then visited the schools, interviewing community members and teachers," she said.

If officials from AZ LEADS³ are successful, even more Arizona principals will soon be displaying the same skills demonstrated by the members of the initial Circle of Honor, since the honorees will be expected to share their expertise at leadership conferences.

"We want them to help out in mentoring other leaders who need guidance," Garcia-Dugan said.

Reach the reporter at jbihn@star-times.com or (623) 847-4611.

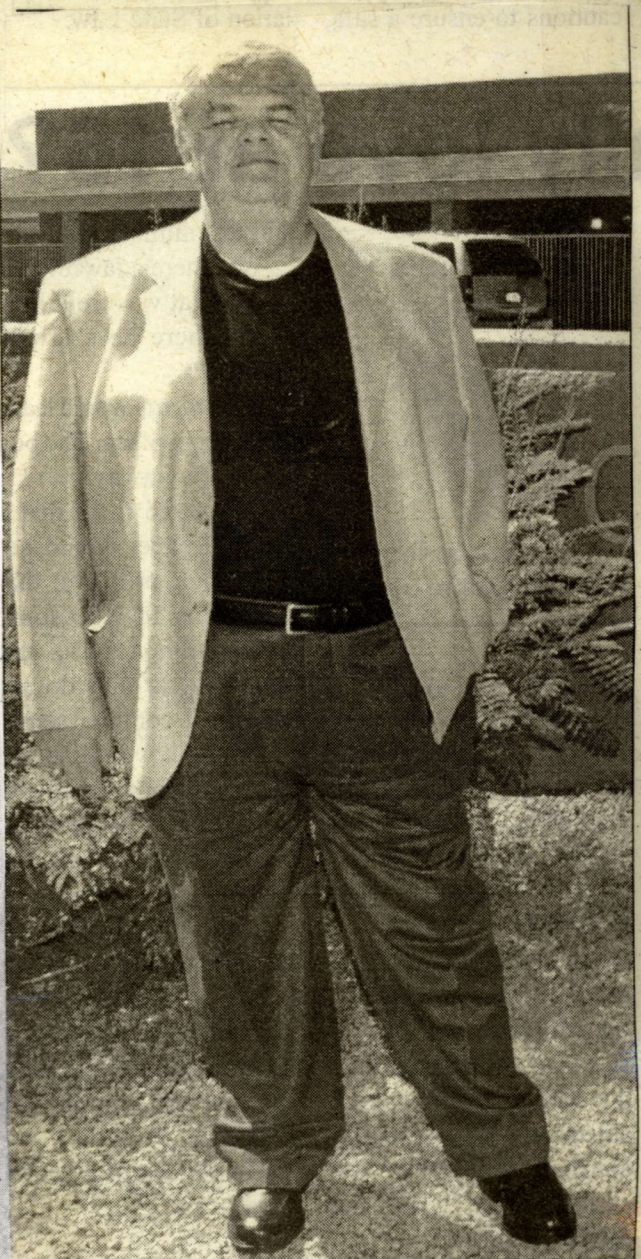


Photo by Jean Bihn

Greg Miller, co-founder and principal of Challenge Charter School, is one of 17 Arizona principals inducted into the inaugural Circle of Honor by a coalition of state education and business officials. The Northwest Valley is home to three of the honorees.