



## 2017 Durstan R. McDonald Teaching Award

### Kay Mijangos

Lifelong educator, Montessori School advocate, dedicated Episcopalian, collaborator extraordinaire, passionate about serving those most in need. Through your willingness to listen patiently for God's call and your courage to embrace that call when it came, you partnered with God and collaborated with others to establish St. Paul's Episcopal Montessori School in San Antonio. You recognized a lifelong dream of building a Montessori School that reflects the beautiful diversity of the kingdom of God.

The seeds of your vocation were sowed early in life when you saw your brother's child, stricken with cerebral palsy, flourishing in a Montessori School. From that moment forward, you pursued a career in teaching at Montessori Schools.

But after the 9/11 attacks on the United States, you realized that something was still missing in your life. You had not completed what you came to earth to do. So, at the pinnacle of your teaching career, without knowing what God's next call might be, you quit your job at a highly successful Montessori School for privileged members of the community.

To help in your discernment about where God might be calling you, you joined a weekly spiritual reflection group for clarifying conversation. After several starts and stops of testing new possibilities, it finally dawned on you that God was calling you to give underprivileged children a Montessori School experience. You later explained that moment of divine revelation, saying that you had caught a vision of God's fast-moving train and jumped aboard. Before you knew it, doors were miraculously opening in every direction.

St. Paul's Episcopal Church had a newly renovated and underutilized education building they offered to the school. A parishioner at St. Paul's stepped forward and donated \$50,000 to apply to scholarships. Several local foundations heard about your project and sought you out to make contributions. A member of your church choir heard about your new passion and volunteered her grant-making expertise to raise more money for the school. A close friend with skills for organization and motivation volunteered to lead your new board. Another board member convinced you that an Episcopal chapel experience was essential for the young students, no matter what their religious background.

St. Paul's Episcopal Montessori School opened in the Fall of 2005 with five students aged three to six and you as their only teacher. In 2008 you established a music program and hired a music teacher. By the time you retired in 2013, the school had 99 students mirroring the broad ethnic and economic diversity of San Antonio. Today, the school has 120 students ranging in age from 18 months to 12 years. From the first day until now, over half the students have received financial aid. Some of your first graduates are now receiving scholarships to attend the finest preparatory schools and colleges in the country. Your vision and mission for God's diverse kingdom to be reflected in the students at a Montessori School has been fulfilled.

For these extraordinary accomplishments, Seminary of the Southwest is honored to present Kay Mijangos with the 2017 Durstan R. McDonald Teaching Award.

The Very Rev. Cynthia Briggs Kittredge  
Dean and President

The Rev. Nathan Jennings  
Faculty Secretary