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WESTWORD

WEB EXCLUSIVES

Torres honored with IDEA award

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Torres

Niles West drafting and architecture teacher Lou Torres was named Illinois Drafting Educators Association (IDEA) Teacher of the Year at a conference Friday, Nov. 9 in Bloomington, Illinois. He was nominated by a parent of a past student and the decision was ultimately made by the IDEA board members.

Torres, who will retire at the end of this year, has taught numerous subjects, including wood shop, engineering, architecture, electronics and drafting. He has taught in District 219 since 1994 and has experience working for various companies in the field of engineering.

Along with being a successful drafting instructor, Torres is an award-winning diving coach. His main focus, though, seems to be preparing engineering students for the real world.

“Our objective should be to prepare students for what is to come. Engineering is difficult, so a lot of students drop out, but most stay in the class because they know what to expect after high school. Many colleges are doing the same thing that we are, so students know that it can only get easier from here,” Torres said.

Torres has won other awards such as Niles West’s Most Inspirational Teacher (on three occasions), Air Force Outstanding Teacher Award in Technology Education in 2001-2002, Diving Coach of the Year in 2001-2002 and the Illinois Industrial Technology Education Association Award in 1999. He was also president of IDEA in 2000.

“Winning awards is always great, but my real satisfaction comes from students who have graduated and come back to visit me. They tell me that they are working for companies now, and that they are doing very well. The point of the engineering courses is sustaining a living. You learn information that you can use for the rest of your life, even if you don’t go into that field,” Torres added.