

Dolly's Story: Chasing Rainbows

“Chasing Rainbows” definitely sums up Dolly’s life story as she went from rags to riches. She was born January 19, 1946 in a one room cabin on the banks of the Little Pigeon River in the Great Smokey Mountains of East Tennessee. She grew up poor-very poor. In fact, her daddy couldn’t afford to pay the doctor for delivering her, so he gave him a sack of cornmeal. Being poor was something Dolly was neither proud of nor ashamed of. Although her young life was rough, growing up with her parents and eleven brothers and sisters in a close-knit home, that while materially lacking, was more than rich in spirit

Dolly’s young life was filled with the inspiration for music that led the fiercely independent, ambitious eighteen-year old, the day after high school graduation, to arrive in Nashville with nothing but her guitar and her dream. Since that day in 1964, she has become one of the most well-known and loved celebrities in the world. Sometimes lost in the glamour of stardom is her enormous talent as a singer, writer, and actress. Undoubtedly, this talent was a gift granted to her the day she was born, a talent she has developed and nurtured through her incredible work ethic.

Dolly endured the ups and down in her life and gives the credit to her faith, which helped her overcome many obstacles. Dolly never strayed far from her roots, and through her humanitarian efforts, has given back a great deal of her “pot of gold” to the community in which she grew up and to boys and girls across the nation.

Dolly's Contributions: “Not A Pot of Gold; A Heart Of Gold”

Dolly says, “The kids call me the ‘Book Lady’ and I think it’s great!” Dolly launched the Imagination Library in 1996 to promote reading among preschool children in Sevier County, a rural community in the Great Smokey Mountains. It generated so much interest, that in 2000 she decided to offer the program nationally. Today, Dolly’s Imagination Library reaches millions of children in thousands of communities in the US, Canada, United Kingdom, and in 46 states and Washington D.C. The books-from life’s little lessons to bedtime stories-are mailed once a month, starting at birth, and continues through sixty selections until the child turns five years old. She has a national literacy board that selects the books and the Imagination Library is managed by her Dollywood Foundation’s Board of Directors.

Dolly's Inspiration

The National State Teachers of the Year Organization was excited to present to Dolly Parton the “Chasing Rainbows” Award on April 5, 2002 at the dedication of the Chasing Rainbows Museum in Dollywood. Dolly has not only captured the rainbow, but the pot of gold at the end as well. But it wasn’t the pot of gold that captured NSTOY’s attention; it was “a heart filled with gold.” Dolly loves children and it is her desire that all children across the nation have books of their very own in their own home, become better readers, and expand their imaginations. Although everyone knows Dolly as a talented singer, songwriter, and actress, this award honors her for her lifelong commitment to improve the lives of children.

Every year NSTOY will honor a special Chasing Rainbows Teacher of the Year who, like Dolly Parton, has overcome great obstacles in his/her life, has captured the rainbow, and is helping children. This distinguished award will be displayed in a permanent place in the Chasing Rainbows Museum with the award winning teacher's name beside Dolly's as a reminder to people to never be afraid to chase their dreams. **The recipient of the award will be treated to a weekend trip to Dollywood to meet Dolly, have their name added to the award and enjoy the beautiful Smokey Mountains.**

It takes two things to make a rainbow: bright shining light and tiny droplets of water. This bright, representing Dolly and the teacher, shining through the tiny droplets of water, which are children, make a beautiful rainbow and lead us to the pot of gold, our future generation!

The Spirit of Dolly's Chasing Rainbow Award

Dolly Parton was the first recipient of the "Chasing Rainbows" award on April 5, 2002. Now NSTOY will recognize annually a Chasing Rainbows Teacher of the Year who epitomizes the "spirit" of this award.

The goals of this award are:

- To bring recognition to the Chasing Rainbows Teachers who overcome obstacles to become an exemplary teacher
- To honor teachers who enhance the teaching profession in the eyes of the public
- To stress empathy and better meet the needs of students
- To increase membership to NSTOY and State Chapter memberships
- To encourage TOY's to become chartered State Chapters
- To challenge chartered State Chapters to become more actively involved

Requirements for Nomination

1. Each state chapter may select one or more nominees
2. The nominee may be nominated by someone else or be self-nominated
3. The nominee may be actively teaching or retired
4. NSTOY member may nominate any teacher who has overcome obstacles and is making a difference in the lives of children.

Application Guidelines

1. Application must be completed in its entirety.
2. Binders, folders, clips, or clear plastic covers are not allowed. Staple the items in the top left corner only.
3. Please include a black and white professional photograph (size may vary from 2X3 to 8X10). This photography will be used for publicity purposes only and will NOT be a consideration during the actual selection process. (photo is optional)
4. Send six completed packets (the original and 5 copies)
5. Five letters of support are required. Include one from each of the following individuals, plus one additional letter from an individual of your choice:
 - a. Student
 - b. Colleague/team member

- c. Parent of a student
- d. Principal or other supervisor
- 6. If retired, use your last year of teaching for reference
- 7. If nominate, send completed nomination form
- 8. The self-portrait should be three double-spaced typewritten or computer generated single-sided sheet of white paper.

Deadlines

July NSTOY Conference-The Chasing Rainbow Awards Kick-off

April 1-Deadline for applications

May 1-Notification of Awardee

Send Application To:

Edna Rogers
904 Lake Smokey Road
Sevierville, TN 37876
(865)774-0777

Nomination Form

This page is to be completed by the person making the nomination.

I officially nominate _____ for Dolly Parton’s “Chasing Rainbows” Award. Indicate in 50 words or less why the nominee should be given the award.

Signature of nominator

Nominator Information

Name

Address

City

State

Zip

Phone

E-mail

Fax

Relationship of nominator to nominee