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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – EMBARGOED UNTIL MAY 12, 2026, AT 4:50 P.M.

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Arkansans for the Arts Names Loni Harshaw 2026 Arkansas Fine Arts Teacher of the Year

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. (April 29, 2026) – Arkansans for the Arts is proud to announce that Loni Harshaw, Fine Arts Chair at Little Rock Southwest High School, has been named the 2026 Arkansas Fine Arts Teacher of the Year. A surprise celebration will take place at Southwest High School on Tuesday, May 12, at 4:50 p.m. in the auditorium.

Now in its third year, the Arkansas Fine Arts Teacher of the Year program recognizes one outstanding full-time fine arts teacher in the state who exemplifies excellence and enriches students' lives through the arts. The award includes a \$1,000 cash prize and a commemorative certificate.

With more than 15 years of experience, Ms. Harshaw has taught students from middle school through college, using innovative, cross-curricular approaches that foster creativity and cultural awareness. Drawing from her international work in Uganda and Zanzibar, she brings global perspectives into her classroom.

As Fine Arts Chair at Southwest High School, she has built a dynamic and inclusive arts program, doubling AP Arts enrollment and expanding opportunities through initiatives like Community Art Nights. She also serves as Secondary Lead for the Artistry in the Rock Exhibition and founded Middle School Portfolio Day.

Harshaw was named Southwest High School Teacher of the Year (2024–2025) and has received grants and recognition from state and national arts organizations. She holds advanced degrees in art education and is an AP Summer Institute Instructor.

She is the first visual arts teacher to receive this award and only the third recipient since its inception in 2024, and will serve as an ambassador for Arkansans for the Arts throughout the year. For more information, visit www.arkansansforthearts.org.