

New Orleans Educator Receives Presidential Award for Mentoring Children

*Southern University at New Orleans Professor and Kumon Instructor, Joe Omojola,
Honored by President Bush*

November 27, 2007 (NEW ORLEANS) - Kumon Math and Reading Center Instructor and College Professor, Joe Omojola, is one of the 11 recipients of the National Science Foundation's Presidential Awards for Excellence in Science, Mathematics and Engineering Mentoring (PAESMEM).

Omojola was recognized by President Bush on November 16, at the White House for his exceptional mentoring efforts that increase the involvement of diverse and underrepresented student groups in the science, technology, engineering and mathematics fields. A presidential commemorative certificate and a \$10,000 grant accompany the Presidential Award, encouraging each recipient to maintain and advance his or her mentoring work. Omojola will use the grant to launch Gateway Entry to Math and Science (GEMS), a hands-on program intended to increase the interest of urban elementary school students in math and science.

"It is an honor to receive this award because mentoring children prepares them to be our future leaders," said Omojola. "This award signifies a ray of hope and triumph of the human spirit in the midst of the ruins caused by Hurricane Katrina."

Omojola received a bachelor of science degree in engineering physics from the University of Ife in Nigeria, a masters degree in nuclear engineering from the University of Wisconsin at Madison, and a Ph.D. in nuclear engineering from the University of Arizona in Tucson.

Since 1998, Omojola has utilized his extensive education background as a proactive and successful professor of math and physics for the Southern University at New Orleans. In 2001, he opened a Kumon Math and Reading Center in Gretna, Louisiana to offer his children and other children in the New Orleans area a structured learning approach that could help them succeed academically and in life.

"Dr. Omojola is not only an excellent Kumon Instructor, but a motivator for children to achieve high goals," said Bridget Bailes. "I have four children in the program, and thanks to Kumon and Dr. Omojola's instruction they are all studying above grade level and consistently receiving high grades in school."

Omojola is a role model to his four daughters and two sons, who take education just as seriously as their father. To further his children's education and ensure that they are confident self-learners, all six of Omojola's children were enrolled in the Kumon program. His eldest has followed in his footsteps as a high school English teacher in New Orleans, two are studying in college at Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge

and University of Louisiana in Lafayette, one is a senior in high school, and the youngest two are in eighth and fifth grade.

Omojola's mentoring work includes campus coordinator for Southern University at New Orleans's (SUNO) Louisiana Alliance for Minority Participation (LAMP), campus coordinator of SUNO's component of the Graduate Alliance for Education in Louisiana (GAELA), and one of two managers for the program for Excellence in Science, Mathematics and Computer Technology (PESMaCT).

About Kumon Math and Reading Centers

Kumon [koo-mŏn] is an after-school math and reading program. Celebrating its 50th anniversary in 2008, the learning method uses a systematic individualized approach that helps children develop a solid command of math and reading skills. Through daily practice and mastery of materials, students increase confidence, improve concentration and develop better study skills. Kumon has 26,000 centers in 44 countries and more than four million students studying worldwide.

About the National Science Foundation

The National Science Foundation (NSF) is an independent federal agency that supports fundamental research and education across all fields of science and engineering, with an annual budget of \$5.92 billion. NSF funds reach all 50 states through grants to over 1,700 universities and institutions. Each year, NSF receives about 42,000 competitive requests for funding, and makes over 10,000 new funding awards. The NSF also awards over \$400 million in professional and service contracts yearly.

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