



PRESS RELEASE

2019 COABE ADULT LEARNER OF THE YEAR

KENNETH LUDOLPH, JR.

February 15, 2019

COABE's mission is to inspire educators so adults succeed and communities thrive. We exist to provide leadership, communication, professional development, and advocacy for adult education and literacy practitioners to advance quality services for all adult learners. One way that we engage in these activities is by spotlighting excellence in the field. The Coalition on Adult Basic Education (COABE) represents the field of 55,000 adult educators and provides a variety of services, including professional development through annual, state-of-the-art national conferences, more than 50 webinars annually, and publication of the *COABE Journal*. COABE also launched an award-winning national public awareness campaign and an advocacy campaign that has mobilized the field to more than 100,000 connections with legislators since inception in April 2017. COABE also highlights excellence in the field of adult education by providing competitive, national-level awards valued at \$10,000 each, special recognition awards valued at \$2,000 each, incentive grants to encourage and promote best practices in the field, and scholarship opportunities, all through special funding provided by The Dollar General Literacy Foundation. It is with great pleasure that COABE announces Kenneth Ludolph as the winner of this year's Adult Learner of the Year Award.

In February of 2018, Kenneth Lee Ludolph, Jr. was transferred from the Oklahoma State Reformatory to an Oklahoma City halfway house. On his first Saturday evening, he heard an announcement for the GED® students to go to class. Although he wasn't yet enrolled, he ran to join the others. Kenneth had been attending a GED® class at his former location and had been disappointed to leave that dream behind when he was transferred. He was excited to learn that he could continue to pursue his goal. It wasn't long before Kenneth secured a job at a restaurant which required him to work evenings and kept him from attending his new class. Upon learning about the situation and Kenneth's high entrance scores, the coordinator offered to tutor him during the day. Their tutoring sessions were limited, but Kenneth spent countless hours independently studying. Two months after running to that first class at the halfway house, Kenneth passed his high school equivalency test and achieved his goal.

With the high school equivalency under his belt, new doors of opportunity began to open. Kenneth attended the learning center's Career Success class where he earned a Certificate of Work Ethic Proficiency. He was honored at the annual OCCC Student Awards ceremony that recognizes the two most outstanding high school equivalency students. Three days after his release from the halfway house Kenneth began college, majoring in automotive technology. In September, Kenneth was honored again as the 2018 Adult Learner of the Year at the Oklahoma Literacy Coalition Conference. By the end of the fall term, Kenneth had completed 20 college credits with a 3.7 GPA—accomplishing this while working 35 hours per week. Kenneth has always stood out as a leader. After experiencing a four-hour trip home from class after his bike had a flat tire, he carried a spare inner tube and gladly shared the tube with a stranger who was experiencing the same calamity. Another time, he purchased parts and repaired a single mom's car. Kenneth hopes to have his own shop where he can continue to serve people in need. Kenneth has the kind of humble and teachable spirit that makes a teacher's job enjoyable. He has proven that perseverance pays off and that faith and hope are available for all who choose to reach out for it. Kenneth chose to leave behind his previous trouble and work toward doing something meaningful with his life. COABE wishes Kenneth all the best as he pursues his dreams!

To learn more about COABE's prestigious award program, go to www.coabe.org or contact awards@coabe.org.