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Bill Gross Contributes \$1.1 Million to the Orange County Teachers of the Year Awards

Donation Adds to the \$3.4 Million Previously Given by Gross

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Bill Gross

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NEWPORT BEACH, Calif., Dec. 31, 2018 /PRNewswire/ -- Philanthropist and asset manager Bill Gross announced a donation of \$1.1 million to the Orange County Teachers of the Year awards, adding to the \$3,387,800 previously donated by Mr. Gross to the preeminent program recognizing excellence in Orange County education.

Sixty-three educators from Orange County school districts and community colleges were honored last month at a special dinner celebration at the Disneyland Hotel coordinated by the Orange County Department of Education. Six 2019 Orange County Teachers of the Year finalists previously announced in May received special recognition at the ceremony.

"As a father and long-time resident of Orange County, I have always admired and respected the role of educators in making a difference in our community," said Mr. Gross, whose son Jeff and his wife Jenny will be overseeing donations to the Teachers of the Year awards going forward. "We are proud to support the important work that our teachers perform in making a difference in young people's lives every day."

Mr. Gross has been a sponsor of the Orange County Teachers of the Year awards since 1992, and has previously donated to other educational institutions including UCLA and UC Irvine, and his alma mater Duke University. Mr. Gross is the chairman of the William, Jeff and Jennifer Gross

Family Foundation. The Foundation's donations are directed by Mr. Gross, his son Jeff and his daughter Jennifer.

"Orange County's teachers encourage, support and equip young learners to be tomorrow's leaders," Orange County Superintendent of Schools Dr. Al Mijares said. "Thanks to Mr. Gross's extraordinary contributions, we are able to proudly recognize those who elevate their profession, enabling young people to believe in themselves while empowering them to make a difference."

Approximately 62 to 64 teachers are honored each year, with six finalists, 10 semifinalists, and up to 48 nominees. Finalists receive an award of \$15,000, while semifinalists receive \$3,000, and nominees \$900. In January, each kindergarten through grade 12 district and Regional Occupational Program (ROP) district in Orange County is invited to submit one to three nominees based on the number of fully credentialed teachers employed, and each community college is invited to submit one nomination from each of their accredited colleges.

In April, the nominee applications are reviewed by a panel of educators, and fifteen semifinalists are selected. In May, K-12 semifinalists are interviewed by a panel of educators and community leaders, and five finalists are announced. One community college finalist is selected through the application reading process. The finalists are considered the Orange County Teachers of the Year. K-12 finalists submit their applications in August to the California Teachers of the Year program, which is coordinated by the California Department of Education.

SOURCE Bill Gross