Mayrand retiring as Director of Regional Science Resource Center

K-12 STEM education champion a leader in science, technology, math and engineering education outreach

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Sandra Mayrand, MBA, founder and director of UMass Medical School’s Regional Science Resource Center (RSRC), has announced her retirement, effective August 30, 2013. An accomplished scientist in her own right, Mayrand made it her life’s mission to encourage children to embrace the joy of science and to broaden their educational opportunities.

As a key architect of UMMS K–12 science education outreach initiatives, Mayrand has promoted science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) education networks throughout the commonwealth. Her involvement began as a mother’s quest in 1989, while she was a senior research assistant at the Worcester Foundation for Biomedical Research. She started volunteering her time and resources at nearby Shrewsbury High School, where her son was a struggling chemistry student.

In 2002 Sandy received the American Society for Cell Biology’s Bruce Alberts Award for Excellence in Science Education. She received this national award in recognition of how her early volunteer K–12 science education activities grew into a major science education initiative, bringing researchers and educators together around the focus of experimental cell biology.

Nearly 2,000 middle and high school students a year have an opportunity to experience authentic science in a real laboratory at the RSRC. Mayrand chaired and grew the Massachusetts State Middle School Science and Engineering Fair from 95 participants in 2001 to 264 participants in 2013; raised $6.7 million for K–12 science and math education over 16 years; developed key partnerships with other Central Massachusetts STEM stakeholders in higher education and business; advanced the Governor’s STEM Plan as director of the Central MA STEM Network; and worked with community agencies including Girls, Inc., the YWCA, the Boys and Girls Club, and the Worcester Educational Development Foundation.

Mayrand’s work has been recognized locally as well as nationally. For her contributions to getting and keeping young women interested in science, the YWCA of Central Massachusetts presented her with its Katharine F. Erskine Award for Medicine and Science in 2003. Her numerous other honors include the Manuel Carballo Governor’s Award for Excellence in Public Service; Citation for Outstanding Performance by the Commonwealth of MA; and the Girl Scouts Women of Distinction Award.

RSRC Science Coordinator Karin Lebeau will assume the position of acting director upon Mayrand’s retirement.

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