



**AWARDS LUNCHEON IS PLANNED
TODAY IN CITY**

Dedication to heritage earns salute



Fort Gibson High School humanities teacher Thrissa A. Johnson shows a student the grave of Sam Houston's wife, Talahina.

PHOTO PROVIDED

BY CARRIE COPPERNOLL

Staff Writer
ccoppernoll@opubco.com

Thrissa A. Johnson

ONLINE

Blog
Read more



wants her students to know Fort Gibson is a pretty exciting place to call a hometown, even if they didn't think so before they entered her classroom.

"Many times, young people have the idea that their particular location is not extraordinary," said Johnson, a humanities teacher at Fort Gibson High School. "In the country and across Oklahoma, we are blessed with extraordinary people who have achieved greatness."

Today, Johnson will be honored with the Indian Territory Award for Excellence in Teaching Oklahoma History, one of seven awards to be presented by the Oklahoma Heritage Association at the non-profit's annual luncheon.

Johnson knows most of her students will go on to careers outside of history, but she said learning about history and culture is about more than dates and textbooks.

Johnson takes her students to historical sites. Some of her students' favorites are the grave of Crawford "Cherokee Bill" Goldsby and Johnson's home, which is on the National Register of Historic Places.

On Halloween, Johnson

education
news on
NewsOK's
Education Station
blog.

[BLOG.NEWSOK.COM/
EDUCATIONSTATION](http://BLOG.NEWSOK.COM/EDUCATIONSTATION)

tells local legends in near darkness in her classroom.

"They love it," she said. "They just love it. But its history I'm telling them – these are not made-up stories."

Johnson invited a ballet teacher to give her students a lesson, and Johnson followed up with stories of great American Indian ballerinas from Oklahoma.

"They know within Oklahoma that these ladies were able to go out in the world and stand among other great ballerinas and have confidence," she said. "They succeeded. They were equal to anyone in the world!"