

THE GILDER LEHRMAN  
INSTITUTE of AMERICAN HISTORY

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**ADDA SANTOS NAMED 2022 MASSACHUSETTS HISTORY TEACHER OF THE YEAR**

**SOMERVILLE, MA (September 12, 2022):** Adda Santos, a history teacher at Somerville High School in Somerville, MA, has been named the 2022 Massachusetts History Teacher of the Year, an award presented annually by the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, the nation's leading organization dedicated to K-12 American history education.

Inaugurated in 2004, the History Teacher of the Year Award highlights the crucial importance of history education by honoring exceptional American history teachers from elementary school through high school. The award honors one K-12 teacher from each state, the District of Columbia, Department of Defense schools, and U.S. Territories.

"Knowledgeable and impassioned teachers bring our country's history to life for students, allowing them to understand engaging with history is about more than a series of facts," said James G. Basker, President of the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History. "Teachers are the lifeblood of our students' education, and these are the best of the best."

Adda Santos has been teaching at Somerville High School for 24 years. She holds a B.A. in History and M.Ed. in Secondary Education from UMass, Boston. She currently teaches American History. Ms. Santos takes an approach to American History that is both unflinching and hopeful. In her words, "American history is filled with stories of incredible resilience in the face of terrible oppression, and I hope these stories inspire and empower students to always fight for what they believe."

In 2020, Ms. Santos was awarded The William Spratt Award for Excellence in Teaching Secondary Social Studies from the Massachusetts Council for the Social Studies. As the advisor to the Somerville High School Local History Club, Adda Santos led the creation of a student-designed and researched exhibit called "[The Basement Project: Not Your Usual Junk](#)." Filled with annotated artifacts found in the basement of The Somerville Museum, the exhibit exemplifies her emphasis on primary sources. For her creation of The Basement Project and for the exhibit, Ms. Santos and The Somerville Museum won The American Association of State and

Local History Leadership in History Award in 2021. Ms. Santos continues her education through summer seminars, workshops, and by reading primary and secondary sources in her main area of interest, African American History. She was born and raised in Brazil and moved to the United States to attend college. Like many of her students, English is not her first language. She hopes her recent achievements send a message to immigrant students that with hard work and perseverance they too can achieve their version of the American Dream.

Former Somerville High School History and Social Studies Department Chair Alicia Kersten, currently co-Interim Principal at SHS, says, “Ms. Santos is a remarkable teacher whose passion for history inspires and empowers her students. Her immense skill and remarkable knack for creating a safe, warm classroom environment allows her wide range of students to thrive and truly connect with history. She is dedicated to the concept of teaching “hard history.” She does not shy away from the difficult topics and is sure to provide the space students need to understand and process their reactions. She reaches students at all levels of readiness and from different backgrounds by centering student voice, and by giving focused, individual feedback and support. Ms. Santos’ approach helps students know the fundamental history that made the United States what it is today, while making sure that students see that they are and can still be part of that history. Adda is absolutely deserving of this award and we are delighted to see her getting the recognition she deserves.”

In addition to a \$1,000 honorarium, Adda Santos receives a core archive of American history books and Gilder Lehrman educational materials, recognition at a local ceremony in her honor, and becomes one of 53 finalists for the 2022 National History Teacher of the Year Award.

The winner of this year’s National History Teacher of the Year Award will be announced in October 2022. Past presenters of the award include the Honorable Sandra Day O’Connor, *Good Morning America’s* Robin Roberts, First Lady Laura Bush, former U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan, and former New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg.

Nominations for the 2023 History Teacher of the Year Awards are now open. Students, parents, colleagues, and supervisors may nominate K-12 teachers for the award by visiting [gilderlehrman.org/nhtoy](http://gilderlehrman.org/nhtoy). The deadline for 2023 nominations is April 30, 2023.

### **About the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History**

The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History was founded in 1994 by Richard Gilder and Lewis E. Lehrman, visionaries and lifelong supporters of American history education. The Institute is the leading nonprofit organization dedicated to K-12 history education while also serving the general public. Its mission is to promote the knowledge and understanding of American history through educational programs and resources.

As a 501(c)(3) nonprofit public charity the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History is

supported through the generosity of individuals, corporations, and foundations. The Institute's programs have been recognized by awards from the White House, the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Organization of American Historians, the Council of Independent Colleges, and the National Daughters of the American Revolution.

### **About Somerville High School**

Somerville High School is a comprehensive high school with over 1300 students in a newly renovated, state-of-the art facility designed to encourage cross-curricular and collaborative work between students and between staff. Students can take Advanced Placement Courses, prepare for a vocational career alongside taking a full academic load, and participate in extensive arts, music, theatre, and athletics extracurricular activities and coursework. Dual enrollment is also available with several local colleges along with intensive career and college guidance support to prepare students for life after high school. Known for its diversity, Somerville High School boast more than 50 home languages spoken by its student body with 56% of students speaking a language other than English as their first language and 15% who are academic English Language Learners. Somerville High School prides itself on meeting the needs of all its students.

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