



## **Alaska Earth Science Teacher of the Year for 2001** *Cheryl Cooper*

It is the privilege of the Alaska Geological Society to present Cheryl Cooper, a Kindergarten and First Grade teacher at the Delta Elementary School, Delta Junction, Alaska, with the Science Teacher of the Year in Alaska award, sponsored by the Pacific Section of the American Association of Petroleum Geologists, from a field of candidates that includes teachers from grades K through 12 from all over the state of Alaska.

Cheryl is an exceptional teacher who has developed a curriculum and promotes a philosophy which instills an invaluable scientific attitude of exploration and discovery in children at the beginning of their school education. Part of her classroom is permanently designated as a science lab where the kindergarten and first grade students don lab coats and explore and investigate. They learn to observe, describe, record, classify, and graph attributes of the rocks they collect and share. They learn to break their observations into categories, organize their data, look for patterns, and draw conclusions – fundamental scientific procedures. Cheryl cultivates, reinforces, and launches their curiosity and desire to learn about the world of nature and natural resources at an early stage of their educational development, which is likely to have a profound influence on the future attitudes and endeavors of these students. Cheryl's enthusiasm, energy, and leadership are also inspirational to fellow teachers in her school system, and in neighboring remote parts of Alaska. We truly admire Cheryl's dedication and commitment to follow through with scientific concepts in and beyond her classroom with every student, their parents, and other teachers.