

# TODAY'S LOCAL NEWS

## People Magazine honors Central Middle

### School's CIS Virtual Office gets nearly \$10,000

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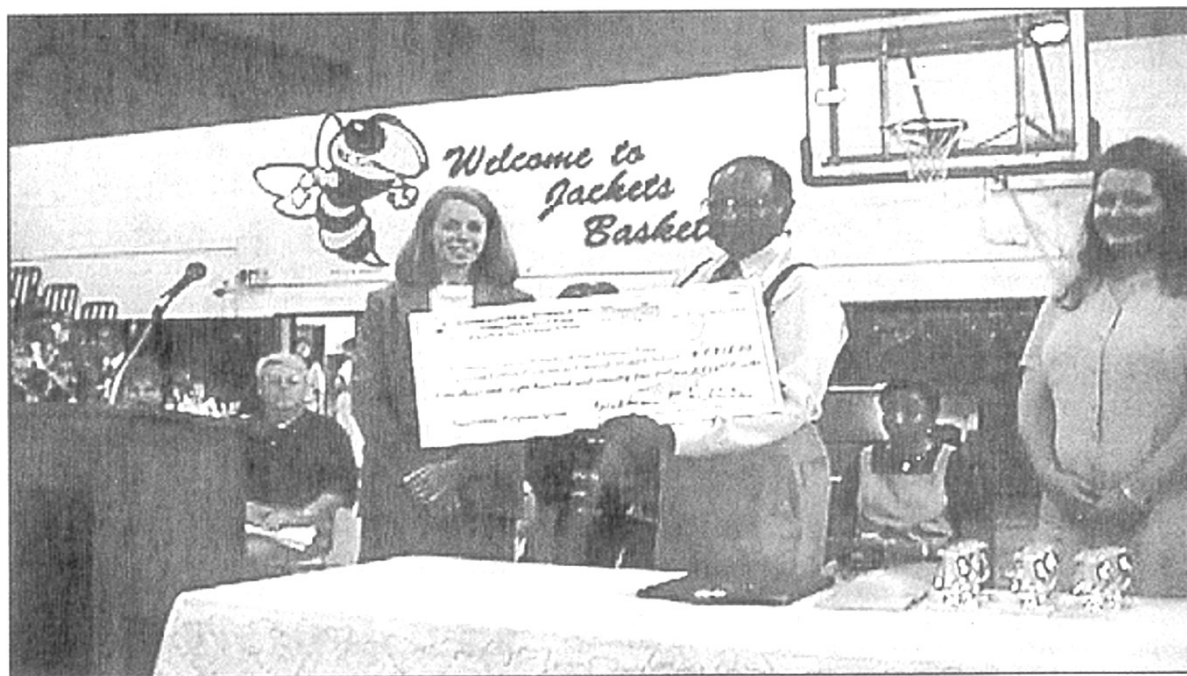
THOMASVILLE — Central Middle School held its School Wide Honors Program Friday morning to recognize those who have excelled.

Entertainment was provided by the CMS Chorus while Principal Earl Williams, with the help of Assistant Principal Van Cowart and teachers, presented awards to the outstanding students.

"These students are deserving of our respect," Williams said.

In a tear-filled moment, he then recognized seventh-grader Latasha Moody for exemplifying the true spirit of the school. With the audience on its feet in a standing ovation, Moody was presented with the Hustle and Harmony Award.

Also during the celebration, the CMS Communities In Schools (CIS) Virtual Office received \$9,875 from People Magazine for its innovative and cre-



Submitted photo

**GETTING AN AWARD:** Communities In Schools Vice President Louise E. Reaves presents Thomas County Central Middle School with a check for \$9,875 from People Magazine. Accepting the award are Principal Earl Williams and CMS Director of CIS Leslie Gonzalez.

ative program for youths. There were 92 schools nationwide that applied for the grant. Out of the 21 approved, only two were in the state of Georgia.

The Virtual Office is a real-

world computer lab designed to allow students to set up, install software and work with their own computer station for three school years. Major software packages are used as well as digital cameras, printers and a

LCD projector and screen.

"It is definitely like a business workshop," said CIS Director Leslie Gonzalez, who wrote the grant application with the assistance of her husband, Claude Gonzalez.

"This makes us stand apart from the rest of the country," Williams said. "We have a great, great teacher in Mrs. Gonzalez."

The students will build web pages and produce desktop publishing products for the school system, CIS and the general public at reduced retail prices.

"This will allow us to become self-sustaining, to survive financially," Gonzalez said.

Students will rotate between marketing, production, and accounting teams and receive mentoring in these areas from business leaders.

All earnings will be used to support the business and distribute scholarship lap top computers to graduating eighth-graders.

The award was presented by CIS Vice President and Chief Operating Officer Louise E. Reaves.

"The program was designed around bridging the digital divide," Reaves said. "This gives the students the tools they will need to function in the technical society."

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