

Molly Hudgens

School Counselor and Congressional Medal of Honor Citizen Honor Recipient

<https://www.kirklandproductions.com/molly-hudgens.html>



On September 28, 2016, Molly Hudgens, a school counselor in Pleasant View, Tennessee, averted a school shooting when a fourteen-year-old eighth grader, armed with a semi-automatic handgun and an additional magazine of ammunition, came to her in the counseling department at Sycamore Middle School with a plan to harm people on their campus. He told her, "I think you're the only person who can talk me out of this." After ninety minutes of talking and ultimately praying with the young man on her knees beside him, Hudgens was able to convince the student to relinquish the weapon to her with no shots fired and no lives lost. As a result of her intervention, Hudgens became a 2017 recipient of the Congressional Medal of Honor Society's Citizens Honor for a single act of heroism.

Hudgens is a 1998 and 2000 graduate of Western Kentucky University with a Bachelor of Arts degree in English and Allied Language Arts and a Master of Arts Education degree in counseling. She is currently completing her twenty-fourth year as an educator in the Cheatham County School System where she continues to serve as a school counselor at Sycamore Middle. In addition to her counseling role, Mrs. Hudgens also currently serves on SMS' Crisis Management and Leadership Teams as well as co-sponsoring the Jr. Beta Society at her school.

During her tenure in education, Hudgens has served as the president of the Alpha Chi chapter of Delta Kappa Gamma Society International and is an active member of the Honor Society of Phi Kappa Phi. Hudgens was also the writer of an NFL Play 60 Super School Grant for Sycamore Middle School.

After a personal experience in college, her interest in violence prevention and safety sparked a desire to educate others who work with intervening in the lives of potentially violent teenagers. Her in-depth study on school shootings and the teenagers who commit these acts, "Recognizing Red Flags," written prior to the averted school shooting incident at her school, has been utilized nationally to train professionals in the fields of education, law enforcement, juvenile probation, and juvenile court. The training focuses on understanding the three types of school shooters and how to use threat assessment tools as an intervention to prevent violent acts in a school and community setting.

Hudgens, the 2004-2005 and 2016-2017 Sycamore Middle School and Cheatham County Middle School Teacher of the Year, is also the 2017 recipient of the Tennessee School Counseling Association's Phoebe White Award for Excellence in School Counseling and the 2019 Mental Health of the Midsouth's I.C. Hope Award for bringing mental health awareness to schools.

Hudgens has been the recipient of three state recognitions for heroic actions on September 28, 2016—a Proclamation from the Tennessee House of Representatives in October of 2016, House Resolution No. 66 from the Tennessee House of Representatives in March of 2017, and Senate Resolution No. 40 from the Tennessee State Senate in April of 2017. Mrs. Hudgens has also been a nominee for the Carnegie Hero Fund Commission as well as the American Hero Channel's Red Bandanna Hero Award in 2017.

Hudgens is a member of the Professional Educators of Tennessee, the Tennessee School Counseling Association, and the American School Counseling Association. She is also a treasurer and choir member at Friendship Church. Because she is the first Congressional Medal of Honor Citizens Honor Recipient from Tennessee, her story is exhibited in the Charles H. Coolidge National Medal of Honor Heritage Center in Chattanooga, Tennessee, where she serves as a member of the Advisory Board.

Mrs. Hudgens is the owner of Molly B. Hudgens Communications and is a national motivational speaker as well as a violence prevention specialist. Hudgens' book, *Saving Sycamore: The School Shooting that Never Happened*, published by Dave Burgess Consulting in October of 2020, chronicles the story of Hudgens' life and of the event of 9/28/16. Molly is also a speaker for Safe and Sound Schools through Kirkland Productions.

Molly resides in Ashland City, Tennessee where she lives on her family farm with her husband, Jason, and sons, Bradley and Henry.