

## Past Winners of the NCTE/SLATE Intellectual Freedom Award

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### 2009:

The **Texas Freedom Network**, nominated by the **Texas Council of Teachers of English Language Arts**, is the **2009 NCTE/SLATE National Intellectual Freedom Award winner** for supporting the state's educators and working to be sure their voices are heard. When the Texas State Board of Education in 2008 presented and ultimately adopted a new English language arts curriculum, the Freedom Network supported the Coalition of Reading and English Supervisors of Texas in getting its position out to a wider audience through the media. Throughout the adoption process the Texas Freedom Network honored the expertise of English language arts educators while crafting and delivering the messages, and since the final vote on the curriculum, the Freedom Network has continued to support the work of the teachers and to fight for intellectual freedom in Texas schools by educating reporters and the public. The Texas Freedom Network will also receive the 2009 NCTE/SLATE Affiliate Intellectual Freedom Award.

The **California Association of Teachers of English** recognizes **Bill Younglove** of California State University, Long Beach, as its 2009 NCTE/SLATE Affiliate Intellectual Freedom Award winner for his concentration in his teaching, presentations, and publications on literature of the Holocaust.

The **Colorado Language Arts Society** recognizes **Carrie Faust** of Smoky Hill High School in Aurora as its 2009 NCTE/SLATE Affiliate Intellectual Freedom Award winner. With charisma and courage, Faust, Colorado High School Press Association (CHSPA) President, coaches publications advisers on ways they can convince 43 state legislatures to uphold student freedom of expression rights. CHSPA is the only local organization to take proactive advocacy steps for student press rights, not waiting for censorship issues to escalate.

The **Illinois Association of Teachers of English** recognizes **Becky Anderson Wilkins** of Anderson's Bookshop in Naperville as its 2009 NCTE/SLATE Affiliate Intellectual Freedom Award winner. Wilkins has guided her family's independent bookstore to influence and success. Much of this flows from her unflagging support of diverse and sometimes controversial writers, their books, and their readers, such as (1) when the local high school canceled an appearance by professor William Ayres, Wilkins sponsored a community forum to discuss the First Amendment (well over 100 citizens participated), and (2) when author Sherman Alexie's local reading and speech caused some consternation, Wilkins's support proved crucial for teachers who invited him.

The **Kentucky Council of Teachers of English Language Arts** recognizes **Britney McIntosh and Ed Matthews**, students at the University of Kentucky, as its 2009 NCTE/SLATE Affiliate Intellectual Freedom Award winner. While peacefully documenting the 2008 Republican National Convention for the Kentucky Kernel (UK's newspaper), McIntosh and Edwards were arrested and held for 36 hours by police during sweeping arrests of demonstrators outside the convention. Despite showing their credentials and registration, the photojournalists were also denied access to their camera equipment following their release. In recommending the pair for the national award, KCTE noted, "their arrest and treatment highlighted the need for continued vigilance in protecting the freedoms of speech and the press in contemporary society."

The **Nebraska English Language Arts Council** recognizes **Catherine McMurtry** as its 2009 NCTE/SLATE Affiliate Intellectual Freedom Award winner. McMurtry is one of the most loyal members of the Academic Freedom Coalition of Nebraska. She travels 100 miles round trip monthly to attend its meetings and is the treasurer for the group. In fact, she is the only person to serve as treasurer of the group – and has for over two decades. She is also active in the Nebraska English Language Arts Council and is a voice for both the teacher and student in the classroom.

The **Ohio Council of Teachers of English Language Arts** recognizes **Dean Woodring Blasé**, Clark Montessori, Cincinnati Public Schools, as its 2009 NCTE/SLATE Affiliate Intellectual Freedom Award winner. Blasé is committed to bringing her students the very best literature in the world. She has found that even across the broadest spectrum of her students' abilities, all of her juniors and seniors thrive when reading great literature.

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## 2008:

**Heather Gillman**, a student at Ponce de Leon High School, Ponce de Leon, Florida, is the **2008 NCTE/SLATE National Intellectual Freedom Award winner**. The selection committee applauds her defense of First Amendment rights of students and the stand she took when she contacted the ACLU with her concerns about the intimidation and censorship she was experiencing in her school in regards to discussing gay rights issues or showing expressions of support for gay rights. Heather will also receive the 2008 NCTE/SLATE Affiliate Intellectual Freedom Award from the **Florida Council of Teachers of English**.

**Brandon Hensler, Howard Simon, and Randall Marshall of the American Civil Liberties Union of Florida** were named recipients of the **2008 NCTE/SLATE National Intellectual Freedom honorable mention award**. Their nomination was submitted by the **Florida Council of Teachers of English**: "Hensler, the Director of Communication; Simon, the Executive Director; and Marshall, the Legal Director at the American Civil Liberties Union have all been supporters of Heather Gillman's stand for the First Amendment rights of students at Ponce de Leon High School. Another First Amendment right that they are in the process of defending comes against the Miami-Dade County School Board. In June 2006 a parent in Miami-Dade County complained to the school board about a children's book, *A Visit to Cuba*. The book is intended for grades K-2 as an introduction for beginning readers to basic feature of life in other countries and is part of a series of 24 similar stories. This book does not mention Fidel Castro or the characteristics of a Communist government and therefore the complaint is that it is inaccurate in its representation. Two advisory panels were assembled to direct the board towards a decision and though both recommended that the book remain, the school board voted to remove *A Visit to Cuba* and the other 23 books in the series, though they were not in question. Furthermore, the books were only being questioned at one school but the board decided to remove them from library shelves district-wide. The ACLU stepped in with a lawsuit in 2006 to challenge the removal of these books. The ACLU lawsuit is based on the fact that by removing the books, the school board violated their own procedural rules and the constitutional rights of students. They are suggesting that instead of removing the books, the board should add books with additional perspectives. A U.S. District Court Judge overruled the board and ordered that the books be reinstated in the library; however, the school board voted to appeal the decision just one month later. Responding to the appeal, Hensler of ACLU states, 'Continuing this law suit is a senseless waste of taxpayers' dollars which could be spent educating the children of Miami-Dade County.' He continues by saying that, 'This may be the first case of a book being censored for what it doesn't say.'"

The **New York State English Council** recognizes the **Depew Union Free School District** as its 2008 NCTE/SLATE Affiliate Intellectual Freedom Award winner. **Depew UFSD also received a 2008 NCTE/SLATE National Intellectual Freedom honorable mention award** for its efforts in advancing the cause of intellectual freedom; one instance was described in the award nomination: *Looking for Alaska*, a novel included on the summer reading list for 8th graders of the Depew Union Free School District was questioned by a parent for its content. Consequently, the book was removed from that list on the basis that the content was better suited for an older audience. During the open house for school year 2007-2008, *Looking for Alaska* was shown on the 11th grade syllabi for the English class. A school board member, who was also a parent of an 11th grade student, noticed the book and was upset about its reappearance. Among the upset parents were those who found the book to be offensive because of its language and the common understanding, due to the complaint regarding the 8th graders, was that the

book had been “banned.” This case was brought to the board of education soon after, where the school defended the use of *Looking for Alaska* and it was approved. The review committee was unanimous for reinstatement and the book remains on the list for English 11.

The **Kentucky Council of Teachers of English/Language Arts** recognizes the **Trey Grayson**, Kentucky Secretary of State, as its 2008 NCTE/SLATE Affiliate Intellectual Freedom Award winner. KCTE/LA noted that Trey Grayson “has placed great importance on encouraging young Kentuckians to take part in the electoral process... (he) has placed a great emphasis on civic literacy for students, including constitutional rights, role in democratic government, and good citizenship.”

The **Nebraska English Language Arts Council** recognizes **Jerred Zegelis** as its 2008 NCTE/SLATE Affiliate Intellectual Freedom Award winner. In its award nomination, the affiliate stated that Jerred Zegelis, faculty advisor for the Omaha Benson High School newspaper, very professionally handles the controversy which arose over a series of newspaper articles on the “N word.”

The **Ohio Council of Teachers of English Language Arts** recognizes **Stacey Ciancio**, Hilliard Davidson High School, Hilliard, Ohio, as its 2008 NCTE/SLATE Affiliate Intellectual Freedom Award winner. The award nomination stated that Stacy Ciancio “consistently pushes students to think critically about ethnicity, sexuality, mental illness, and other subcultures in our society. She teaches a multicultural literature class in which she encourages students to look beyond their white privilege. . . . Not fearful of literacy in a world of ‘that’s not on the OGT so I can’t teach it,’ Stacey says, ‘It’s a wonder I’ve never been fired.’”

The **Texas Council of Teachers of English Language Arts** recognizes the state’s **Coalition of English Language Arts and Reading Professionals** (represented by Pat Jacoby, Alana Morris, and Cindy Tyroff) as its 2008 NCTE/SLATE Affiliate Intellectual Freedom Award winner. In its award nomination, the affiliate said, “Without Pat Jacoby, Alana Morris, and Cindy Tyroff, as the Coalition of English Language Arts and Reading Professionals, the SBOE would have adopted a standards document that had been rejected ten years prior. This document emphasized teaching grammar in isolation, paid little, if any, heed to the importance of teaching reading comprehension, and listed titles of readings that have no relevance to the diverse multi-cultural Texas population.”

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## 2007:

**Kimberly Horne** of Austin, Texas, is the **2007 NCTE/SLATE National Intellectual Freedom Award winner**. Kimberly Horne created a Senior English curriculum which included Annie Proulx’s novel *Brokeback Mountain* and successfully defended a challenge to the novel from parents who threatened to pull a \$3 million pledge to the school if the book was not removed from the curriculum. In the words of her nominator, “Kimberly Horne is deserving of the Intellectual Freedom Award because she has resolve. She understands the power of words and is not afraid to ask tough questions and discuss important topics.” Kimberly Horne will also receive the 2007 NCTE/SLATE Affiliate Intellectual Freedom Award, nominated by the **Texas Council of Teachers of English Language Arts**.

The **California Association of Teachers of English (CATE)** recognizes **Dave Eggers** as its **2007 NCTE/SLATE Affiliate Intellectual Freedom Award winner**. Through 826 Valencia in San Francisco Dave Eggers promotes writing workshops for kids. The workshops cover a variety of areas that schools cannot typically include in their curriculum, helping students whose voices are traditionally silent be heard, become articulate, and change the world for the better.

The **Illinois Association of Teachers of English (IATE)** recognizes **Susan Carley** as its **2007 NCTE/SLATE Affiliate Intellectual Freedom Award winner**. Susan Carley has played a key role in

retaining challenged books in her district's curriculum. During the past year, one of District 214's school board members asked for nine books to be removed from the curriculum. Other board members, administrators, teachers, and students joined together to retain the books. Additionally, in the latest school board race, over \$60,000 was raised to keep the incumbent school board that denied the request to remove the books.

The **Indiana Council of Teachers of English (ICTE)** recognizes the **Human Rights Steering Committee at Indiana State University** as its **2007 NCTE/SLATE Affiliate Intellectual Freedom Award winner**. The steering committee has produced and promoted Human Rights Day at Indiana State University which has grown since 2002 from a community program to an international event attracting over 2500 attendees. Dedicated to human rights at many levels, the event focuses on themes such as poverty, minority rights, and freedom of expression. The steering committee comprises community and campus members, some of whom are affiliated with sponsors such as Amnesty International, NAACP, the Social Justice Endowment, the Eugene Debs Foundation, and the Central Labor Council. Activities have included speakers on social justice, theatrical performances (such as "The Exonerated"), the funding and building of a Habitat for Humanity house, and a student art exhibit. Attendees range from middle school students to octogenarians.

The **Kentucky Council of Teachers of English Language Arts (KCTE/LA)** recognizes **Kelli Dean** as its **2007 NCTE/SLATE Affiliate Intellectual Freedom Award winner**. Kelli Dean serves as program coordinator for the Lexington Public Library and is the director of several major programs promoting literacy and self-expression. In addition, she has spearheaded the library's participation in the American Library Association's Banned Books Week and has been one of the leading supporters of controversial Chris Crutcher's works.

The **Nebraska English Language Arts Council (NELAC)** recognizes **Michael Baker** as its **2007 NCTE/SLATE Affiliate Intellectual Freedom Award winner**. Michael Baker, a history teacher, decided to teach history lessons in reverse and was told by the school administration that he could not use this unique approach. The affiliate honors Michael Baker for his professionalism during numerous meetings and much publicity dealing with the question of academic freedom.

The **Ohio Council of Teachers of English Language Arts (OCTELA)** recognizes **Tammy Metcalf** as its **2007 NCTE/SLATE Affiliate Intellectual Freedom Award winner**. Tammy Metcalf came under fire while teaching Nadine Gordimer's *July's People*. The book has been called pornographic by community parents, but Tammy Metcalf has followed all district challenge policies and, because no rationale exists for this text, has written one herself. The case is ongoing at this time and she has sought help from OCTELA and NCTE.

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## 2006:

The **Missouri Association of Teachers of English (MATE)** and NCTE recognize the **Blue Springs Board of Education** as the **2006 NCTE/SLATE National Intellectual Freedom Award winner**. The Blue Springs Board of Education is commended for the following actions amidst media coverage in the *Kansas City Star* and on local television, and much controversy in the community: following its instructional materials reconsideration policy when Lois Lowry's *The Giver* was challenged; accepting the reconsideration committee's recommendation to retain the book; and unanimously voting to retain the book in the district curriculum and to support the district's faculties in their selection of texts for the curriculum. The Blue Springs Board of Education will also receive the **2006 NCTE/SLATE National Intellectual Freedom Award**.

The **Indiana Council of Teachers of English (ICTE)** and NCTE recognize **Sue Loughlin**. Sue Loughlin, education reporter for the *Terre Haute Tribune Star*, covers difficult education issues, from state

standards to controversies about censorship and about administrative leadership in local public schools and universities. Her balanced, fair coverage has been a source of community awareness for a score of years. She has provided in-depth stories about student, staff, and faculty dissatisfaction with leadership at Rose Hulman Institute of Technology and Indiana State University. Her coverage of a book challenge to Brock Cole's *The Goats* spanned a period of eleven months and helped the community discover the motives of those who would censor books.

The **Kentucky Council of Teachers of English/Language Arts** (KCTE/LA) and NCTE recognize **Al Cross**. Al Cross's support of journalism and students of journalism led him to leave a 26-year career with the *Louisville Courier-Journal* to take a position as Interim Director of the Institute for Rural Journalism and Community Issues in 2004. In 2005 he was named Director of the Institute and Assistant Professor in the School of Journalism and Telecommunications at the University of Kentucky. In this dual position he calls himself "extension agent for rural journalism."

The **Nebraska English Language Arts Council** (NELAC) and NCTE recognize **Susan Baird**. Susan Baird has served as the voice for academic freedom in journalism and championed the cause for student voices. She is a leader in student publications and has served students in journalistic education for many years.

The **Ohio Council of Teachers of English Language Arts** (OCTELA) and NCTE recognize **Marcia Punsalan**. Marcia Punsalan successfully overcame challenges to her teaching of *Kite Runner*. She also wrote a rationale for the book, developed a letter to parents outlining the reason for using the book in her classroom, and advised her entire department of the need and purpose for establishing rationales.

The **Tennessee Council of Teachers of English** (TCTE) and NCTE recognize members of the **Williamson County School Board**. In January 2006 an anonymous letter appeared in the mailboxes of middle school parents in Brentwood, Tennessee, encouraging them to sign a petition to have Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird* removed from all Williamson County schools. According to the letter, the book contains "profanity and adult themes such as sexual intercourse, rape, incest," and the book promotes "racial hatred, racial division, racial separation, and white supremacy." In a courageous show of support for intellectual freedom, the Williamson County School Board voted unanimously at its February meeting to keep the book on the suggested reading list for Williamson County Schools.

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## 2005:

**Senator Richard Durbin**, was nominated by the **Illinois Association of Teachers of English** as this year's **NCTE/SLATE National Intellectual Freedom Award** winner for his authorship, along with Senators Larry Craig, Russell Feingold, and Ken Salazar, of the Security and Freedom Enhancement Act (SAFE Act). A press release on the SAFE Act (Durbin Press Release 4/4/2005) provides background supporting Senator Durbin's nomination for the award:

The SAFE Act would impose reasonable limits on the FBI's seizure of business and library records, "sneak and peek" warrants," and roving wiretaps. It would not change pre-PATRIOT Act law in any way. Under the SAFE Act, the FBI would still have wide-ranging authority to combat terrorism. At the same time, the bill would protect innocent Americans from unchecked government surveillance.

"We're not proposing a full repeal of the PATRIOT Act. I voted for that bill, as did the vast majority of my colleagues in Congress. I believed then, and I still believe, that the PATRIOT Act made a number of reasonable and necessary changes in the law. But in some cases the new law goes too far, and we should amend those provisions to reflect every American citizen's right to be both safe and free," Durbin said.

..."The SAFE Act is a narrowly-tailored bipartisan bill that would revise several provisions of the Patriot Act. It would protect civil liberties while giving law enforcement the powers they need to fight terrorism.

"Senator Craig and I are on opposite sides of the political spectrum. Yet we have come together with the understanding that whether you are conservative or progressive, all Americans value our civil liberties.

The **Kentucky Council of Teachers of English / Language Arts** recognizes **Cyndi Powell Skellie**, of Shelbyville, Kentucky, as their **2005 NCTE/SLATE Affiliate Intellectual Freedom Award winner**. Cyndi Powell Skellie directed the production of Shelby County's "The Rose of Treason" by James DeVita. The play is a true story of courage, selflessness, and faith in what is right, set in 1943 Germany. The plot centers around some university students who start a resistance group aimed at bringing down Hitler and his regime. While focused on a past issue, the production made linkages to contemporary issues, such as censorship through The Patriot Act. Skellie's directing skills connected the two issues subtly, using projections with significant quotes, often times words that could have come from the *Nightly News*. This was a risky endeavor in a conservative county and state. The Kentucky Council of Teachers of English / Language Arts is honored to nominate Cyndi Powell Skellie for this award.

The **Nebraska English Language Arts Council** recognizes **Linda Beckstead**, of Bellevue, Nebraska, as their **2005 NCTE/SLATE Affiliate Intellectual Freedom Award winner**. Linda Beckstead is a teacher of English and Journalism at Bellevue High School and a leader in our state on issues that deal with academic freedom. She is a past president of The Academic Freedom Coalition of Nebraska (AFCON) and is called upon time and again to lead workshops dealing with censorship and journalism and speech issues. She is indeed a defender of free speech. The Nebraska English Language Arts Council is honored to nominate Linda Beckstead for this award.

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## 2004:

The **Colorado Language Arts Society** and NCTE recognize **James LaRue**, Director of Douglas Libraries as **2004 NCTE/SLATE National Intellectual Freedom Award** winner. In his weekly newspaper column, testimonies before the State General Assembly and the House Judiciary Committee, leadership within the Colorado Library Association, and conference presentations, Jamie educates his audiences and argues for responsible public funding and decision-making. During the past ten years, LaRue has defended the selection of classic literature and the use of subject-related R-rated films in secondary classrooms. Thoughtful and provoking whenever he speaks or writes, Jamie consistently supports and honors intellectual freedom in our public libraries and in our public schools. James LaRue will also receive the **2004 NCTE/SLATE Affiliate Intellectual Freedom Award**.

The **Indiana Council of Teachers of English** and NCTE recognize the **Lilly Endowment Inc.'s Teacher Creativity Fellowship Program** and **Barbara S. DeHart**, Program Associate in Education, with the **2004 NCTE/SLATE Intellectual Freedom Award**. Since 1987 hundreds of teachers, principals, and assistant principals from the state of Indiana have been allowed to renew and inspire their classroom practice by pursuing "personal and intellectual renewal" inquiries. Grants of \$7,500 have allowed grant fellows to travel to England to walk in the footsteps of Shakespeare, study clothing of the nineteenth century at the Metropolitan Museum of Art Costume Institute, work with Native American jewelry designers in New Mexico, and many more activities. These events were intended to renew these professionals and help them "become even more committed to helping Indiana's young people grow and learn with excitement and enthusiasm." Each year up to 120 grants are allotted with the only restriction being that the educator must give six weeks of study to the program. In the summer, the program offers a time for all of the fellows to get together to share what they have learned. As the Creativity Fellowship program suggests, it is a "time to be, not to do." This year was the 17th year that the Endowment has offered the program because "it is committed to helping Indiana become an even more rewarding area for seasoned teachers and other educational professionals."

**Kentucky Council of Teachers of English/Language Arts (KCTE/LA)** and NCTE recognize **Starr Lewis**. Starr Lewis served on the committee that designed the state mandated writing portfolio. The original version was to have a writing assessment that articulated some common goals for Kentucky students' communication skills, but still provide opportunities for student voice and student choice. Starr Lewis continues to work for intellectual freedom in all areas of education across the state of Kentucky.

**Nebraska English Language Arts Council (NELAC)** and NCTE recognize **Dr. Robert Brooke**. Dr. Brooke has promoted Intellectual Freedom for "Writing" Teachers for decades and led the Nebraska Writing Project with success and courage. Facing a variety of situations with creative, positive solutions, he exemplifies the spirit of this award and is most deserving. Dr. Brooke empowers teachers to learn, study, write and read. He guides teachers and then lets them shine with their strengths and presentations. He develops teachers as writers, helps them publish, defends them and is a motivation to their creativity. He established the Rural Institute and believes teachers learn best from each other.

**New Jersey Council of Teachers of English (NJCTE)** and NCTE recognize **M. Jerry Weiss**. Jerry Weiss has been working for decades fighting censorship cases throughout the country and speaking against censorship at workshops. He has inspired generations of English teachers who stand up for academic freedom in their school districts. Dr. Weiss chaired the NCTE Committee Against Censorship for five years and was instrumental in developing papers and a CD of rationales that explain what good books do for children and why they should be used. The papers were used to draft, along with SLATE, guidelines for national and state awards. The New Jersey Council of Teachers of English Executive Board has unanimously endorsed his nomination for this award, and recognize that is long overdue.

**Ohio Council of Teachers of English Language Arts (OCTELA)** and NCTE recognize the **Youngstown State University English Festival**. For the past 26 years, the university and community have collaborated to produce this festival, which attracts nearly 3,000 students annually from throughout the region. Participants of the English Festival read a series of books throughout the school year, leading up to the festival in the spring. At the festival, students participate in writing workshops and contests and attend lectures by authors. Young Adult books are selected for students, and, of course, the issues of morality, sexuality, parental authority, and alternative lifestyles, have often been challenged. The Festival committee has used these incidences as avenues for talking with students, teachers, and parents about what quality YA literature offers, the questions raised in this literature, and how these questions and issues should be explored by students. The clear goals of the festival to include quality literature for students and the consistency in the selection of materials have enabled festival sponsors to stand up to censorship challenges and to further intellectual freedom and the students' right to read.

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## 2003:

**Gloria Pipkin** and **ReLeah Cossett Lent** believe it's important for students to think deeply, read widely, and write honestly. Equally important, they are not afraid to defend this conviction, even if it means standing up in a courtroom.

For their longstanding commitment to defending intellectual freedom for students and teachers, Pipkin and Lent will receive the **2003 NCTE/SLATE National Intellectual Freedom Award** during the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) Annual Convention to be held in San Francisco, California, November 20–25.

The duo met as they helped to build a strong literacy program at Mowat Middle School in Lynn Haven, Florida. In 1985 NCTE named the program one of 150 "Centers of Excellence" across the country for exhibiting high quality in the English language arts. It was during this decade that religious fundamentalists challenged the program's methods and materials and the superintendent eventually

banned more than 60 books. Pipkin and Lent rallied to the defense, and Pipkin was a plaintiff in a federal lawsuit, which lasted five years and restored access to all banned books and restricted materials.

Lent faced other challenges when she taught at A.C. Mosley High School, also in Lynn Haven. There she helped to reverse the principal's ban on the classroom teaching of John Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men* and confronted a challenge as advisor to the student newspaper. On the last day of school in May 1997, the principal removed Lent as advisor, citing differences in philosophies and a desire to emphasize school spirit over investigative journalism. Lent sued in federal court and won an out-of-court settlement in 1998.

Their struggles gained wide exposure, including an article in *The Washington Post Magazine* (January 4, 1987). They also have told their stories in *At the Schoolhouse Gate: Lessons in Intellectual Freedom* (Heinemann, 2002), which contains an "Intellectual Freedom Manifesto" listing teachers' and students' rights and responsibilities related to reading, writing, thinking, and learning. Pipkin and Lent also are editors of *Silent No More: Voices of Courage in American Schools*, which relates stories of other educators who share the conviction to stand up for teachers' and students' rights (Heinemann, 2003).

Their courage has drawn other honors as well. The Courage Foundation recognized Pipkin for defending the right to read. Lent received the PEN/Newman's Own First Amendment Award. And both Lent and Pipkin have received Golden Apple Awards from the Association of Bay County Educators.

The **Kentucky Council of Teachers of English/Language Arts** (KCTE/LA) recognizes **Dr. Robert F. Sexton**. Robert Sexton has been at the center of a generation-long struggle to lift Kentucky's schools from the bottom rungs academically into models of effectiveness. As the Executive Director of the Prichard committee, an independent, state-wide, non-partisan, advocacy group dedicated to the improvement of education, he was instrumental in filing legal briefs, conducting research and testifying before the state supreme court for a decision mandating legislative reform of the school system. This reform has boosted teachers' salaries, created fairer funding systems for school districts, and holds each school accountable for its performance.

The **Nebraska English Language Arts Council** (NELAC) recognizes **Douglas Christensen**. Nebraska Commissioner of Education, Douglas D. Christensen, is honored by the Nebraska English Language Arts Council for his persistent advocacy of Nebraska teachers and their intellectual freedom to use their best professional judgments in the classroom. He argues, "Decisions about whether or not students are learning should not take place in the legislature, the governor's office, or the department of education. They should take place in the classroom, because that is where learning occurs." (P. Roschewski, C. Gallagher, and J. Isernhagen. April 2001. *Nebraskans Reach For The Stars, Phi Delta Kappan.*)  
(more)

The **Ohio Council of Teachers of English Language Arts** (OCTELA) recognizes **C.J. Bott**. Bott has initiated several projects and programs that qualify her for this honor. Among these are a non-harassment statement for all classes in the Shaker Heights City School District, grades 4-12; a Gay Straight Alliance; and Women Helping Educate Women (WHEW), a women's group that primarily seeks to teach young women healthy ways to cope with their feelings, to make good decisions regarding their future careers, and to be independent thinkers. She also created a course in social needs in fiction and non-fiction that deals with censorship, violence, homophobia, bullying, and homelessness.

The **Wyoming Association of Teachers of English** (WYATE) recognizes **Karen Delbridge**. When Karen Delbridge was a brand new English teacher in 1996 in Tennessee, she took to heart the idea that students need to write for a clear purpose and audience. Some of her sophomores wrote letters to the editor of the local newspaper. Their thesis was that if the community had money to spend on a new expensive project, then they had the money to begin plans to build a new high school. The flurry of letters turned into a blizzard of reactions, and Karen was chastised for her involvement by several school

board members. Throughout this year when the board tried to thwart her success and close her students' freedom of speech, Karen learned one thing for sure: The pen is mighty!

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## 2002:

The **California Association of Teachers of English (CATE)** recognizes **Susan Harmon**. Susan Harmon has shown courage in advancing the cause of intellectual freedom; that is fighting for the cause of more authentic assessment and against the abuse of testing. Harmon has devoted her professional life resisting tests and testing programs that misinterpret the intellectual and academic growth of our youth by narrowly defining their capacity and that adversely affect the future of our children by tracking them into educational programs that underserve them.

The **Colorado Language Arts Society (CLAS)** recognizes **Karen Hartman**. Hartman has connected students and teaches to their own stories and to the stories of persons who have made a difference in their communities, and she has nourished a climate of intellectual freedom that is fed by literacy. Hartman helps students and teachers hear and heed their own stories and connect their stories to what Parker Palmer calls "a power that wants to pull my heart open to something larger than myself." Hartman's colleagues say that she is "opposed to self-censorship," and that in her 32-year career as a teacher in the language arts, as well as in her work in the Colorado Writing Project, she has shown courage and tenacity.

**Georgia Council of Teachers of English (GCTE)** recognizes the **Brunswick High School Language Arts Department**. In July 2001, English teachers at Brunswick High School became leaders in a 1st Amendment battle, which caught the attention of state and national organizations. At that time, the Glynn County Board of Education in Brunswick, Georgia, began discussing the use of profanity in curriculum texts such as *A Catcher in the Rye*. Their action quickly spread to an attempt to remove all instructional materials in the high school district which contained profanity. The ensuing debate continued until September 10, 2001, ending in confusion. As a result, the issue remains unresolved and will likely appear again. BHS English teachers will be ready to continue the fight.

**Indiana Council of Teachers of English (ICTE)** recognizes **Bloomington TAWL (Teachers Applying Whole Language)**. The Bloomington TAWL members have actively worked to educate their community to the shortcomings of standardized tests and to the role standardized tests play in diminishing depth in the curriculum. In the last two years, the thirty teachers who are members of this long-standing professional organization have distributed 1,000 bumper stickers that point out "A child is more than a test score," and have hosted two public forums for their community. Even though they are extremely busy with teaching, they have made time to write letters to the editors of their local newspaper whenever they see things in the media that reflect an uninformed perspective about testing. They have worked with local reports and community members to raise their awareness of the problems with high stakes testing. In short, they have stepped outside the school walls to share what they know and to help more people understand the complexity of learning and the importance of educative assessment in schools.

The **Kentucky Council of Teachers of English/Language Arts (KCTE/LA)** recognizes **Judith G. Clabes**. A founding member of the Kentucky First Amendment Congress and UK's First Amendment Center, Mrs. Clabes has been a tireless crusader for freedom of speech and for the proposition that newspapers must not only report the news but stand for something if democracy is to thrive. Described, as being "small and feisty like the newspaper she ran," Judith Clabes, now President and CEO of the Scripps Howard Foundation, is a person of high integrity and a strong commitment to First Amendment principles. Kentucky has benefited from its citizen, whose voice and energies have developed community support for the arts, recognition for outstanding teachers and young authors and school reform.

The **Nebraska English Language Arts Council** (NELAC) recognizes **Board of Education, Lincoln Public Schools**. The Board demonstrated calm courage, and reasoned deliberation when reviewing a student request to remove the novel *The House of the Spirits* from the Advanced Placement curriculum. The Board reviewed its own policies for selecting curriculum materials, convened a subcommittee that read and studied the novel, and heard testimony from the student and from district English teachers other than the student's teacher. Still the Board upheld their policies and ruled the staff had acted properly and fairly.

The **Ohio Council of Teachers of English Language Arts** (OCTELA) recognizes **Dottie DePugh**. Dottie DePugh, a thirty-year veteran second grade teacher in the Adena School District in Ross County, Ohio, successfully battled a censorship challenge to *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*. After initial complaints were made against the reading of the book in her class, DePugh contacted the Ohio Council of Teachers English and, with their help, was able to continue reading the book to her students.

The **Tennessee Council of Teachers of English** (TCTE) recognizes **Professor Mark Creter**. Mark Creter, Assistant Professor of Theatre at Tennessee Tech and Backdoor Theater director, deserves the Intellectual Freedom Award for putting on Eve Ensler's play the "Vagina Monologues", for the first time on campus in February 2001. In a more sophisticated metropolitan area, the simple act of producing this controversial play would not be noteworthy. However, in conservative Cookeville, in the Bible Belt, where much criticism resulted, it was an act of courage. Negative phone calls, letters to the editor, conversations on campus and in the community surrounded the production. Although he and the all-female cast were excoriated, he opened the curtain every night of the run with no apology.

The **Wisconsin Council of Teachers of English Language Arts** (WICTELA) recognizes **Nicholas Karolides**. Nick Karolides' diligence and dedication to the cause of intellectual freedom never flags. He continues to write, speak, teach, model, and publish for the fight against censorship and for meaningful education. Besides being a model classroom teacher whose specialties include Native American literature and reader response criticism, Karolides has published five books and many articles against censorship. He has recently been invited to revise and update *The Encyclopedia of Censorship* and to become an NCTE spokesperson on censorship.

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## 2001:

The **Colorado Language Arts Society** and NCTE recognize **Joyce Meskis**, of The Tattered Cover Bookstore, in Denver, Colorado as the **2001 NCTE/SLATE National Intellectual Freedom Award** winner. The committee applauds Meskis for her defense of the public's access to a "vast array of books containing ideas as diverse as the world in which we live." In the words of Carol Sullivan, the nominator:

During nearly 30 years of bookstore ownership, Joyce Meskis has adhered to [her] philosophy in the face of threats, loss of business, and, most recently, a police task force demand to review customer records. Because she so strongly believes in the free flow of ideas, regardless of her personal beliefs, she also allows off-duty employees to picket the store when they oppose the beliefs of authors who come for book signings.

The **Indiana Council of Teachers of English** (ICTE) recognizes **Bonnie Cameron**. Bonnie Cameron teaches the course "Diverse Learner/Multicultural Education" at the University of Indianapolis. To appreciate the challenges inherent in her instructional role, one needs to understand that the university is a small institution with very little diversity. Cameron challenges students to recognize a variety of cultural and personal biases and reflect on how these biases influence their effectiveness as educators. Moreover, she extends a similar challenge to faculty members, encouraging them out of their well-established comfort zones. Finally, she acts as a mentor and advocate for students of color, helping them navigate an environment that they often perceive as different and hostile.

The **Kentucky Council of Teachers of English/Language Arts (KCTE/LA)** recognizes **Governor Paul E. Patton**. At his inauguration, Governor Paul Patton vowed to make his mark as the “higher education governor.” In his desire to prepare Kentucky’s students for the global workplace of the 21st century, he has supported the funding for providing every classroom with one computer for every six students, created the KEES Program that rewards high school students with a C+ GPA or higher with a state scholarship to apply toward college, increased funding and programs for adult education and literacy, established the KIDS NOW program to help ensure that all children receive a strong educational foundation, provided Internet access for students to take challenging courses not available at their schools, and created the Kentucky Virtual University that provides all Kentuckians access to higher education and training programs.

The **New Mexico Council of Teachers of English (NMCTE)** recognizes **Patsy** and **Nadine Cordova**. Two years ago administrators in Patsy and Nadine Cordova’s school censored their materials for their English/history classes. After following policies and procedures concerning the adoption of textbooks, meeting curriculum needs, and after receiving accommodations for their teaching efforts and an affirmation concerning their materials, the Cordova sisters began teaching an innovative and exciting class that inspired their students. Soon, however, administration began challenges against the program and the Cordova sisters were dismissed. Legal council brought a court decision in the Cordovas’ favor but the challenge left irreparable damage to their lives in their community. The sisters have left their hometown and are now educational leaders in other schools.

**New York State English Council (NYSEC)** recognizes **John Jay High School Students Who Spoke Against Censorship**. This group of concerned students from John Jay High School in the Wappingers Central School District, outraged at one parent’s attempt to censor the curriculum by demanding that Rudolfo Anaya’s *Bless Me, Ultima* be removed from the curriculum, prepared oral arguments in support of this book, spoke before the Board of Education, and wrote a letter to the editor of the local paper. Their research included contacting the author who validated their defense. At the well-attended Board meetings, these students conducted themselves with dignity and grace, spoke eloquently and courageously, provided persuasive arguments in favor of intellectual freedom and anti-censorship, and ultimately won their fight.

The **Tennessee Council of Teachers of English (TCTE)** and **Shelby-Memphis Council of Teachers of English (SMCTE)** recognize **David Waters**. David Waters, a regular columnist for *The Commercial Appeal* in Memphis, Tennessee, praises and honors teachers. He supports the notion that teachers know what is best for students. He supports their intellect and wants them to have the freedom to do their jobs. In an era when teacher bashing seems to be the political norm, it takes a man of vision and of courage to applaud teachers and praise the hard work we do. David Waters is such a man. He writes what we all as teachers know: that we love children, that we work hard, that we teach. That he says this in a public forum with no expectation of reward speaks to his courage and intelligence. His columns have questioned the validity of test scores as the only measure of progress students and teachers make together, questioned educational reform initiated by those who are not educators, and questioned those who would place the blame on teachers. Positive responses to his columns come from across the nation.

The **Washington State Council of Teachers of English** recognizes **Deborah Jacobs**. Deborah Jacobs deserves recognition for her professional lifetime commitment to fighting censorship. Jacobs, Head of the Seattle Public Libraries, waged her first censorship battle at the Corvallis-Benton County Public Library in Oregon. There she fought off a ballot measure that would have banned from the library books by or about homosexuals. In the process, however, she realized that she could not defend her own position of having books that supported her philosophically unless she was willing to also carry books in the library that reflected her opponent’s beliefs. So, she also ordered books for the library that represented Christian and anti-gay philosophies. In Seattle, Jacobs has chosen to forgo federal funding rather than put Internet filters on the library’s computers. Jacobs currently serves on the Intellectual Freedom Committee of the American Library Association and is drafting a position statement--the 21st Century Intellectual Freedom Statement.

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## 2000:

The **Oklahoma Council of Teachers of English** and NCTE recognize **Frosty Troy**, editor of *The Observer* in Oklahoma City as the **2001 NCTE/SLATE National Intellectual Freedom Award** winner. The committee applauds Troy for his ongoing crusade for teachers and their right to teach and for students and their right to read, particularly his vocal stand against those who would restrict teachers in their efforts to teach students to think. In the words of V. Pauline Hodges, the nominator:

"Frosty is not afraid to print the truth, and his research is thorough so that he is confident that what he prints is accurate and without error. He does not play favorites as to political party or status. He attacks anyone of any political party if he believes them to be unfair or if he thinks their actions are for their own political gain."

The **California Association of Teachers of English (CATE)** recognizes **Don Mayfield**. Don Mayfield's newsletter, *CommuniCATE*, keeps CATE members informed about legislation and policy. He has worked with the CATE professional legislative analyst to keep the Board of Directors and CATE membership informed and he leads a delegation of CATE Board members to the capital every year to present legislators with CATE resolutions and to discuss with educational policy makers important educational issues. Don Mayfield has also represented CATE at State Board of Education sessions, speaking out on issues such as reading instruction and testing. He has also attended public educational hearings, presenting the views of CATE and the everyday classroom teacher. Don Mayfield will become the Region 8 Representative to the SLATE Steering Committee at this year's Annual Convention (2000).

The **Indiana Council of Teachers of English** recognizes **Marianne Darr-Norman**. Marianne Darr-Norman has served the students and professional communities in Indiana through her directorship of one of the National Writing Project sites, her work in the classroom, her work with state standards commissions, and her tenure on the board of the Indiana Council of Teachers of English. She is a long-time defender of national, state, and local standards. She has given commentary on the dangers of censorship, how restricted teaching methods penalize both students and teachers, and the hidden agendas of commercial writing models.

The **Kentucky Council of Teachers of English Language Arts** recognizes **Ashland Inc. and CEO, Paul W. Chellgren**. Ashland Inc. has supported education through financial contributions as well as participation in various activities. For the past 17 years, Ashland has committed its corporate regional advertising budget to increasing public awareness of the importance of and need for quality education. Ashland Inc. has focused on issues ranging from general support of all levels of education, to dropout prevention, teacher appreciation, business-education partnerships and parental involvement. Ashland Inc. has helped education through its teacher assistance tools and community awareness programs; teacher achievement awards, which presents \$2,500 to 10 outstanding teachers; National Foundation for Advancement in the Arts; employee volunteers; Kentucky education reform through the Partnership for Kentucky Schools; newspapers in education partnerships; school-to-work programs; and partnerships with The Business Higher Education Forum to increase its national involvement.

The **Montana Association of Teachers of English Language Arts** recognizes the **Administrative Staff, School Board, and English Teachers of Bozeman High School**. Bozeman High School's administrative staff, school board, and faculty have fought a yearlong censorship challenges to restrict the reading of *Fools Crow*. Throughout this process, Bozeman High School employees have been guided by their respect for a student's and parent's right to read this Native American novel.

The **Nebraska English Language Arts Council** recognizes **Peggy Adair**. Peggy Adair is a writer, child advocate, and juvenile justice consultant. Her novel, *Chance* which deals with child abuse, has been

challenged in a Nebraska school district. She has also defended high school students who were punished for writing and distributing an “underground newspaper.”

The **Wisconsin Council of Teachers of English Language Arts** recognizes **Ginny Moore Kruse** and the **Cooperative Children’s Book Center**. Ginny Moore Kruse and the Cooperative Children’s Book Center were awarded the WCTELA annual Lee A. Burrell Intellectual Freedom Award. She and her staff were recognized for their referrals to appropriate services, book reviews, and other supporting materials they provide librarians and educators when books are challenged.

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## 1999:

**Jim Burke** of Burlingame High School in California has been named the winner of the **1999 NCTE/SLATE Intellectual Freedom National Award** as moderator of the **California Association of Teachers of English** CATENet e-mail discussion list. The Committee applauds Burke’s efforts to develop and maintain the CATENet list, which serves its 2,000 members (and the additional 3,000 who receive forwarded messages from CATENet) to keep them informed about and to post their discussions and comments on issues of intellectual freedom, including censorship of texts and instructional practices. With its diverse membership of teachers, politicians, writers, professors, reporters, school board members, and textbook company representatives, CATENet provides a rich resource on teaching the English language arts and a venue for advancing intellectual freedom.

The **Colorado Language Arts Society** (CLAS) recognizes **Joyce Meskis**. Joyce Meskis and The Tattered Cover, her independently owned bookstores in Lower Downtown Denver and Cherry Creek, are Rocky Mountain landmarks known nationally for connecting people, books, and ideas. She has championed intellectual freedom in various posts: president of the Colorado Citizens Against Censorship, founder of the American Booksellers Foundation for Free Expression, and leader in the National Coalition Against Censorship. She allows off-duty employees to picket the store when authors they condemn come to book signings. Her store stocks 150,000 titles as Meskis seeks “constitutionally protected materials that our customers want, irrespective of our personal feelings.” She instructs staff, “Let a book stand or fall on its own merits.”

The **Indiana Council of Teachers of English** (ICTE) recognizes **Stan Evans**. Stan Evans, ICTE Executive Director and Region 4 Representative to the NCTE Standing Committee on Affiliates, has been a tireless supporter of intellectual freedom both in the classroom and in the public forum. Not content with being just an advocate, Stan offered specific assistance and completed a multipage document recording all newspaper articles, interviews, letters, and any other materials germane to a contentious censorship issue in his community. Stan then proceeded to offer other Region 4 members expert witness to the problems, failures, and successes of battling censorship problems. The ultimate result went far beyond one school and allowed hundreds of people to see that standing up for intellectual freedom can be a challenging but ultimately rewarding struggle.

The **Nebraska English Language Arts Council** recognizes **Gerry Cox**. Gerry Cox has been a leader in intellectual freedom in Nebraska for many years. A retired teacher from Lincoln East High School, Cox was a member of the Advocates for Intellectual Freedom which became AFCON (Academic Freedom Coalition of Nebraska), a group to promote access to intellectual freedom, including freedom of belief, of expression, of access to information in particular in education and research contexts. Cox was its president in 1989-90 and was one of its Academic Freedom Awards recipients in October 1998 for her continuing work in promoting intellectual freedom in Nebraska.

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## **1998:**

The **Indiana Council of Teachers of English** and NCTE recognize **Rebecca MeElroy** and **Sandra Kelley**.

The **Kentucky Council of Teachers of English/Language Arts** recognize **Harold Federson**, Principal, and the **Central High School Site Based Decision Making Committee**.

The **Minnesota Council of Teachers of English** recognize **Richard Fischer**.

The **Nebraska English Language Arts Council** recognize **Carol Gulyas**.

The **Houston Council of Teachers of English (TX)** recognize **Writer in the Schools (WITS)**.

The **Texas Council of Teachers of English** recognize **Shirley Wright**.

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## **1997:**

The **Colorado Language Arts Society** recognize **Alton Barbour**.

The **Missouri Association of Teachers of English** recognize **Celia (Cissy) Lacks**.

The **Montana Association of Teachers of English Language Arts** recognize **Mary Sheehy Moe**.

The **Nebraska English Language Arts Council** recognize **Mel Elaine Krutz**.

The **New York State English Council** recognize **Bedford parents** Rev. Paul Alcorn, Shodie Alcorn, Dr. Jed Berman, Dr. Randy Berman, Neil Ginsberg, Marty-Ann Kerner, Paula Kumar, Susan McCathy, Roda Portell, Rose-Ellen Racanelli, Fred Schlottmann, Siglinde Schlottmann, and Nancy Stein.

The **Oklahoma Council of Teachers of English** recognize **Frosty Troy**.

The **Virginia Association of Teachers of English** recognize **Dr. Robert Small**.

The **Washington State Council of Teachers of English** recognize **Jim Bodeen** and **Linda C. Brown**.