The Annual Business Meeting for the Board of Directors and Other Members of the Council of the National Council of Teachers of English was called to order by President Ernest Morrell at 5:30 p.m., November 21, 2014.

Platform guests included Doug Hesse, Vice President; Shelley Rodrigo, Resolutions Committee Chair; Kathy Short, President-Elect and Program Chair of 2014 NCTE Annual Convention; Ernest Morrell, President; Erika Lindemann, Parliamentarian; Mila Fuller, Deputy Executive Director; Susan Houser, Incoming Vice President; Sandy Hayes, Past President; and members of the Resolutions Committee: Lisa Scherff, Carol Gilles, Antero Garcia, and Franki Sibberson.

President Morrell called for a motion to adopt the rules for the Annual Business Meeting. Beverly Chin, MT, presented the motion; Rebecca Sipe, MI, seconded it. The motion CARRIED.

Howard Tinburg, RI, moved to adopt the agenda; seconded by Rick Hardt, OR. The motion CARRIED.

Patricia Stock, MI, moved to dispense with the roll call of directors; seconded by Tim Martindell, TX. The motion CARRIED.

Zanetta Robinson, FL, moved to dispense with a formal reading of the 2013 Minutes of the NCTE Annual Business Meeting, seconded by Wanda Porter, HI. The motion CARRIED.

Louann Reid, CO, moved to accept the posted 2014 Annual Reports, seconded by Carolyn Lott, MS. The motion CARRIED.

President Morrell introduced President-Elect Kathy Short, Chair of the 2014 Distinguished Service Award Selection Committee. Short thanked this year’s committee members: Joseph Rodriguez, College Section Chair; Jocelyn Chadwick, Secondary Section Chair; and Doug Hesse, Vice President.

The Distinguished Service Award recognizes a person or persons, either volunteer or staff, who have exhibited valuable professional service within and outside the Council, including scholarly or academic distinction at any level; who have demonstrated distinguished use of language; and who have exhibited excellence in teaching.

President Morrell introduced Sheridan Blau, a member of the 2014 James R. Squire Award Selection Committee. Blau thanked this year’s committee members: Keith Gilyard, Chair; Carol Jago, and Leila Christenbury.

The James R. Squire Award, formerly called the NCTE Executive Committee Award, was established in 1967. In 1999 the Executive Committee renamed the award to honor former Executive Director James R. Squire for his contributions to NCTE and the profession at large. The award is given in recognition of outstanding service, not only to the stature and development of NCTE and the discipline that it represents but also to the profession of education as a whole, internationally as well as nationally. The award—given only to an NCTE member who has had a transforming influence and has made a lasting intellectual contribution to the profession—is not an annual award. In fact, it has been presented only 15 times in the past 40 years. The award is bestowed only when selection committees, composed of past presidents of the Council, decide that nominations in a given year warrant its presentation.

Blau announced the recipient of the 2014 James R. Squire Award: Yetta Goodman, University of Arizona.

President Morrell announced the winner of the 2014 David H. Russell Award. No committee members were present. Morrell acknowledged Jamal Cooks as Chair of the selection committee.

The David H. Russell Award is given for any work or works of scholarship or research in language, literature, rhetoric, or pedagogy and learning published during the past five years. Works nominated for the award should be exemplary instances of the genre, address broad research questions, contain material that is accessible to a wide audience, and reflect a project that stands the test of time.

Morrell announced the recipient of the 2014 David H. Russell Award: David Kirkland, Michigan State University, for his book, A Search Past Silence: The Literacy of Young Black Men (published in 2013 by Teachers College Press). Attendees were invited to the Closing Session of the Day of Research.
Saturday, November 22, 8:00-9:15 a.m. (Potomac 3) to hear Kirkland speak. Kirkland accepted the award at the Sunday General Session at 9:00 a.m. (Woodrow Wilson A).

President Morrell introduced Past President Sandy Hayes, who introduced the NCTE past presidents and executive directors in attendance: Yetta Goodman, Janet Emig, Beverly Ann Chin, Carol Avery, Sheridan Blau, Jerry Harste, Ann Ruggles Gere, Leila Christenbury, David Bloome, Patricia Stock, Joan Yatvin, Kylene Beers, Carol Jago, and Yvonne Siu-Runyan. Former executive directors Miles Myers and Faith Schullstrom also were introduced.

President Morrell asked for a moment of silence for all NCTE members who had passed away since the last meeting.

President Morrell introduced Mitch Nobis, Chair of the NCTE Nominating Committee. Nobis solicited nominations for the 2015 ballots. Representatives from each of the Nominating Committees were seated at tables in the back of the room.

President Morrell introduced Paul Thomas, NCTE Historian, who provided the following moment of NCTE history:

In 2003, I sat on the floor in a crowded luncheon slightly behind Adrienne Rich, speaking and reading her poetry at the Annual Convention, held that year in San Francisco. Appropriately, Rich was reading from her then-upcoming collection, *The School among the Ruins*, and talking about teaching, teachers, and education. One of Rich’s most enduring messages from her *Arts of the Possible* confronts U.S. choices about education:

> "Universal public education has two possible—and contradictory—missions. One is the development of a literate, articulate, and well-informed citizenry so that the democratic process can continue to evolve and the promise of radical equality can be brought closer to realization. The other is the perpetuation of a class system dividing an elite, nominally, ‘gifted’ few, tracked from an early age, from a very large underclass essentially to be written off as alienated from language and science, from poetry and politics, from history and hope—toward low-wage temporary jobs. The second is the direction our society has taken. The results are devastating in terms of the betrayal of a generation of youth. The loss to the whole of society is incalculable.”

History is a tapestry of choices—the story of human commitments, choices that shape us. Universal public education is such a tapestry of choices, choices about the possible as well as the possible ignored.

Writing in the November 1985 *English Journal*, novelist Walter Dean Myers reflects on his journey to loving literature:

> “I would read a library book under my desk with the assigned text on the desk itself. It happened that I had no library book one day, but I had discovered a store which sold used paperbacks for ten cents apiece. The cover of the book I had selected featured a young women, sword in hand, blouse carelessly pulled down from her shoulder, standing before a billowing mainsail . . .

Now, I’d like to think that I read today because I enjoy the finer things in literature. I’m sure that’s the case. I remember, years later, icebound on a cargo ship on Baffin Bay, I actually experience Coleridge’s ‘wondrous cold’ and the ‘dismal sheen’ of Arctic fog. But sometimes . . . sometimes I wonder if I wasn’t reading for at least a few years, at just the right time in my life, in hopes that I would find another really juicy line the likes of ‘he silently padded over her’.”

In 2014, the year he passed away, on July 1, just a month and one day before James Baldwin would have turned 90, Myers returned to why he loved literature, why he wrote in *Where Are the People of Color in Children’s Books*?

> “But by then I was beginning the quest for my own identity. To an extent I found who I was in the books I read . . .

But there was something missing, I needed more than the characters in the Bible to identify with, or even the characters in Arthur Miller’s plays or my beloved Balzac. As I discovered who I was, a black teenager in a white-dominated world, I saw that these characters, these lives, were not mine. I didn’t want to become the ‘black’ representative, or some shining example of diversity. What I wanted, needed really, was to become an integral and valued part of the mosaic that I saw around me . . .

Then I read a story by James Baldwin, *Sunny Blues*. I didn’t love the story, but I was lifted
by it, for it took place in Harlem, and it was a story concerned with black people like those I knew. By humanizing the people who were like me, Baldwin’s story also humanized me. The story gave me a permission that I didn’t know I needed, the permission to write about my own landscape, my own map.”

Years before, Myers in the January 2005 English Journal explained, “As a writer I especially want to reach the uninspired reader. I believe it is vital for the country and important for social order, and I relish my shared experiences with inner-city youths.”

Like Myers, Rich wrote about Baldwin. Rich had encountered Baldwin’s work when she was 19, and then met him personally in 1980, explaining, “I did not need to introduce myself to Baldwin nor raise my hand in a question. His work was what I needed.”

In the U.S. where our streets and schools are increasingly hostile to young black males—the threat of being shot and killed by the exact police meant to protect them or destined to be suspended, expelled, or failed by the exact schools meant to teach them—we teachers of English, among all teachers, have become hostage to yet another era of accountability, standards, and tests that keep us from our central calling—one identified by Rich and Myers, one voiced by Baldwin at the Non-Violent Action Committee in Los Angeles, in December 1964, “you must consider what happens to a life which finds no mirror.”

With each passing moment, we are contributing to the ever-growing tapestry of history, too often adding the possible ignored. Instead, let’s create the possible; let’s offer our students those mirrors for their quests, for their own identities.

Former NCTE President Lou LaBrant warned, “Teachers should consider carefully what they are doing with the most intimate subject in the curriculum.” The possible, then, resides in the words of Rich, Myers, and Baldwin and the faces of our students who come to our classes seeking themselves.

President Morrell gave his presidential report:

It’s humbling how fast a year goes by. And to talk about it in six minutes is even more humbling. What does it mean to be a part of a movement? It’s a question you can ponder in many ways. It’s a question I pondered often as a child, of children in the civil rights movement, as a mentee of people like Sheridan, Yetta, Patti and others in the room. I do not presume that this is our first movement or that we have been without movement. But it is our next movement.

What does it mean to participate in that movement? What does it mean to think of an organization as a part of a movement or as I said last year, at the Opening General Session, what does it mean for NCTE to think about itself, not as what we get, but as what we get to do with others to transform the conditions of literacy teaching and learning? That is what we have been attempting to do this past year. I would like to give a few highlights of what that work is and where we are.

One of the things that has been really important to me in a movement and that Yetta Goodman talked about is “you young people”; one thing an organization has to do is cultivate its next generation of leaders, amongst our teachers. Two initiatives that I am very proud of, one of them is our Cultivating New Voices program. They had their reception last night. It is a program that works with young teachers and scholars of color and matches them with mentors who are senior scholars in the field. We have begun to see the yield of the alums of this program who are leaders in the organization. I told them last night that I expected there would be several dozen presidents of NCTE, in the future, come out of that Cultivating New Voices program.

We expanded and supported an early childhood program that pairs early childhood teachers of color with teacher educators. I see Susi Long in the back, who is one of the cool PIs of that project. They are in their second year. Those young teachers are presenting tomorrow at 8:00 a.m. It’s a chance to see that next generation. Mila Fuller, Deputy Executive Director, has been instrumental in our early career leaders of color awards and we celebrated those folks in our general session last night, but one of things we want to do is to continue to find ways to cultivate that next generation of leaders.

We’ve also, in terms of developing that movement, pushed for teacher teams to be involved in our literacy and learning exchange. That is a site where teacher teams come together and discuss problems of practice, and they share resources with other teachers around the country. I’ve worked with a few of those teams in the New York metropolitan area. We now have over 500 teams that are involved in that literacy and learning exchange.
We’ve also made inroads into getting grants and having that grant activity to help fund the kind of research that we think needs to be done and to tell the kinds of stories that we need to tell about what is happening in literacy research. Darren Cambridge and KaiLonnie Dunsmore are two of the staff who really helped us to receive a $4+ million dollar grant; NCTE has about an $800,000 share, which helps to look at rural schools and how you can develop capacity amongst teachers in rural schools with a bottom-up professional development model which actually begins with teachers asking their own questions in their local contexts instead of a traditional professional model.

We’ve also had two major new hires to push us into directions that I think are very important. So I would like to acknowledge Jenna Fournel, who is our new Communications and Alliance Strategist. Jenna is helping us think about what it means to get the word out. We are professionals of practice in the classroom; we are not professionals necessarily capable of sharing those stories in multiple ways to multiple audiences. To have the rhetorical power that we actually need is to change the discourse. Jenna is helping us do that. We have Darren Cambridge, Director of Policy, Research, and Development, also helping us think about how to engage in the kind of scholarship that we need in order to be able to transform conversations. But how do we use that scholarship as leverage in terms of policy and praxis? Again, it’s not necessarily the expertise one develops as an English teacher, but English teachers have the content and the narratives, and that kind of connection between those narratives and someone who has expertise in policy and research development is very helpful.

We have an amazing Task Force on Assessment that has been chaired by Kathi Yancey, a former president of this organization. The Executive Committee decided that we needed a task force to be able to respond quickly to all of the nonsense you see in the media about assessment, and as this continues to get rolled out we have to be able to respond; we have to be nimble, we have to be quick, and have to make sure that, at every podium that is offered to us, we share NCTE’s values and what we think about assessment, about our children, and about what our children know. As if teachers aren’t assessing every day in the classroom. So we are going to continue to push on that. We are trying to cultivate some of those conversations with the media so that they come to us. We are also trying to anticipate some of the dominate conversations that are going to be unfolding this spring as we begin to get some of the rollout of the first reports on these standardized tests.

We’ve also had an amazing chair for our Standing Committee Against Censorship, ReLeah Lent, who helped revise the statement on the Students’ Right to Read. We also developed our first NCTE Statement on Academic Freedom. That will be coming out to you in a few weeks. It was just passed by the Executive Committee, but with all the things that are happening out there for K-12 teachers and college teachers who want to speak their mind and feel under threat for doing that, we felt NCTE needed to have a statement on academic freedom. Millie Davis has been vigilant in fighting censorship battles. I believe the number of challenges we’ve had this year, as opposed to last year, is up 500%, for people wanting to ban books and prevent kids from having access to them.

I don’t want to give away my whole presidential talk, but in my talk for Sunday I have a letter from someone who is lauding NCTE for helping them fight a battle against Catcher in the Rye in 1963. Fifty years later, we are still fighting the same battles. But part of the struggle is not to wish for the end of the struggle, because that is beyond us. It is to wish for the continuance of the opposition in the face of oppression. We’re still here, and we’re still battling.

I think I am about out of time. I am really proud of the Executive Committee. I’m proud of the presidential team. We are trying to make you proud, trying to move forward in the face of what we see tremendous adversity. My parents who collectively taught in the K-12 arena for ninety-six years and counting say there has never been a time when there has been an absence for the need of struggle. And we hope that we can continue in this struggle together. That we can really feel this next movement in NCTE as a collective force of 35,000 plus members who believe in children, as Paul Thomas is saying, and who believe that we should center our investment in kids, not on kids, not punishing kids, not punishing teachers, but giving them the resources they need.

It has been an honor and a privilege to be your president. Thank you.

President Morrell introduced Mila Fuller to give the Executive Director’s report on behalf of Kent Williamson:

The NCTE financial news for FY14 remains extremely positive—far better than we had hoped when budgeting for the year. We had anticipated a small
operating loss of $110,910 but actually earned operating income of $127,069. Better yet, we had budgeted receiving $1.49 million from our invested reserves, but in fact we earned $4.89 million in investments, leaving us with a net gain of $4.65 million for the year, once we factor out transfers to our constituent organizations. The bottom line is that NCTE ended the fiscal year with net reserves of $31.48 million, a record level for the Council.

Here is a breakdown of the FY14 Revenue: 37% Investments, 20% Subscriptions and Advertising, 18% Conventions, 12% Grants and Fees, 9% Dues, and 4% Books and Professional Development.

The financial picture is certainly brighter than it was six years ago when we were in a state of free fall during the heart of the recession, and our reserve funds provide a margin for constructive investments in changes that can help the Council make progress toward its 2020 vision and better pursue its mission. Momentum is building as plans come together to achieve our FY15 organizational and budget goals. Focused work on shifting the reputation of the Council as a convener and broker of expertise to transform the conditions for literacy learning is underway. The implications of this shift are significant in that it shifts the professional work of literacy teachers from a “problem to be fixed” to an asset that communities can build and invest in to secure their own successful future. Our own history of inquiry, research, publishing, and activism has erected the intellectual infrastructure needed for the job. But to see it through, we will need to build new alliances, invite others into the work, and use the full array of communication tools to make clear how schools, communities, and states can pragmatically invest to make a substantive difference in learning.

While we now have ample reserves and still have more than $2 million of the original NCLE grant remaining, now is our best chance to reposition NCTE/NCLE as the place to go to for any department, school, or system that wants to support faculty learning as the engine of sustainable improvement in literacy learning rather than resort to generic “programs” or simple compliance with externally mandated reforms. As the new fiscal year dawns, the Council’s prospects for success rest at the intersection of its values, outreach strategy, policy agenda, and capacity to meet educators’ learning needs.

Question 1: Literacy as everyone’s job: If literacy is everyone’s job, what is the role of the English language arts teacher, if any, in working with other disciplines as they develop literacy teaching strategies?

Question 2: Authentic evidence of student learning: What might NCTE do to build authentic evidence of student learning to show how assessment can contribute to and not merely measure learning?

Question 3: Inquiry into teaching and learning: What do you think NCTE might do to better support systematic inquiry into teaching and learning?

Question 4: Time for collaboration: If time for collaboration among educators is essential, it is also in short supply. What might the Council do to open more time in the school schedule for collaboration?

Question 5: Shared leadership: What models or research might the Council supply to make the case for sharing responsibility for leadership in literacy?

President Morrell announced a discussion format for fifteen minutes. Roundtable discussions on topics are intended to generate ideas about issues important to the Council so that we can harness the energy and the voices in the room to bring them back to the Executive Committee and staff. He invited people to select one of five key principles that are important to the Council and join people at the tables geared responding to particular questions.

President Morrell called on Doug Hesse, Vice President to announce upcoming meetings and locations for Council conferences. Hesse reported the following dates and sites for upcoming NCTE Annual Conventions: November 19-24, 2015, Minneapolis, MN “Responsibility, Creativity, and the Arts of Language”; November 17-22, 2016, Atlanta, GA; November 16-21, 2017, St. Louis, MO; and November 15-20, 2018, Houston, TX; November 21-25, 2019, Philadelphia, PA; and November 19-24, 2020, Denver, CO. CCCC conferences: March 18-21, 2015, Tampa, FL, “Risk and Rewards”; April 6-9, 2016, Houston, TX; March 15-18, 2017, Portland, OR; March 14-17, 2018, Kansas City, MO; and March 13-16, 2019, Pittsburgh, PA. Conference on English Education: July 6-9, 2015, Fordham University, NY, “Common Ground, Global Reach: Teaching English and English Education for Global Literacies” (CEE is a member organization of the International Federation of Teachers of English [IFTE] and is hosting the IFTE Conference at its meeting). Whole Language Umbrella, July 9-11, 2015, Atlanta, GA, “Sharing Our Stories: Re-visioning Our Worlds Reading, Writing, and Taking Action.” And finally, the NCTE Assembly for Research Mid-Winter Conference, February 6-8, 2015, New Orleans, LA, “Research at the Intersections of Race, Language, and Literacy in Context.”
Rodrigo thanked the committee for its work and noted that various committee members would present the resolutions.

Lisa Scherff presented the following resolution:

**Resolution 1**

**Resolution on the Need for Diverse Children’s and Young Adult Books**

Resolved, that the National Council of Teachers of English
- advocate for more children’s and young adult books from publishers and booksellers that reflect this culturally diverse lives and experiences present in the United States, and
- highlight and support authors, illustrators, publishers, and booksellers whose work represents multiple perspectives and cultural diversity in the lives of all children.

On behalf of the Resolutions Committee, Scherff moved the adoption of this resolution.

President Morrell called for a discussion.

President Morrell, hearing no discussion, called for a vote. The resolution CARRIED.

Carol Gilles presented the following resolution:

**Resolution 2**

**Resolution on Mandatory Grade Retention and High-Stakes Testing**

Resolved, that the National Council of Teachers of English strongly oppose legislation mandating that children, in any grade level, who do not meet criteria in reading be retained.

And be it further resolved that NCTE strongly oppose the use of high-stakes test performance in reading as the criterion for student retention.

On behalf of the Resolutions Committee, Gilles moved the adoption of this resolution.

President Morrell called for a discussion.

President Morrell, hearing no discussion, called for a vote. The resolution CARRIED.

Antero Garcia presented the following resolution:

**Resolution 3**

**Resolution on the Dignity and Education of Immigrant, Undocumented, and Unaccompanied Youth**

Resolved, that the National Council of Teachers of English
- acknowledge that immigrant, undocumented, and unaccompanied children and youth, including those recently entering the United States, are historically a part of the diverse fabric of our student populations;
- respect the dignity of and advocate for the equitable schooling of undocumented youth, including those who cross borders along and/or are unjustly apprehended and temporarily held; and
- support teachers, administrators, and local education agencies in the education of immigrant, undocumented, and unaccompanied youth.

On behalf of the Resolutions Committee, Garcia moved the adoption of this resolution.

Yetta Goodman, AZ, on behalf of Ken Goodman, suggested that NCTE send a letter of congratulations to Barack Obama for the work he has done on immigration.

Shelley Rodrigo, chair of the Resolutions Committee, agreed with the request made by Goodman and explained that all resolutions go forward to the officers and Executive Committee for implementation once they are approved by the membership.

President Morrell, hearing no further discussion, called for a vote. The resolution CARRIED.

President Morrell announced that no sense-of-the-house motions had been submitted and asked if anyone had any declarations to make.

President Morrell, NY, presented a declaration from Executive Director, Kent Williamson. Kent continues to serve as a very active executive director for NCTE, even as he is recovering from leukemia. At this time, he is unable to travel but remains in daily contact with staff and many members and Council allies. He anticipates a full recovery in the year ahead and wishes every board of director a wonderful convention experience.

Colleen Ruggieri, OH, the state hosting the NCAA Women’s Final Four and the Convention of the GNC, respectfully asked “Why not NCTE?” “As a past president of the Ohio Council of Teachers of English Language Arts, I respectfully ask the Convention Committee to consider the buckeye state as a future site of our annual convention. We have the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, we have art institutes, and more. We promise to keep our brothers and sisters nice and warm. So please think about Ohio. In addition, because this annual board of directors meeting typically follows the affiliate
leadership meeting, we are also asking that future planners consider a ticketed dinner option for this event. Many of us go from 4 until 7 and are pretty hungry. And we need to practice what we teach and remember that hungry tummies are not always productive.”

Tim Martindell, TX, current president of the Texas Council of Teachers of English Language Arts, invited everyone to their 50th annual convention in Houston, January 23-25, 2015, at the downtown Hyatt.

Bruce Novak, PA, Assembly for Expanded Perspectives on Learning, invited everyone to their annual conference, at Estes Park, CO, June 18-21, 2015, devoted to James Moffett. The theme of the conference is “James Moffett, Educational Prophet: Education for Global Dialogue, Wide Awakeness and Service to Life.” Moffett’s central idea was that, even if National NCTE stands for literacy, there is a very special skill at the heart of what we stand for that might well be called humanicy. The core of the universe of discourse is as he said was the I/thou relationship to others, to the world, and to ourselves. “That is what we are going to try to put into practice and into theory at this conference. It is going to be an exciting time. People who come to this conference are deeply warm-hearted, loving, and joyous. The keynotes are Sheridan Blau and Janet Emig.”

Sandy Hayes, MN, invited everyone to the NCTE Annual Convention in Minneapolis, November 19-25, 2015. No promises it won’t snow. Minneapolis is very creative though. The downtown area can be walked without a coat. It is all skyways, and restaurants and hotels are connected to the convention center. Hotels further out are on a light rail system.

Claire Lamonica, IL, outgoing chair of the Standing Committee on Affiliates, expressed the entire committee’s deep appreciation for the tireless help and support of NCTE staff member, Millie Davis.

President Morrell called for a motion to adjourn.

Zanetta Robinson, FL, moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Matt Skillen, PA. The motion CARRIED and the meeting was adjourned.

Meeting adjourned at 6:45 p.m.