



## **GERRY KUROGHLIAN**

### **Portrait of a Volunteer**

In this feature, Gerry Kuroghlian explains the work and rewards of serving as chair of the Resolutions Committee and his work with the Standing Committee on Affiliates.

Kuroghlian teaches at Staples High School in Westport, Connecticut, serves as Liaison Officer for the Connecticut Council of Teachers of English, and served as Exhibit Chair for the New England Association of Teachers of English. Publications include articles for the Connecticut Education Association; *Course Taking in Secondary Schools*; and, *CAPT Test--State of Connecticut*.

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#### **What motivated you to volunteer for NCTE service?**

As President of the Connecticut Council of Teachers of English, I needed the help of NCTE to solve a problem with state testing. NCTE did such an outstanding job that I wanted to be a part of a professional organization that had improved the life of every teacher of language arts in Connecticut.

#### **What has kept you interested in volunteering your time over the years?**

My major motivating factors for continued volunteering are the people with whom I work, especially Millie Davis, and the results of the work of NCTE in improving the quality of instruction for the nation's teachers.

#### **What does your current role entail?**

I am currently chair of the Resolutions Committee. The Committee reviews and edits resolutions, which set policy for NCTE.

#### **What key roles have you played and what did you find most satisfying in carrying them out?**

Up to this point my most rewarding work was with the Standing Committee on Affiliates (SCOA) as both an area representative and as Chair of the committee. I worked with outstanding people from across the country to provide leadership training, recognition, and awards for the state and regional Affiliates, which are the lifeblood of NCTE. Along with Pat Graff and the current chair Olivia Pass, SCOA has provided for yearly training for tomorrow's leaders of NCTE.

#### **What satisfactions do you derive from volunteering?**

To be a complete person who must give as well as receive from a professional organization. I took many ideas from NCTE when I started teaching and now is the time to give back to the organization and my peers. I love being with the people who make up NCTE and I have made many friends as a result.

#### **Why would you recommend volunteering to another NCTE member?**

The personal reward and networking is a major reason to volunteer. I feel great and am pumped up when I return from a conference. The rewards come from person-to-person contact with vital and interesting people. I can also see how the work I put in helps teachers across the globe.

**How has being your affiliation with NCTE improved your professional development and career?**

One NCTE conference provides an attendee with more professional development than a system could provide in five years. Issues and presentations are cutting edge and the material I bring back to my department enriches us all. As a result of the SCOA work I think I have a big picture look at American education, which puts triumphs and turmoil in the right perspective.

**Do you have a favorite NCTE publication?**

The *ENGLISH JOURNAL* has been my favorite since I started to teach. It has had amazing editors who provide invaluable information. I love reading it.

**What is the one book, article, or professional development experience you would recommend to other educators?**

Every teacher of language arts should attend an NCTE conference. They are addictive to the brain. I will continue to attend sessions even after retirement as they represent some of the best ideas in the nation.

**How has being a part of an educational community like NCTE improved your abilities as a teacher and a leader?**

NCTE has honed my leadership skills and has developed me as a person. The professional staff of NCTE in Urbana has been extremely helpful to my affiliate, my region and to me. I am a better teacher because I stay on top of what is happening in the field and “borrow” or adapt many of the theories, ideas, and lessons to my own classroom.