



JESSE PERRY

Portrait of a Volunteer

In this feature, Jesse Perry explains the work and rewards of serving as a member of the Literacy Award Committee, as well as his previous roles as NCTE President, as a founding member of SLATE, as a Secondary Steering Committee member, as Commission on Language director and as a NCTE Fund committee member.

Dr. Jesse Perry, past President of NCTE (1992-93), has been a leader in local, state, national, and international language arts organizations. Formerly a high school English teacher in Oakland and a lecturer on English methods at Mills College, Oakland, he also served as the Program Manager, English Language Arts, for San Diego City schools. During his tenure there, the District ran an outstanding Hispanic Reading Program for elementary students and greatly expanded its Advanced Placement program. In addition, Dr. Perry is a former President of the International Federation for the Teaching of English.

Dr. Perry became director of the Commission on Language, a founding member of SLATE, a member of the Secondary Section Steering Committee, the NCTE Commission on Literature, the Committee to Evaluate Curriculum Guidelines and Competency Requirements, the Senior High Booklist Committee, the Conference on English Education, NCTE FUND, and the Black Caucus. He has also served on the NAEP Writing Advisory Committee; on the College Entrance Examination Board English Advisory Committee and the English Composition Test Development Committee; on the San Diego State University Advisory Committee for the Graduate Program in Reading; on the IRA Journal of Reading Advisory Board; and for the California State Department of Education on the Basic Skills Test Writing Advisory Committee, the English Language Arts Model Curriculum Standards Advisory Committee, the California State Curriculum Committee, and the Committee to Revise the List of Recommended Readings in Literature K-12.

Dr. Perry has won many awards, most recently the 2002 Distinguished Service Award from the California Association of Teachers of English. He currently serves as dean of the Leadership Institute at his church in Oakland.

What motivated you to volunteer for NCTE service?

My profound interest in furthering the mission of the Council based upon what the Council has offered me through my many years as a member, such as highly professional staff development activities and opportunities to interest teachers of English Language Arts from across the country by supporting teachers in their right to teach and students in their right to learn. I continue to volunteer because I'm interested in supporting the growth of new teachers in the profession through curricular programs and practices that are on the "cutting edge."

What leadership roles have you held at NCTE?

Currently, I am serving as a member of the Literacy Award Committee, but over the years I have served in many roles that advance the mission of the Council, including serving as President of the Council

(1992). In addition, I was a founding member of SLATE (Support for the Teaching and Learning of English), served as a member of the Secondary Steering Committee, as director of the Commission of Language, and member of the NCTE FUND Committee.

What satisfactions do you derive from volunteering?

It is my hope that whatever contributions I make by volunteering will help other teachers of English to be more successful in what they do. This brings me satisfaction.

Why would you recommend volunteering to another NCTE member?

I would recommend volunteering because of the satisfaction it has brought me over the years to help move along the Council's agenda, particularly in the area of multi-cultural education and in providing teachers with strategies that would help them deal with those social and political practices that affect their profession.

Do you have a favorite NCTE publication?

The English Journal

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

I would recommend any professional development program that emphasized the importance of including multi-cultural/multi-ethnic literature into the ELA curriculum. I also recommend *Making the Journey: Being and Becoming a Teacher of English Language Arts* by Leila Christenbury.

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

NCTE offered me an opportunity to develop and enhance the skills I needed to become an effective teacher and a leader in my local school district (San Diego, retired).