



NEWSLETTER

Heidi Anne Mesmer, Editor
Spring 2005

President's Report

Donald J. Leu
University of Connecticut

Hidden Stories Within NRC: Lessons for Us All

It was a sincere pleasure to see so many of you in San Antonio. The San Antonio conference reminded me of the changing nature of our organization: we experienced more international speakers and attendees than ever before; we benefited from greater participation and involvement by graduate students; colleagues presented more rigorous research papers; and we gained new insights from an exceptional methodology series organized by Marla Mallette and Nell Duke. San Antonio was also a reminder of the traditionally supportive community that defines our organization. Everyone helped out, assisting one another in various venues—from the Newcomer's Luncheon, hosted by our outgoing Field Council Chair, Joyce Many; to the graduate pizza luncheon with over 250 participants, hosted by our outgoing Chair of the Student Research Award Committee, Josephine Peyton Young; to the Annual Town Meeting, so wonderfully hosted by our colleagues Kelly Chandler-Olcott and Michael McKenna. NRC is such a warm and inviting home to come back to each year! I marvel at how this magic happens each December.

The conference also reminded me of the many hidden stories that are a part of the NRC tradition. These are stories that take place every day, but few of us ever hear about them. They each involve common commitment to our organization. I want to pull back the curtain a bit and share a few of these stories, making more visible the important contributions that so many give to NRC. These stories, and so many more, remind us of who we are, individually and collectively. They also define a future where collaboration will be central to the conduct of research as increasingly complex problems emerge in our field.

Consider the first hidden story about a new member of our NRC team. This year we managed to bring the conference in under budget while, at the same time, we also managed to generate a bit more income than anticipated. Much of this was due to the outstanding work of the entire team at TEI, our management company. I want to specifically recognize, however, Angela Owens' tireless contributions to making certain that the annual conference ran smoothly and under budget. Angela is our Conference Manager and the director of day-to-day operations for NRC. She had to work especially hard since she was new to both TEI and

our organization. Angela had very little sleep during the conference so that all of us were able to benefit from our time together. She managed everything, from the morning coffee for Study Groups to the AV for plenary speakers. Angela also manages all of the day-to-day work of our organization, solving countless problems you will never see. If you have a chance, drop Angela a note to let her know how much you appreciate her hard work for all of us—a.owens@nrconline.org.

Another hidden story is the tireless work that takes place behind the scenes to move more of our work online. Our very capable President-Elect, Victoria Purcell-Gates, and her exceptional team of Area Chairs has worked diligently with Roy Smith at TEI to refine our online submission and review process. They are also adding a tool that will make final program composition go more smoothly. The collective hours this team is working is staggering, and yet so little of it is visible. Hold your email thank you's to this team for a bit, though. They are working feverishly right now with a talented group of reviewers to ensure the highest quality conference possible for you in December. They are already flooded with email correspondence as they work hard on our behalf. Let's tell them how much we appreciate their work at AERA, IRA, and at NRC in December!

A third hidden story revolves around the quiet financial contributions that so many members have given to our organization over the years. I am not going to be able to mention all of these but they include: (1) the wonderful gift given to us by Ed Fry for the annual book award; (2) the gift of royalty income from the Editors of the Handbook of Reading Research (Michael Kamil, David Pearson, Peter Mosenthal, and Rebecca Barr); and (3) a similarly generous gift of royalty income from the editors of the Handbook of Literacy and Technology (David Reinking, Michael McKenna, Linda Labbo, and Ron Keiffer). They also include the beneficial results of an initiative several years ago by many long-time members. During a moment of financial peril for the organization, these NRC pioneers organized a system for members to contribute financially to our organization. Each year, many members, unknown to most of us, contribute \$30, \$60, or \$100 when they pay their membership dues at the Silver, Gold, or Platinum levels. You may do this on either our hardcopy or online forms where you can specify where you would like your donation to go: (1) the Fund for On-going Support for NRC Efforts; (2) the Ethnicity, Race, and Multilingualism Fund; (3) the Promising Researcher Fund; (4) the Reserve Fund; or (5) the International Travel Fund. I want to thank everyone who has contributed in the past and encourage as many of us as possible to maintain this tradition.

This makes a tremendous difference to the new support we have been able to provide each of these important areas. It also ensures that our important Reserve Fund is maintained at a sufficient level.

There is another important story hidden to those who were unable to attend our Town Meeting this year. The Town Meeting prompted important conversation about our name. Nell Duke, along with others, raised a central issue—our name is beginning to seem somewhat distant from the true nature of our research community today. They noted that we are international in our membership, not national; we report research on a range of literacy issues, not simply reading issues; and we are much more of a permanent organization, not simply a one-week conference. Names, though, carry so many important meanings and such important history with them. To consider a name change is not an easy matter. And yet, I wonder if it is time to consider a name that more accurately reflects our work and our membership?

Shortly, I will be inviting continued conversation about the name of our organization on the NRC listserv so that the Board has a better sense of your thoughts about this issue. I hope we hear your voice in this conversation. If you have not yet subscribed to the new NRC listserv, I hope you will consider subscribing when you receive this newsletter. It is an easy matter. Simply follow the link to the NRC Listserv from our homepage: <http://www.nrconline.org/>

Why do I spend so much time, sharing these hidden stories about NRC? There is a simple answer. Each story tells us how collaboration is becoming increasingly important to our work, often as new technologies permit new ways of gathering information and communicating with others. The story of Angela and her team, Victoria Purcell-Gates and her team, the contributions that many of us make due to the initial efforts of a group of NRC pioneers, the collective conversations we had at our Town Meeting, and the conversations about our name that will take place shortly on the listserv, all point to this important lesson: collaboration is essential in an increasingly complex and networked world. Our collaborative work in NRC defines our future and our potential as a research community.

This principle also applies to our research as well as to our organizational work. Today, it is less often the single investigator who makes important breakthroughs. Instead, important research is increasingly the result of work by collaborative teams. Previously, during a time when many research questions tackled smaller elements of larger problems, the work of individual scholars defined our field. We still see vestiges of this period in the emphasis at some institutions on sole-authored research during tenure and promotion reviews. Most of us are coming to understand, however, that essential problems are now far too complex for the traditional, single investigator model. Collaborative efforts have become important in a world that presents increasingly challenging research problems for us to solve but also presents new technologies to assist us. Teams that are able to build effective working relationships, distribute tasks in effective ways, and use new technologies to facilitate their work, will solve the most challenging and complex literacy research issues of our time.

Developing productive, collaborative relationships is not easy, however. I see NRC as a place where each of us learns more about the power of collaborative research. To me, NRC is not only a

place to share research but it is also the incubator for new collaborations that form each year and that come back the following year to share the important work they have completed.

Yes, NRC is a very special home. We need to carefully nurture this special community where so many, give so much, to our organization, helping us to learn new lessons about NRC, about life, and about research. I look forward to seeing you in Miami where even newer lessons await us all!

President-Elect's Report

Victoria Purcell-Gates
Michigan State University

As Program Chair for the 2005 Annual Meeting, I had to hit the ground running following the close of the 2004 meeting in December. The 2005 Area Chairs met with me and Program Co-Chair Patricia Edwards on the morning of the last day of the conference in San Antonio to begin the planning. Since then, we have put the 2005 Call for Proposals online at the NRC website, and I worked with Roy Smith at the NRC Headquarters to revise and debug the online proposal submission process. Several new features in the proposal submission process necessitated this. First, we will now be putting the program book together directly from the proposal submissions. Those of you who have submitted proposals have noted this. You were asked to enter all of the information needed for a program entry as part of submitting your proposal. Secondly, the increasing numbers of presentations at our Annual Meetings has led to our changing the way in which we schedule presentations across the three and a half days of the conference. Before, we worked to avoid conflicts in scheduling for all authors listed for a paper. Beginning this year, we will be scheduling to avoid conflicts only for presenting authors. When you submit(ted) a proposal on line this year, you were therefore asked to list authors according to whether they will actually present part of the paper or are nonpresenting co-authors.

Since January, I have been actively working to engage plenary speakers who will (a) represent the scope of research activity present among NRCers as well as (b) help to kick-start an initiative that Pat Edwards and I are hoping to facilitate. This initiative brings together researchers from across the methodological and epistemological landscape to address long-standing inequities in literacy achievement, teaching, and learning. We are hoping to engage the thinking of all in this effort and look to facilitate focus groups of researchers who are willing to 'think outside the box' and to work *with* other researchers who do different types of research than their own in the belief that together we are stronger and more effective than alone.

Within this spirit and purpose, I am extremely pleased to announce that both Brian Street and Charles Perfetti have agreed to give Plenary Addresses at the 2005 Annual Meeting. Brian Street, from the UK, is well-known for his ground-breaking work on reconceptualizing literacy as multiple and ideological. Many NRCers conduct research currently within this frame and the opportunity to hear Professor Street and to engage in conversation with him is not to be missed! Charles Perfetti, from the University of Pittsburgh, is equally well-known for his work, from a cognitive/neurological

frame, on the components of the reading process. Many NRC members conduct work within this frame, and we are looking forward to hearing about Dr. Perfetti's latest work and to conversations with him as to how this work can inform our thinking about pressing issues of literacy equity.

Finally, in February, I surveyed the site for the 2005 Annual Meeting in Miami, Florida—the InterContinental Hotel—with the conference proceedings in mind. I checked out the meeting rooms, the guest rooms, the lounge(s)...Yes, this is a tough and tedious job! I am sure that all will be warm, sunny, exciting, and relaxing—as well as informative and productive for all!

Past President's Report

Lea McGee

University of Alabama

As Past President, I am chairing a committee to make a decision regarding renewing our relationship with TEI as NRC's Headquarters Team. The committee consists of current Executive Board Members Victoria Purcell Gates and Patricia Edwards as well as current Board members Chuck Kinzer and Norm Stahl. Lee Gunderson is also serving on the committee. The current management company's contract with NRC expires April, 2005. They have sent us a new bid for another three years at a slightly higher cost. We have also solicited bids from seven other management companies. In the next few weeks the committee should present a recommendation to the Board. If you have input that will help us make a decision in this regard, please contact me.

As Past President I am also charged with two additional duties. I am required to prepare the annual review of the management group and to present a report on the status of NRC's membership. In the next few months I will send out a survey to members asking for input on how well the management team has served our needs during 2004. Further, I will survey members to determine how headquarters handles membership renewals from the members' perspective. If any member has information or suggestions regarding either of these activities, please contact me through e-mail at lmcgee@bamaed.ua.edu.

Vice-President's Report

Patricia Edwards

Michigan State University

As Vice-President, one of my first official tasks was to prepare the 2007 Convention Hotel Site Search Report. In January, Jeff Armstrong, Angela Owens from TEI, and I visited two hotels—the Sheraton New Orleans and the Hyatt Regency Austin. I recommended to the Executive Board the Hyatt Regency Austin as my choice for three reasons: (1) the first time I attended NRC it was in Austin; (2) the NRC membership would have the entire hotel to ourselves; and (3) the hotel staff was exceptional and sent me several follow-up notes/cards indicating that they really wanted our business. The Executive Board recommended this venue to the Board. I am excited that the Board approved the Hyatt Regency Austin for our annual conference from November 28-December 2, 2007.



NRC members Lee Gunderson, Janice Almasi, Patricia Edwards, Don Leu, and Lea McGee share a moment together.

The Hyatt Austin Hotel offers 23,000 square feet of function space, including a beautifully renovated Foothills Ballroom and Texas Ballroom, which can accommodate 1,500 guests. In addition, the hotel offers 3,832 square feet of pre-function space. All public areas and meeting rooms offer wireless high-speed Internet and a complete array of audiovisual services as well as a creative convention services staff. The single/double hotel rate is \$139.

The Hyatt Regency Austin is a beautiful property directly located on Town Lake with a magnificent view of Downtown Austin. The downtown area is directly over the bridge which is next to the hotel. The hotel is very accessible to everything in Austin, along with a 9-mile Town Lake Hike 'n' Bike Trail located just outside the back door of the hotel. The hotel provides excellent restaurants, including the LaVista Restaurant, which was voted for the best fajitas three years in a row by the Austin Chronicle. Many more restaurants are all located within walking distance of the hotel and can vary in price. The majority of entertainment options are within walking distance and cabs are very accessible and fairly inexpensive.

So, please mark your calendars and prepare for another exceptional time in Austin, one of NRC's all-time, great locations!

Ethics Innovative Community Group (ICG)

Janet Richards, Co-Chair

University of South Florida

Allen Berger, Co-Chair

Miami University of Ohio

The NRC Ethics ICG meeting met at the annual NRC conference in San Antonio on December 2, 2004, from 7:30—8:30 AM. Despite the early hour, there were 14 enthusiastic members in attendance. We were pleased that despite his monumental schedule, Don Leu was at the meeting to help steer us in the right direction. Anne McGill Franzen also attended as NRC Board representative.

We discussed the following issues: The responsibilities and charge of the ICG, The concept of ICG versus committee, Review of Codes of Ethics of other relevant professional organizations, The process of appointing members to the committee, Dissemination

of ethics information to doctoral students and new NRC members, Long-range committee goals, Formation of sub-committees, and Establishment of a listserv.

Members raised the following questions: What steps does the committee take to go from an ICG to a committee? How might Ethics ICG members' names be listed in the program as in previous years? In addition, we decided to invite a guest speaker to discuss ethics considerations and submit an NRC Ethics proposal for the 2006 conference.

Please contact Janet Richards at JRichards@coedu.usf.edu or, Allen Berger at Bergera@muohio.edu for additional information. The NRC Ethics Committee welcomes new members.

Ethnicity, Race & Multilingualism Committee

Doris Walker-Dalhouse, Co-chair
Minnesota State University Moorhead

Gwendolyn Thompson McMillon, Co-chair
Oakland University

The Ethnicity, Race & Multilingualism committee would like to thank Jennifer Turner for writing the proposal and organizing the 2004 symposium "Crossing over to Canaan: Engaging distinguished women and/or minority scholars in critical conversations about tenure." We extend our gratitude to all who participated, especially Donna Alvermann, Kathy Au, Patricia Edwards, Jane Hansen, and Robert Rueda, and for those individuals who attended the annual committee meeting. We extend an invitation for your continued support and involvement in the work of the committee. As a follow-up to our 2004 symposium on tenure, the committee would like to recommend the following books for reading and discussion within and outside of the NRC community. These references include:

Li, G., & Beckett, G. (Eds.) (in press). *"Strangers" of the academy: Asian female scholars in higher education*. Sterling, VA: Stylus Publishing, LLC.

Mabokela, R.O., & Green, A. (Eds.) (2001). *Sisters of the academy: Emergent black women scholars in higher education*. Sterling, VA: Stylus, Publishing, LLC

Individuals interested in being involved in the work of the committee should express their interest in an e-mail to either of the committee chairs, Doris Walker-Dalhouse (walkerd@mnstate.edu) or Gwendolyn ThompsonMcMillon (mcmillon@oakland.edu).

Oscar S. Causey Award Committee

David W. Moore, Chair
Arizona State University at the West Campus

Oscar S. Causey helped create the National Reading Conference and served for many years as Chair of the Executive Committee. The Oscar S. Causey Award is given each year for outstanding contributions to reading research.

Victoria Purcell-Gates and Steven Stahl received this prestigious award in 2004. As many of you know, Dr. Stahl passed away shortly after receiving this award.

Special thanks go to Mark Conley for chairing the Oscar S. Causey Award Selection Committee the past few years. David Moore is the newly appointed, 2005-2007 chair of the committee.

Any NRC member may nominate recipients for the Oscar S. Causey Award. If you wish to nominate a candidate for the 2005 award, please send a letter of nomination and the candidate's current vita by **September 15, 2003** to the following address: DAVID.MOORE@asu.edu

Early Career Achievement Award Committee

Colin Harrison, Chair
University of Nottingham

Members of the Early Career Achievement Award Committee encourage all NRC members to submit nominees for the 2005 award. The Early Career Achievement Award was first presented in 1999. It is designed to honor new members of the NRC community who have been actively involved in research, teaching, and service and have demonstrated outstanding commitment and accomplishment in the field of literacy. Nominees must have seven or fewer years in the field from the date of their doctoral degree (or equivalent). In addition, they must have been members of NRC for at least three years, but not necessarily consecutively. NRC members may nominate candidates by sending a recommendation, outlining the candidate's contributions to the field of literacy research and the nominee's participation in NRC. **Friday, April 22, 2005** is the deadline for receipt of nominating communications.

Nominees are then requested to submit a current curriculum vitae that includes affiliations, degrees, research honors and awards, publications, and editorial board service as well as a statement delineating their professional experiences and research agenda. An additional letter of support from the candidate's current institution (e.g., department chair, research/teaching colleague) is also required. These materials must be received no later than **Friday, May 20, 2005**. Please note that in order to facilitate international participation we are discouraging the use of surface mail. If possible, send all materials by email (preferably in a zipped folder in one of the following formats: rtf, pdf, or Word) to the Early Career Achievement Award Committee Chair:

Colin Harrison
School of Education
University of Nottingham
Wollaton Road
Nottingham NG8 1BB, UK
colin.harrison@nottingham.ac.uk

The Early Career Achievement Award fills an important role as part of the National Reading Conference's effort to recognize and promote excellence. The committee and NRC appreciate your efforts to identify deserving nominees.

Student Research Award Committee

Rebecca Rogers, Chair
Washington University in St. Louis

We are pleased to report that the winner of the Student Outstanding Research Award for 2004 was Rebecca Deffes Silverman. Her paper, "Improving Standard Practice In Kindergarten Vocabulary: Comparing Three Methods of Vocabulary Instruction through Read-Alouds" was selected by the award committee. Her advisor is Catherine Snow.

Josephine Peyton Young, Arizona State University, will step down from her role as Chair of the Student Research Award Committee this year after serving as Chair for four years. Josephine did an outstanding job as Chair of the committee and made advancements in recruiting student papers for the award and initiating a lunch for graduate students at NRC. Rebecca Rogers, Washington University in St. Louis, is the new Chair of the Student Research Award Committee and will serve as chair of the committee from 2005-2008.

The Student Research Award Committee again sponsored a lunch for graduate students at NRC this year which was very well attended and received.

Publications Committee

Diane Barone, Chair
University of Nevada at Reno

Our Editors have been busy with quality manuscripts, a Yearbook, journal issues, and changes.

Journal of Literacy Research

Wayne Linek, Editor, Texas A & M University-Commerce
Nancy Padak, Editor, Kent State University
Tim Rasinski, Editor, Kent State University
Elizabeth Sturtevant, Editor, George Mason University

Beginning with Volume 38 (2006), Lawrence Erlbaum Associates (LEA) will publish the *Journal of Literacy Research*. As publisher, LEA will be responsible for sales, distribution, promotion, and advertisement, as well as production. NRC will continue to control all aspects of editorial work for *JLR*, such as selection of Editors, establishment of editorial policies and procedures, manuscript review and selection, etc.

This change will affect *JLR* authors only minimally. Authors will be charged for nontypographical changes at the galley stage. LEA will hold copyright, instead of NRC. Authors, however, will be able to reprint their own work without charge. Permission charges for others will be "commensurate with rates" LEA uses for other journals. In addition, all authors whose articles appear in *JLR* will each receive one complimentary copy, instead of the current 15 copies, although LEA will make article reprints available "at rates comparable to those charged for other journals."

We are excited about this change and we know that Erlbaum will enhance the presence of *JLR*. We expect that more professionals, students, and others like policy makers will now become aware of the quality of the work that is published in *JLR*.

The Yearbook

Beth Maloch, Editor, University of Texas at Austin
Jim Hoffman, Editor, University of Texas at Austin
Diane Schallert, Editor, University of Texas at Austin
Colleen Fairbanks, Editor, University of Texas at Austin
Jo Worthy Editor, University of Texas at Austin

The Editors of the Yearbook—Beth Maloch, Jim Hoffman, Diane Schallert, Colleen Fairbanks, and Jo Worthy—have been assured by Headquarters that the Yearbooks are in the mail. You should be receiving yours shortly, if you have not already.

The papers in the 2004 Yearbook reflect NRC's diverse membership and our commitment to improving literacy for all learners. As a research community, we are using traditional and innovative methodologies to study a wide range of topics, becoming more involved in schools, and moving outside of university and school settings to learn from parents and other community members. The Yearbook articles indicate that NRC members are looking at our own practice in critical, often uncomfortable, ways and anticipating future directions in research. The Editors know that you will appreciate this volume and thank you for your patient waiting.

Please consider submitting your manuscript (presented at the 2004 conference) for consideration in the 2005 Yearbook by February 8th. The Call for Manuscripts can be found on the NRC website.

Thinking about the Future

The Editors of the Yearbook will be crafting two more Yearbooks—one for 2005 and one for 2006. This means that NRC

Congratulations Award Winners !!!!

Albert J. Kington Award

Peter Mosenthal

Distinguished Scholar for Lifetime Achievement

Courtney B. Cazden

Early Career Achievement Award

Rebecca Rogers

Edward Fry Book Award

Michael L. Kamil

P. David Pearson

Peter B. Mosenthal

Rebecca Barr

Oscar Causey Award

Victoria Purcell-Gates

Student Outstanding Research Award

Rebecca Diffes Silverman

will be looking for new Editors. We ask that you consider this opportunity or encourage others to ponder it. Details about the search will be forthcoming. We are anticipating one overlap year, so that the new Editors can learn from the current team.

Candidate Statements

To cast your vote for NRC's 2005 Election, please visit the NRC website at URL: www.nrconline.org, and select the link to Vote-2005 Election. You will then be prompted to log on. The system will help you access information if you require it. Voting will begin Monday, April 11, 2005 and will close at midnight (central time) on Monday, April 25th.

Candidates for Vice President

Charles (Chuck) Kinzer

Chuck has been a member of NRC since 1978, when he was a K-12 Language Arts Consultant for a 44-school district in British Columbia, Canada. He received his Ph.D. from the University of California, Berkeley, in 1981 and was a faculty member at Vanderbilt University through 2002. He is now Professor and Program Coordinator at Teachers College, Columbia University.

Chuck's research on literacy teacher cognition, preservice education, anchored instruction and interactive, multimedia case-based instruction has been funded by the US Department of Education (OERI, FIPSE, OSEP), the NSF, the Spencer Foundation and other agencies, and has appeared in venues such as Applied Cognitive Psychology, English Quarterly, Reading Research Quarterly, Journal of Reading Behavior, Journal of Literacy Research, Reading Teacher, Language Arts, Journal of Special Education Technology, Handbook of Research on Teaching the English Language Arts, Handbook of Literacy and Technology. His co-authored text, now in its fifth edition, has influenced preservice teachers, and his co-edited book (Computer Strategies for Education: Foundations and Content Area Applications) was among the first to recognize the potential of computer and Internet technologies.

Chuck co-directs Case-based Technologies to Enhance Literacy Learning, a project creating Web-based, multimedia cases for preservice literacy instruction and testing nationally the effectiveness of case-based approaches. He also directs the Steppingstones Integrated Curriculum Project, studying pedagogical and technology supports to enhance literacy and social studies learning for children in inclusion classrooms. He is past editor of the NRC Yearbook and the Electronic Classroom division of Reading Online, serves on several editorial boards, and edits the education division for The Journal of Written Language and Literacy. Active in NRC since becoming a member, Chuck has served on numerous committees, including the Field Council Executive. He recently completed a term on the NRC Board of Directors, providing guidance to the negotiating team that moved the Journal of Literacy Research to Erlbaum Publishers, and is currently part of the team evaluating and negotiating with NRC's management company.

Position Statement

As the first in my family to graduate from college, and as a speaker of two home languages before learning English when my

parents moved to Canada in 1952, I feel strongly that literacy is critical to personal growth and professional opportunities and that that research leading to understanding the development and effective teaching of literacy is vital to our children's and our nation's futures. I view NRC as the premier organization supporting a community committed to moving the field forward through scholarship and research-based practice. It is the organization that provides, through publications, conferences and networks, a sustaining energy for its members. NRC has been instrumental in my personal and professional development, and I am honored to have been asked to place my name in nomination for Vice-President Elect.

NRC brings together the literacy researchers of the present and mentors the literacy researchers of the future. Recently, NRC has extended its role by reaching out to other organizations and by encouraging diversity in membership, research methods and interests while retaining its focus on literacy issues. These activities also indicate future directions. As an organization, our collective voice must be heard so that policy makers, curriculum designers, publishers and others base their decisions on the best research available—research that is consistently represented by NRC and its members. We need to continue our efforts to encourage a diverse membership, to create meaningful relationships with other professional organizations, and to highlight the evolving definitions of literacy and literacy practices.

The NRC leadership has important responsibilities to NRC members and the global community that has vested interests in literacy research and practice. The leadership makes important decisions about things that immediately and directly affect members—decisions that ensure smooth-running conferences, high-quality outlets for literacy research, and opportunities for members to collaborate and support each other. But NRC's leaders must also make important decisions that can affect national policies related to literacy and shape future literacy research. What we do as an organization to shape national debates is becoming increasingly important. I will strive to make decisions that reflect members' wishes in both of the areas noted above: the visible, day-to-day aspects, and the important decisions that will shape NRC's future and the future of literacy research and practice nationally.

NRC is an organization of committed individuals who work for the common good. I will work to ensure that new members are welcomed and mentored and to facilitate national and international outreach activities. I will support activities to enhance a policy agenda based on sound research from a variety of perspectives and will strive to bring policy makers and others to NRC so we can more directly hear each others' voices. I will encourage NRC's tradition of being a place where people hold each other in high regard and where meaningful dialog is encouraged. And I will continue to provide a place for a range of research and for emerging technologies on NRC's program.

Looking at past NRC programs and Yearbooks, one is struck by how NRC members anticipate and set the trends for what often become the mainstream directions in research and research-based practice. As we look to the future, both near and more distant, NRC must continue to anticipate needed directions in research

while supporting current initiatives. These directions include advocacy for broadly-based research, literacy teacher education, research methods appropriate for changing contexts and technology, issues of diversity within the organization and the larger community, research that spans individuals' earliest years to the years after retirement, and policy agendas that include new literacies and definitions of literacy that are being influenced by emerging technologies.

NRC continues to influence and energize my work through every issue of its journal, through every volume of the Yearbook, and through every annual meeting. Yet NRC's strength comes from individuals—friends and colleagues—who represent the organization. As we work to enhance literacy opportunities for all, we are collectively stronger with NRC as our intellectual home.

Norman A. Stahl

I am Professor and Chair of the Department of Literacy Education at Northern Illinois University. Across my career, I've had the opportunity to serve in faculty or research lines at Georgia State University, the University of Pittsburgh, and San Francisco State University.

My Ph.D. was awarded by the Program in Language Communications at the University of Pittsburgh, and previous to that I earned degrees at San Francisco State University (M.A. & B.A.) and the City College of San Francisco (A.A.).

Throughout my career I have authored or co-authored articles with valued colleagues that have appeared in the *Journal of Literacy Research*, the *Reading Teacher*, the *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy*, *Reading Research and Instruction*, the *Journal of Developmental Education*, and the *Journal of College Reading and Learning*, among others. My work appeared in the yearbooks of the National Reading Conference, the College Reading Association, and the American Reading Forum. Representative examples of my work at this stage in my career include the chapter on the history of college reading instruction in the *Handbook of College Reading and Study Strategy Research*, the chapter on conducting historical research in *Literacy Research Methodologies*, the Epilogue for the special edition of Nila Banton Smith's *American Reading Instruction*, and the text *Teaching Developmental Reading*.

During the past two decades I have presented regularly at our conferences, served on our committees, and reviewed for our journal and yearbook. Currently, I serve on your Board of Directors and as Chair of the Policy and Legislative ICG (with responsibility for issuing biweekly policy briefs). My past work as NRC Historian included collecting and reorganizing a half century of documents, yearbooks, and journals for the NRC archives, conducting the NRC oral history project, co-authoring with Trika Smith-Burke the JLR article "The National Reading Conference: The College and Adult Reading Years." I have also had the privilege to serve in leadership, committee, and editorial positions in IRA, CRA, ARF, and NADE. I have been recently nominated as an ACDEA fellow.

My schooling began as a first grade struggling reader and continued as such through my admission to college as a developmental

studies student. Because I will always remember the struggles and the victories of being at-risk, my professional career has been dedicated to assisting children, adolescents, adults, and most recently, English language learners to become readers and learners.

Position Statement

Two short years ago when I asked for your support while standing for election to the Board of Directors I stated that the National Reading Conference stood at a crossroads in its history. That statement still holds true as I share ideas with you today.

It is clear that we have important decisions to make together as the NRC community not just for the present but as part of our vision for the future of our organization and its membership across the next decade and beyond. In viewing the historical studies of NRC, it becomes clear that we have redefined or even reinvented ourselves successfully on several occasions since 1953. In each case we became more accepting of varied research paradigms and professional worldviews, and we became more diverse in our membership. We overcame both fiscal hardships and crises in management.

What then are the questions we must grapple with as we look forward toward 2015? First, is our current mission providing us with the long-term vision necessary for a professional organization awash in pedagogical, political, and theoretical change? We must continue to examine NRC's mission and the goals through formal, future oriented strategic planning and undertake well-planned tactical actions so as to tackle current issues and maintain NRC's programs. Second, will our philosophical stance, our resource base, and our organizational structure permit NRC to grow unbridled in the decade ahead as has been the case during the past decade? This query requires difficult discussions, but both the leadership and the membership of the organization must undertake the dialogue. We have questions to ask about the size of the membership, the delivery of our conference and publications, and the fiscal management of our resources. Third, has the organization truly embraced diversity in a manner that makes us a beacon in the night for all? While NRC leadership has opened the door widely, the very pride and community so many of us feel in NRC makes the high threshold itself difficult to cross. We have done much in fifty years; we can do so much more. It would be foolish to say that these are the only issues we must face in the immediate future. It would be even more foolish not to face them.

Such decisions might be easy if all that was confronting us was internal to the organization. However, you as members of the NRC, as members of the literacy profession, and more often than not, as members of the professoriate (regardless of one's homeland) are facing a political and pedagogical environment unlike anything that we have encountered in our professional lifetimes. Not since the days when NRC was birthed and took its first tentative steps in the midst of twin evils of McCarthyism and Fleschism has the literacy community been under such scrutiny if not attack. Literacy professionals banded together then for professional support and camaraderie, and so must NRC provide a port in the storm once again some fifty years later. Never before has it been more important for the leadership of NRC to promote the very forms of open and scholarly presentation, dialogue, and

reflection on all forms of literacy theory, research, and practice that we claim to be the hallmarks of our meetings and our publications. Regardless of differing individual points of view, NRC as a scholarly community must join together with our colleagues in other organizations to promote and if necessary defend the very tenets of inquiry and scholarship.

The NRC leadership can not shirk our onus. Such is my vision. Such is how I would serve you.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

Jim Anderson

I am an associate professor in the Department of Language and Literacy Education at the University of British Columbia. I have just completed a three-year term as Graduate Academic Advisor for the department and prior to that, was acting Co-ordinator of Early Childhood Education at UBC for one year. Prior to joining UBC, I worked in the public school system for 13 years as a classroom teacher, reading specialist, district language arts co-ordinator, and assistant superintendent of curriculum and instruction.

My work is in early/family literacy, particularly how non-mainstream parents perceive and support their children's early literacy development. As well, we have begun to examine critically the role of shared book reading in families from diverse socio-cultural groups. It has been published in the *Journal of Reading Research* (United Kingdom), *Journal for Research in Mathematics Education*, *Mathematics Education Research Journal* (Australia) National Reading Conference Yearbook, *Reading Research and Instruction*, *The Journal of Reading*, *The Reading Teacher* and the *Yearbook of the College Reading Association*. A co-edited volume, *Portraits of Literacy Across Families, Communities and Schools: Intersections and Tensions* is forthcoming (2005) from Erlbaum.

I have served on the Editorial Review Boards of *Reading Research Quarterly*, *Journal of Early Childhood Literacy*, *The Reading Teacher*, *Alberta Journal of Educational Research*, and the *College Reading Association Yearbook*. I was also a member of the International Review Board for *Handbook of Early Literacy* (Sage, 2002). In addition to presenting my work regularly at NRC, I have reviewed conference proposals, served as a Division Chair, and served as a member of the Elections Committee for 5 years.

Position Statement

I began my teaching career as a junior high school teacher in a small community in Northern Canada and many of the students were of First Nations (or aboriginal) ethnicity. I will always remember the feeling of helplessness I experienced knowing that for many of them, school literacy practices made little sense in their daily lives, yet knowing little about how I could help these young people fulfill their literacy needs in culturally appropriate and sensitive ways. While we have come a long way in our understanding of the situated and contextual nature of literacy, we still have to keep at the forefront, issues of diversity in terms of literacy teaching and learning as our world becomes increasingly complex and diverse. It is especially important in these "new times" that NRC play a leadership role in helping policymakers (and the general public) understand that answers and solutions to the issues and

challenges that confront us do not lie in resurrecting simplistic solutions that did not work very well for many, even in "old times".

Related to this issue, I believe it is important for NRC to continue becoming more international in perspective and scope. We already have a strong foundation on which to build in this regard. As we move forward in this area, it is especially important that we also respect and understand different epistemological traditions and learn from each other.

Given the increasingly complex and diverse nature of our society, I believe it is increasingly important that this organization continue to take a strong stand on the dangers of high stakes testing. Again, I believe that NRC should take a leadership role in helping policymakers (and the general public) understand the nature of high stakes assessment, especially for people who are marginalized and from outside the mainstream.

Finally, I feel very honoured to have been nominated for the board of directors of the pre-eminent literacy research organization. I also accepted the nomination with considerable humility. I have found NRC to be a community where new members and graduate students are welcomed and feel included. I believe that we need to continue to enhance this aspect of the organization and to work toward making it more diverse and representative.

Janet W. Bloodgood

I am an older relative newcomer to the field of literacy education. I am an associate professor in my eighth year of teaching at Appalachian State University in Boone, North Carolina. I teach undergraduate courses in the foundations of literacy and world children's literature and graduate courses in reading assessment, language arts, word study, and the clinical practicum. For the past year, I have served as the program coordinator for a reading faculty of eleven.

After obtaining a B.A. in English and General Literature from Harpur College (SUNY Binghamton) and an M.A.T. from Brown University, I taught seventh grade English before taking a hiatus to raise my children and several others. Almost 20 years later I decided to go back to school and completed an M. Ed. and Ph.D. in Reading Education at the University of Virginia. I became fascinated with the processes and understandings children develop as they become literate, and I have continued to explore those issues. I also became convinced that word knowledge, in all its many ramifications, was central to literacy development, so this has been another area of investigation for me. Now, as I teach undergraduate and graduate courses for elementary education students and teachers, my research horizons have expanded to include issues related to the core knowledge our students require and how best to convey it. This has led to exploratory studies of traditional literature, grammar, and word study instruction.

I have been fortunate to have my work published in *Reading Research Quarterly*, the *NRC Yearbook*, *Elementary School Journal*, *Reading Research and Instruction*, *The Reading Teacher*, and *Language Arts*. Several of these pieces, which were collaborative efforts, have been incorporated into edited books (e.g., M. F. Opitz (Ed.). *Literacy instruction for culturally and linguistically*

diverse students; R. D. Robinson, M. C. McKenna, & J. M. Wedman (Eds.). *Issues and trends in literacy education*, 2nd ed.). My first national presentation was in San Antonio in 1992, where I filled in for my doctoral advisor in an NRC symposium. I have presented at NRC almost every year since that time and consider the NRC community my professional home. I was honored to receive the NRC Student Outstanding Research Award in 1994. I have served on the Student Outstanding Research Award Committee and the Early Career Achievement Award Committee, which I have co-chaired for the past 3 years. In addition, I have reviewed conference proposals and served on the Editorial Review Board for *Journal of Literacy Research* as well as *Reading Research Quarterly* and *Reading Research and Instruction*.

Position Statement

I am truly honored to have been nominated for the NRC Board of Directors. NRC has played a major role in my professional life, and I look forward to each conference as a way to meet old and new friends and rejuvenate my thinking. NRC provides a welcoming community for first-time graduate students, international attendees, and veteran participants; diverse viewpoints are heard and respected. The conference provides a sounding board for legislative policies, expanding literacies, evolving technologies, and research methodologies. The NRC membership welcomes graduate students and other newcomers, offering a number of activities (e.g., lunches, research workshops) designed to support them and demonstrate that they are valued members of the reading research community. International Committee efforts and speaker invitations help us expand our world view as the number of participants from other countries grows. Study groups, round tables, Vital Issues, and chats at the bar provide participants with opportunities to discuss old problems, new ideas, and diverse designs, knowing that everyone's view will be considered. NRC and its members face the challenge of how to maintain a "small town" atmosphere while pushing boundaries in a variety of directions.

NRC fills a unique space in our professional world in that it encompasses both theory and practice across all aspects of literacy; researchers and practitioners share perspectives and value colleagues' critiques. The early morning study group that is co-facilitated by Linnea Ehri, a respected researcher, and Irene Gaskins, founder of Benchmark School and dedicated practitioner, is a prime example. Renewed interest in research methods, evident at December's conference, focuses on quality, efficacy, and openness to complementary approaches so that multiple facets of a problem can be addressed. Just as we address the specifics of literacy and how the important issues there can be addressed, we must also focus on the broader issues of policy and legislation that influence our practice. We are a group of intelligent, informed individuals who care deeply about the future of children and their schools. We must make sure that our individual and collective views are heard. NRC has been active in collaborating with other professional organizations in our field (e.g., IRA, NCTE) on this and other fronts, and I would like to work to ensure that these efforts continue.

George Kamberelis

I grew up in a culturally hybrid working-class family in New England. My mother's father emigrated from Sweden, and her

mother was American Indian (Mic Mac). My father's parents emigrated from Greece. Both my grandparents and my parents worked in factories or service industries all of their working lives. Like them, I "learned to labour" at an early age. Inspired by a family mantra about the power of education and encouraged and counseled by a few very important teachers and coaches, I managed to cross class and occupational boundaries. My experiences of social, cultural, and economic hybridity and the power of schooling to change my life galvanized my commitment to education, influenced my career path, and spawned my research interests. Although I remain a "stranger in paradise," continually negotiating the psychological borderlands between my working class and my academic sensibilities and practices, I love my profession and my work.

As an Associate Professor at the University at Albany-SUNY, I teach graduate courses on emergent literacy, literacy and society, media literacy, and qualitative research methods. I approach the study of literacy from a critical social-cultural-historical perspective, and I conduct research in several related domains: (a) how children make the transition from emergent to conventional reading and writing, (b) how children learn and use different disciplinary discourses and genres, (c) how different classroom participation structures lead to different academic and social outcomes, and (d) whether and how English language learning contributes to social and economic empowerment. My research has been published in many NRC, NCTE, and IRA journals, as well as in several authored or edited books.

Like most of you, I consider NRC my intellectual home. My involvement with NRC began when I was a graduate student almost 20 years ago. Since then, I have attended all but two NRC conferences, presenting over 40 papers, participating in pre-conference sessions, and serving on the editorial boards of *JLR* and the *Yearbook*. I was also awarded an NRC Early Career Achievement Award, and I have served on the committee for that award ever since. I cherish the friends and colleagues I have met in and through NRC. I am nourished intellectually and personally at our meetings every December. And I look forward to reading every *JLR* and *Yearbook*. It is thus an honor to have been nominated, and I would be pleased to serve on NRC's Board if Directors.

Position Statement

I am particularly interested in the potential of NRC to exert its influence at the nexus of research, policy, and practice. Central to working at this nexus is critically evaluating the rhetorical and material construction of "science" promoted by the government and the media. Both as a literacy researcher and a philosopher of science, I am troubled by the powerful and pervasive presence of discourses like the "scientific study of reading" and "No Child Left Behind." These discourses constrain the potential of literacy workers both in K-12 and higher education settings, and they pose serious threats to children, especially children from diverse social, linguistic, and cultural families. I believe the NRC community needs to promote definitions and visions of science that are more accurate and more socially responsible. Indeed, our continued ability to pursue the research questions we find most compelling using the theories and methods we believe are most relevant depends upon promoting such definitions and visions. As an NRC Board member, I would promote this goal.

Equally important to developing the intellectual and political potentials of NRC is our ability to attract and support young scholars (especially scholars of color) to our conference and our field. NRC has made great strides in this regard during the past decade. As we have grown and become more diverse, our meetings and journals have become more intellectually interesting, more humanly vital, and more in touch with our ever changing world. Our diversity has also extended the theoretical and empirical reach of our work, with an increasing number of papers on topics such as critical race theory, culturally relevant pedagogies, multiculturalism, masculinities, and English language learning now commonplace at our conference and in our journals. I would like to see us become even more proactive in attracting and supporting young scholars and scholars of color. As an NRC Board member, I would promote this goal.

It is both commonplace and true to say that we now live in a globalized, fast capitalist, televisual, media-saturated world. Indeed, literacy has become media literacy most of us and for the teachers and students with whom we work. Yet, as an organization our commitment to theory and research on the nature and effects of the media and media literacy seem a bit slow growing. For example, there have been relatively few empirical papers on media literacy practices at our conference and in our journals; there have been even fewer original theoretical papers on these topics; and there have been hardly any papers on the ways in which new information technologies are transforming the ways we can collect and analyze data. Inviting several outstanding national and international media literacy scholars to our 2004 meeting suggests that NRC is committed to positioning media and media literacy issues more centrally. I would like to see us move faster and farther in this direction, and as an NRC Board member, I would promote this goal.

The spatial distribution of literacy research and practice is also changing. On-line learning environments, for example, have become increasingly prevalent sites for literacy teaching and learning, but so have after school programs, community-based organizations, and workplaces. Importantly, these new learning spaces are often targeted to serve poor and culturally diverse children and families—a pressing need in the new millennium. As a leader in literacy research, policy, and practice, NRC can and should devote more attention to understanding these new learning spaces and their potential for transforming American education. As an NRC Board member, I would promote this goal.

Joyce E. Many

I am a Professor and Unit Coordinator of Language and Literacy Education at Georgia State University. I joined Georgia State after serving on the faculty at Texas A&M University and as a research fellow at Northern College in Aberdeen, Scotland. My undergraduate and master's degrees were in elementary education from Northeast Louisiana University in Monroe, LA where I taught public school for eight years. I earned my Ph.D. in Curriculum and Instruction with an emphasis in reading/language arts from Louisiana State University. My research has concentrated on understanding children's literacy processes and the classroom contexts that shape those processes, on exploring factors impacting teacher education students' performance in literacy courses, and on describing the scaffolding teachers and peers use to support student learning.

My publications have appeared in a variety of outlets including the National Reading Conference Yearbook, *JRB: The Journal of Literacy, Reading Research Quarterly*, *Reading Research and Instruction*, *Reading Online*, and *Language Arts*. I also edited *The Handbook of Instructional Practices for Literacy Teacher-Educators*, and co-edited, *Reader Stance and Literacy Understanding: Exploring the Theories, Research, and Practice*. An active member of NRC, my first presentation in 1989 won the Student Research Award and I have presented each year since that time. In 1999, I was a recipient of NRC's Early Career Award.

Since 1995 I have worked with NRC's Field Council. For the past four years I have served as Co-chair and then Chair for the Field Council and in that role I also served as an appointed member of the Board of Directors. I have worked on the Publication Committee and the Student Research Award Committee and have regularly served as a reviewer for *The Journal of Literacy Research*, the NRC Yearbook, and the annual conference.

Position Statement

My involvement with NRC has been driven by an awareness of the importance this organization plays in the development of literacy scholars. The juxtaposition of plenary sessions, research presentations, alternative format sessions, and vital issues discussions stimulates our thinking and provides the invigoration we need to envision new possibilities as researchers and educators. In consort with this yearly shot in the arm, the organization's publications provide us with opportunities for ongoing stimulation and reflection throughout the year. As I think about ways this organization can continue to provide exemplary support to members, my attention focuses on three areas: (a) exploring additional avenues for mentoring literacy scholars across all phases of their careers, (b) expanding the levels of involvement of greater numbers of participants, and (c) increasing communication about NRC activities and initiatives.

The participants of this organization have, for many years, underscored NRC's role in nurturing literacy researchers' entry into the profession. The Newcomer's Luncheon, doctoral student luncheon, and the research methodology series are indicative of the importance the members have placed on providing an early support system to novice researchers. As a member of the Board of Directors, I would continue to support these initiatives while also considering new possibilities. For instance, I would urge us to remember that all literacy researchers grow and change over time, and that the need for development continues throughout our professional lives. Consequently, I would like to see us explore additional ways to meet the needs of diverse researchers at all phases of their careers. Possible activities might include pre-conference or post conference institutes, online discussions groups, website support, or focused professional development magazines on topics such as grant writing, data analysis processes, planning and administrating large-scale studies, and approaches to leadership on state and national levels.

Second, as a member of the Board of Directors I would like to pursue ways to expand the involvement of greater numbers of NRC members in organizational activities. As our conference membership grows to record levels, we need to see an increased presence of new faces at committee meetings. When conference

participants are encouraged to move beyond attendance at sessions and to allow their voices to be heard, we are able to benefit from an enriched range of perspectives, to understand diverse sets of needs, and to articulate new directions based on members' ideas and recommendations. We need to continue our efforts to encourage all members to take part in committees and through such avenues make their unique contributions.

Finally, I would like NRC to continue to explore ways to effectively communicate with members, with other organizations, and with the public. The creation and use of the NRC listserv and the renovation of the NRC website have been important steps in helping members understand the scope of NRC activities. However, continued efforts at communication could help more individuals feel a sense of connectedness to ongoing activities, could increase participation in NRC's Collaborative Research Network, and could enhance levels of informed discourse on issues of concern. In recent years, efforts have also been made to increase communication between NRC and other literacy organizations such as IRA and NCTE. These bridges are important in allowing us to share information and plan collaborative activities. Finally, as a Board Member I would support the continued development of Literacy Research Reports and the participation of NRC representatives on national committees focusing on literacy. These activities are important in ensuring the unique perspectives and concerns of NRC as a literacy research organization are heard not only by literacy researchers but by politicians, teachers, and members of the public in general.

NRC provides the fertile ground for all of us to grow and learn as scholars through a range of outlets that cater not only to our needs but also which feed our creative juices and enable us to reach for our dreams. The organization is vital and energetic because of the diversity and expertise found in the membership. By continuing to involve more and more participants in the workings of NRC, supporting scholars at all stages of their careers, and communicating effectively within our organization and beyond our organization, we can increase the degree to which the contributions of our researchers make a difference in the literacy field.

Ellen McIntyre

I am a professor in the Department of Teaching and Learning in the College of Education at the University of Louisville where I teach courses on literacy research, theory, and methods. Since obtaining my Ed.D. at the University of Cincinnati in 1990, all of my work has focused on populations of children historically marginalized in school: the poor; working class; rural Appalachians; and urban minorities, who most often include African Americans and English language learners. My studies in these areas have resulted in several books, including the edited volume, *Balanced Instruction: Strategies and Skills in Whole Language* (with Michael Pressley, 1996) and articles in the *Journal of Literacy Research*, *National Reading Conference Yearbook*, *Reading Research Quarterly*, *Research in the Teaching of English*, *Language Arts*, *American Educational Research Journal*, *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, *Educational Equity and Excellence*, *Reading Research and Instruction*, *Journal of Research in Childhood Education*, and *Journal of Educational Research*, among others. I have served as reviewer for the first five journals mentioned above and NRC conference proposals.

My first research effort examined the spelling strategies of my own first grade students while I was teaching in an urban school serving students of poverty. I presented this study at the National Reading Conference in 1987, and then presented at NRC nearly every year after that. From that time on, I have been keenly interested in how children learn to read, and my subsequent studies focused have on children's literacy and numeracy development. While most of my research has been classroom-based, the focus on development took me into the homes and communities of the Appalachian children I studied in efforts to gain a complete understanding of the resources and barriers that affect student development. These studies showed how powerful good teaching can be. When the teachers skillfully used the knowledge and skills students and their families already had and built curriculum around these funds of knowledge, students' attendance, attitudes, and achievement all improved.

Understanding student development and best practices has led me to research on teacher development. In particular I am interested in how regular classroom teachers meet the needs of the English language learners in the classroom. Using a variety of research methods, this study may contribute to policy decisions about how we can best support teachers in acquiring the skills and commitment necessary for teaching the diverse populations of students we have in today's schools.

In addition to my research, I devote considerable time to teaching and service. In fact, each year I have spent time in schools working with children to hone my own teaching skills and observe children's learning more closely. Each summer I direct a summer project called the Kentucky Reading Project, a professional development institute modeled after the National Writing Project and funded by our state legislature. This state-funded work has led me into policy negotiations with legislators and extensive collaboration with other Kentucky professionals.

Position Statement

I am honored to be nominated for the National Reading Conference Board of Directors. I have been part of NRC since 1988, and have witnessed its many changes. But always, I have found the organization to be open-minded, respectful, critical, and full of smart people doing important work. NRC's mission to conduct and disseminate state-of-art research has taken on great importance in the last decade as new mandates at times collide with the literacies people use and value. I believe, like many members of NRC, that we must stay positive about mandates, seeking collaborative relationships among federal and state constituencies while maintaining our integrity as an organization that values all kinds of people, research, and literacies.

I will work to see that NRC continues the practice of changing to meet the needs of the organization's members. In addition to keeping the conference of high quality, I would like to see the organization become more visible in the policy area. We ought to be considered the premier research organization in literacy, with significant messages about literacy, learning, and teaching. I want the organization to become more visible to the public, perhaps by sending position statements or newsworthy studies to news outlets. I would work to see us better connected to other literacy

organizations with joint papers and position statements—material that will, like some of the white papers published on our website, be disseminated widely and used to affect policy and practice.

Of course, I will also work to continue to improve the conference. I laugh every year when I read the newsletter following the conference in which the president claims it was the best NRC ever. And yet, it does seem to get better each year. The inclusion of the Saturday conference, the research methodologies stream, the Bird-of-a-Feather groups, and the alternative sessions have all added something very important to the conference, strengthening it, and making it more inclusive. The plenary speakers are more compelling each year, always broadening our understandings of literacy.

While the plenary speakers have often been the highlight of each conference for me, I would like NRC to seek even broader inclusion and invite speakers from literature, psychology, anthropology, urban education, and teacher education. One of the challenges for literacy researchers is to keep abreast of research findings in all these fields, as they affect our own.

Additionally, if I am elected to the Board I will suggest featured sessions on teacher research, perhaps to be held during the Saturday conference, with possibly small grants to pay for the teacher researchers' conference registration. Additionally, NRC may have the capability of starting a small grants program that funds cutting edge research that is not fundable elsewhere, for example in the area of media literacy. This could be the organization that supports research most cutting edge—not only what is currently hot, but what will be hot.

The National Reading Conference can and shall continue to be the important organization it is today.

Donald J. Richgels

I am a Professor in the Department of Literacy Education at Northern Illinois University, where I have taught courses in language development, language arts, linguistics, and reading for 18 years. I was a primary grade teacher for 8 years in Janesville, Wisconsin. Teaching reading to first graders motivated my doctoral studies in reading at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, which awarded me a Ph.D. in 1982.

My research in the area of emergent literacy has included empirical investigations of invented spelling and a descriptive study of teaching and learning in an exemplary kindergarten. I have written reports of that research, and I have described its applications in pieces that bridge theory and practice. My work has appeared in *Reading Research Quarterly*, *The Reading Teacher*, *Journal of Reading*, *Journal of Reading Behavior*/*Journal of Literacy Research*, the *NRC Yearbook*, *Journal of Educational Research*, *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, *Young Children*, and the *Handbook of Early Literacy Research*. I have written *Going to Kindergarten: A Year with an Outstanding Teacher*, and I am the co-author, with Lea McGee, of *Literacy's Beginnings: Supporting Young Readers and Writers and Designing Early Literacy Programs: Strategies for At-Risk Preschool and Kindergarten Children*. I have served on the editorial board of *The Reading*

Teacher since 1988 and was author of that journal's Professional Library column from 2001 to 2003; I also have been an active member of IRA's Literacy Development for Young Children Special Interest Group and have served on the editorial board of *Reading Research Quarterly*.

The National Reading Conference has been a significant part of my professional life. I have been a member since 1983. I attended my first conference that year and sixteen other conferences since then. I have been a member of the Publications Committee, reviewed conference proposals and Yearbook submissions, and served on the editorial board of the *Journal of Reading Behavior*. For the last year, I have served as Parliamentarian; in that role, I have attended meetings of the Board of Directors.

Position Statement

Of all the professional organizations to which I belong, NRC is where I feel most at home. NRC has contributed most to my development as a literacy professional, and it is to NRC that I feel the greatest obligation and desire to serve. I especially enjoy the unique opportunity NRC's annual meeting offers for engaging in dialogue with other literacy researchers. Beyond the annual meeting, NRC's presence in the literacy research community is year-round, through its publications, field operations, and online presence. Over the years, NRC has come to define the literacy research community, as it provides a forum for productive interaction among those who represent diverse literacy domains, philosophies, approaches to research, and approaches to literacy learning and instruction. This growth and vitality has come about through the dedication and effort of many. I am honored to be nominated to serve on the Board of Directors and thus to be afforded the opportunity to add to that history of service.

I see the responsibility of a board member to maintain NRC as a community of scholars, that is, a forum for interaction among members. However, as NRC has grown and evolved—as it has assumed a clearer identity as the community of literacy researchers, it has a responsibility also to look outward. A board member must be aware of NRC as an organization of consequence in the larger arena of educational policy, practice, and politics. I am particularly concerned about the current educational climate in the United States, where policy makers too narrowly define literacy and research, teachers feel their professionalism undermined, parents are increasingly voiceless about their children's literacy instruction, and students find that instruction to be ever more regimented and stressful. In the area of my own scholarly work, emergent literacy, I attempt to look across a wide range of language domains in order to support a broad conceptualization of spoken language competence, one that sees as relevant to beginning literacy learning and teaching not just phonemic awareness, as important as that is, but also other formal and non-formal language knowledge. I believe that such a view is essential to meeting the needs of all literacy learners. NRC must continue to stand for—in all areas of literacy research and practice—a similarly broad view of what counts as literacy, as research, and as worthwhile practice. There is much at stake—and much to be learned from the work and sharing of NRC members, both in the United States and internationally. That sharing is the organization's reason for existing.