



NEWSLETTER

Jacqueline Lynch, Editor
Spring 2008

President's Report

Norman A. Stahl
Northern Illinois University

Warm Thoughts and Tedious Plans

The toughest parts of the year for an old California beach bum now stuck in the flatlands of the lower, upper Midwest are always the last days of January and the month of February. I'll never get acclimated to temperatures that flirt with zero, and the copy of the *Surfer's Path* that arrived in the mail a couple hours ago only adds insult to injury. It seems like the last time I was warm was when we were all together in Austin for the 57th Annual Meeting of our National Reading Conference.

I hope thinking about our week together on the banks of Town Lake gives you a warm feeling as we hunker down for the rest of this winter. It should, as you put on a wonderful conference, and I want to thank all of you for all that you did. While it is true that folks tend to thank the conference chair for the work done in delivering our annual meeting, the success comes from the good work done by each of you as you delivered your sessions, interacted with your colleagues, attended a range of presentations, and participated in a host of social events. Indeed many of you were able to report back to your dean or department chair that you actually gave a presentation to an overflow audience where folks were so interested in your research that they were standing in the hall straining to hear what you had to say. Still, all kidding aside, you are what makes NRC great. Thank you!

Having said such, I would be sadly remiss if I did not send out a few special acknowledgements for individuals who shined so brightly at the conference. Wasn't Patricia A. Edwards' presentation "The Education of African American Children: Voicing the Debates, Controversies, and Solutions" inspirational? I don't think you will give me an argument there. I thank you, Pat. You are a class act.

David C. Berliner's plenary speech "How High-Stakes Testing Inevitably Corrupts Our Indicators and Our Educators" was given to a packed house. Your evaluations overwhelmingly indicated that the speech was nothing short of excellent. The message David shared was ever so important in this era of *No Child Left Standing*. I thank you, David. People need to hear your message.

Glynda Hull gave our second plenary session, and we were taken on a journey. First, we were taken across town from the hills of U.C. Berkeley to the flats in Oakland, where she has made a real difference in the lives of young people through a community-based program that

has introduced them to life-changing opportunities associated with the new literacies. Secondly, she took us across the oceans to India where we see that Glynda's good works and associated scholarship know no boundaries. I thank you, Glynda. Your work has meaning to the professoriate and even more so to those on the borders of pedagogy.

What can I say about Douglas K. Hartman, or should I say Edmund B. Huey? His one-man show as Huey connected us with our common roots and demonstrated in ever so many ways that all that is old is new again. I'm told you will be able to share the ideas of Huey with your students, as this presentation will be available on our homepage. I thank you, Doug, or should I thank Edmund?

Last but not least, Michael L. Kamil's Oscar S. Causey presentation, "How to Get Recreational Reading to Increase Reading Achievement," took to task the sacred beliefs or longstanding myths associated with free reading projects. Agree or disagree, the presentation made you ponder carefully your position about what is considered a long-running practice in our schools. I thank you, Mike. The field needs folks who will grab the bull by the horns.

We also owe a big thank you to the good folks from the University of Texas. James V. Hoffman brought us a highly successful pre-conference event that focused on the development of the upcoming fourth edition of the *Handbook of Reading Research*. If that was not enough, Jim joined with Diane Schallert to organize a wonderful set of social activities that highlighted the very best of Austin, Texas.

Finally, thanks goes out to all the folks who served as Area Chairs and their colleagues who reviewed the proposals, as well as to our great headquarters staff members who were there daily to meet our many needs.

Now before I go out to shovel snow for the third time today, let me share with you a few items about plans for the spring. Each President of NRC has always developed a set of goals for the presidential year. My goal was to wipe out illiteracy in the known world. Furthermore, I was going to tackle malaria. Unfortunately, it became rather clear that it was time to tend the home fires for the organization.

Our guiding documents need serious attention, as a number of best-laid plans from the past must be evaluated and perhaps reconsidered. Hence, our *Bylaws* and our *Policies and Procedures Manual (PPM)* will get our direct attention in the foreseeable future. The promised Bylaws change pertaining to Section 9.4 on Bylaws changes will be tackled by the Board of Directors (I realize that such a statement is about as clear as the original writing on critical pedagogy), and if this

is not possible because of quorum issues, there will be a direct vote of the membership. As for the *PPM*, Lee Gunderson and Chris Roper have already done some highly valuable and admittedly tedious work with this document. Your Executive Board will complete the tedium within the next month. Hopefully the revised *PPM* will be available to be accepted by the Board of Directors at the spring meeting at the IRA Convention in Atlanta. It's not glorious work, but it is now necessary.

Talking about necessary, I best get outside and deal with the driveway. Springtime is a long time in the future. Stay warm, scouts.

President-Elect's Report

Kathleen A. Hinchman
Syracuse University

Congratulations and thanks to our colleague, Norman A. Stahl, for organizing a wonderful 2007 conference in Austin, including a highly informative round of plenary addresses. A hearty thanks is also in order to our University of Texas at Austin colleagues for their intensely thoughtful local arrangements. A final thank you goes to our membership for presenting a host of interesting research and alternative format sessions, keeping us on the cutting edge of literacy research.

At the end of this month, your NRC Executive Committee will help me survey the site for the 2008 Annual Meeting in Orlando. Keep in mind that it is February and I do live in Syracuse, so this is an extremely important assignment to me. We will be sure to inspect the meeting rooms, ballrooms, guest rooms, lounge, restaurant, and outdoor facilities, as well as talk with our Orlando colleagues to discuss how we might find time to partake in at least some of what Orlando has to offer.

Thanks to gentle reminders from our outstanding NRC Headquarters staff, our 2008 Call for Conference Proposals is posted online at www.nrconline.org, alongside the Call for Proposals and Proposal Submission links. The 2007 Area Chairs are signed up, ready, and looking for proposals, as well as volunteers to review proposals.

Important Dates

Our theme is **Literacy Research: Merging and Emerging Perspectives**. In keeping with this idea, please encourage your new and not-so-new junior and senior colleagues to submit proposals representing their rigorous research on literacy. For general inquiries and the Call for Proposals, please visit NRC's website at www.nrconline.org. Inquiries about specific areas of research should be directed to the respective Area Chairs, whose e-mails are listed in the Call for Proposals.

 **March 3, 2008** – Proposals for the 2008 conference program must be submitted electronically at www.nrconline.org by 12:01AM EST

 **July 25, 2008** – Notification of all proposal review decisions will be sent out via email

 **September 15, 2008** – Applications for the Student Outstanding Research Award and the J. Michael Parker Award must be received by the Chairs of these committees.

Please check the NRC website for information on nominating others for our organization's prestigious awards. Congratulations to last year's winners, too, and thanks to those who serve NRC as selection committee chairs and members, making annual difficult selections in respectful and helpful ways. Your help is sincerely appreciated.

Thanks, too, to those who've agreed to run for our elected offices this year. I really appreciate your willingness to serve in such capacities. It will be a pleasure to work with you in the coming months and years. Do consider each candidate's statement carefully as you participate in our March election.

Congratulations, Award Winners

Albert J. Kingston Award

John McEneaney
Oakland University

Early Career Achievement Award

Sharon Walpole
University of Delaware

Edward B. Fry Book Award

Elizabeth Birr Moje
University of Michigan

Cynthia J. Lewis
University of Minnesota

Patricia E. Enciso
Ohio State University

Oscar S. Causey Award

Scott G. Paris
University of Michigan

Student Outstanding Research Award

Elizabeth Stolle
Grand Valley State University

J. Michael Parker Award

Amy Suzanne Johnson
University of South Carolina

Kristen Perry
University of Kentucky

The Site

Our 2008 conference will be held in at the Wyndham Orlando Resort. It is on International Drive in Orlando, Florida. Conference rates for the hotel are \$149 (single/double rates). Home to Disney World, Universal Studios, and Sea World—it has prompted the Syracuse University graduate students to suggest all sorts of Mickey Mouse conference themes.

Orlando is infamous as a destination for family vacations. International Drive is in the heart of Orlando's action, accessible to restaurants, shopping, and a snow-free outdoors. This hotel boasts of jogging trails, lush gardens, and romantic lagoons, as well as a lobby bar and a restaurant, Augustine's Grill. There are also three swimming pools, a fitness center, and a game room.

I look forward to reviewing your conference proposals, and to seeing you in December in sunny Orlando.

Distinguished Scholar Lifetime Achievement Award Committee

Margaret J. Finders
University of Wisconsin, La Crosse

Jerome S. Bruner Receives Distinguished Scholar Lifetime Achievement Award

The Distinguished Scholar Lifetime Achievement Award was first presented at the Annual Conference in 2001. The Distinguished Scholar Lifetime Achievement Award was initiated to recognize a distinguished scholar who has had a significant impact in their lifetime contribution to the field of literacy theory, research, and practice.

This year, the committee selected Jerome S. Bruner for the Distinguished Scholar Lifetime Achievement Award. He was nominated by Carolyn Colvin (Ph.D., University of Iowa) and M. Trika Smith-Burke (Ed.D., New York University). Jerome S. Bruner was the inspiration for the creation of the Distinguished Scholar Award by the NRC President at the time, Taffy Raphael.

Jerome S. Bruner is one of the most influential and well-known psychologists of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. His work and legacy as a researcher are intricately woven into our understandings of perception, cognition, culture, and meaning on language and literacy learning and development as well as on the process of education (learning and teaching), curriculum development, and discourse.

Jerome S. Bruner joins past Distinguished Scholar Lifetime Achievement Award Winners: Ann Brown (2000-2001), Louise Rosenblatt (2002), Marie Clay (2003), and Courtney B. Cazden (2004).

It is time to think about nominating one of the individuals who has helped to shape and inform your career.

The Distinguished Scholar Lifetime Achievement Award acknowledges an outstanding individual who has not been actively involved in the National Reading Conference in committee work, editorial work, or presentations, but whose lifetime work, nevertheless, has had a major influence on literacy theory, research, and practice of the NRC membership.

Nominations for this award may be made by a group of 10 (or more) NRC members who present a written nomination signed by these members to the committee chair with a brief description of the significance of the scholar's contribution and the impact this scholar has had on the field.

Please send applications electronically or in hard copy by **March 15, 2008** to the Committee Chair:

Margaret J. Finders, Ph.D.
Associate Dean & Director of School of Education
University of Wisconsin, La Crosse
235 Morris Hall
1725 State Street
La Crosse, WI 54601
Office Phone: (608) 785-8160
E-mail: finders.marg@uwlax.edu

Early Career Achievement Award Committee

Mark Dressman
Chair University of Illinois – Urbana-Champaign

NRC Early Career Achievement Award Call for Nominations

Nominations are now being requested for the NRC Early Career Achievement Award for 2008. The Early Career Achievement Award is designed to recognize the new members of the NRC community who have been actively involved in research, teaching, and service for approximately three to seven years and who have demonstrated outstanding commitment and accomplishment.

Nominees for the NRC Early Career Achievement Award can be of any rank. However, nominees must: (1) be members of NRC (for at least three years, but not necessarily consecutively); (2) possess a terminal doctoral degree; and (3) have worked in the field for seven years or less from the conferral date of their degree to the posted deadline for this competition—that is, to have received their degree no earlier than mid-April of 2001.

Application for the Award is through nomination. NRC members may nominate candidates by sending a recommendation letter outlining the candidate's contributions to the field of literacy research and the nominee's participation to NRC. The preferred format for this letter is electronic. Please send your nominating letter by e-mail to the Chair, Mark Dressman, at mdressma@uiuc.edu, or, if this is not possible, by regular mail at the address in the signature below. The deadline for nomination for this year's competition is **March 31, 2008**.

Nominees for the Award will be contacted by the Chair and asked to submit: (1) a current curriculum vita, including affiliations, degrees, research honors and awards, publications, and service on editorial boards of research journals; (2) a statement delineating professional growth and research agenda; and (3) a letter of support from the candidate's current institution (e.g., teaching/research colleague, department chair); and (4) a publication representative of their work. Members of the Committee will review all nominee materials and rank each candidate.

For further details regarding the selection process and regulations for the Award, please consult the NRC Policies and Procedures Handbook at <https://www.nrconline.org/information/2006PolicyandProcedures.pdf> or e-mail me directly at mdressma@uiuc.edu.

Thanks very much.

Mark Dressman
311 Education Building, MC 708
University of Illinois
1310 S. Sixth St.
Champaign, IL 61821

Ethics Innovative Community Group (ICG)

Cynthia B. Leung, Co-chair
University of South Florida St. Petersburg

Karen M. Feathers, Co-chair
Wayne State University

Karen M. Feathers chaired an alternative session at NRC 2007 for the Ethics ICG. The session, titled "To Act or Not to Act: Ethical Behavior in the Highly Charged NCLB Culture," was held on Friday, November 30, 2007. The purpose of the alternative session was to provide a venue for participants to identify and discuss ethical issues related to literacy research and NCLB, to share actions taken by various NRC members, and to brainstorm other possible actions. There was a panel discussion of ethical issues panel members have faced as literacy researchers, followed by small group discussions led by panel members: Richard L. Allington, Kathy Champeau, Mark Conley, Dorsey Hammond, and Peter Johnston. In addition to presenters, 68 participants took part in the session.

Members of the Ethics ICG are preparing a proposal for an alternative session on ethics and literacy research for NRC 2008. The number of NRC participants who attended the 2007 alternative session sponsored by the Ethics ICG speaks to the need for sessions at NRC on ethical issues related to literacy research. The ICG would like to sponsor a session on ethical issues at all future National Reading Conferences.

The Ethics ICG held its business meeting at NRC 2007 on November 29. At that meeting members discussed the possibility of the Ethics ICG becoming a standing Ethics Committee of NRC. The role of such a committee would be to provide a venue for NRC members to discuss ethical issues and dilemmas related to carrying out literacy research and to provide guidance on ethical issues to doctoral students and those new to the field. The ICG also discussed clarifying the role of the Ethics ICG Steering Committee. These issues will be further discussed on the Ethics ICG Listserv.

If you would like to be a member of the Ethics ICG and join the ICG Listserv, or if you are currently a member and would like to update your e-mail address, please e-mail Christopher Roper, the Listserv administrator at NRC Headquarters, at c.roper@nrconline.org. The address of the discussion list is NRC_Ethics_ICG@nrconline.org.

Everyone is welcome to join the Ethics ICG and to share ideas with other ICG members through the Listserv.

International Innovative Community Group (ICG)

Jiening Ruan, Chair
University of Oklahoma

The International ICG held a successful committee meeting on Nov. 29th during the annual NRC 2007 Conference. The committee expressed great appreciation to Sam Miller for his outstanding leadership over the past few years and to Nancy Pine for organizing the 2007 International ICG research symposium.

The International ICG is in the process of updating its website to add an announcement on International Travel Grants and creating a committee Listserv for its members. The ICG will also sponsor two symposia for the 2008 conference. Sam Miller (sdmille2@gmail.com) and Mary Alice Barksdale (mbarksda@vt.edu) will coordinate a symposium on teacher preparation in reading/literacy education in different countries while Xiaoming Liu (xul10@psu.edu), Carole Janisch (Carole.janisch@ttu.edu), and Amma Akrofi (amma.akrofi@ttu.edu) will coordinate a poster session on research conducted outside the U.S. Please contact any of the coordinators if you are interested in participating.

J. Michael Parker Award Committee

Erik Jacobson, Chair
Montclair State University

The National Reading Conference awards the J. Michael Parker Award to encourage research in adult literacy. The award is given to graduate students and untenured professors who present research on adult learning or education at the annual conference.

The award was established in 2001 in honor of J. Michael Parker, winner of National Reading Conference's Student Research Award. Recipients of the award receive a small cash award to be used for conference expenses and are recognized during a general session of the conference.

The award is presented to both papers with a single author and to co-authored papers. For single-authored papers, the recipient will receive \$500 and a plaque commemorating the award. For co-authored papers, the recipients will each receive a plaque and will decide amongst themselves how to divide the \$500 award.

Committee members will rate the submissions on the following criteria:

-  The research is capable of making a significant contribution to theory and/or practice of adult learning and instruction.
-  The methodology is appropriate to the research question and of sufficient rigor.
-  Implications of the research are of a scope needed to impact the field.

Applicants will be notified of the results prior to the conference, and the plaque and honorarium will be presented to the winner during a plenary session at the conference.

Applicants are required to submit the full paper (25 pages or less) electronically by October 1st, 2008. Papers must be double-spaced and in 12-point font. The text limit does not include references and any appendices.

When submitting applications for the conference, those interested in the award should indicate that they will be applying for the J. Michael Parker Award (noted at the bottom of the personal information page).

Submissions and questions should be sent to the committee chair, Erik Jacobson, at jacobson@mail.montclair.edu.

Oscar S. Causey Award Committee

Deborah R. Dillon, Chair
University of Minnesota

The Oscar S. Causey Award is given each year for outstanding contributions to reading research. Last year's recipient, *Michael L. Kamil*, presented the 2007 Oscar S. Causey Address at the 2007 conference in Austin, TX. The new recipient of the Oscar S. Causey Award, announced at the 2007 conference, is *Scott Paris* from the University of Michigan. He will present his address at the 2008 NRC conference.

Please consider nominating a colleague for the Oscar S. Causey Award. Any NRC member may nominate an individual for this prestigious award. When assessing nominees, Causey Award committee members address five criteria:

-  This individual has published *substantial* research in literacy.
-  This individual has published *significant* research in literacy.
-  This individual has published *original* research in literacy.
-  This individual has generated *new knowledge* through literacy research.
-  This individual is a recognized *leader* in the conduct and promotion of literacy research.

If you wish to nominate a candidate for the 2008 award, please e-mail a letter of nomination and the candidate's current vita *in the near future*. The deadline for nominations is **August 15, 2008**. Please e-mail materials to: Deborah R. Dillon at dillon@umn.edu.

Publications Committee

Shelley Hong Xu, Chair
California State University, Long Beach

JLR Update

During the first year of our editorship we received 192 manuscripts, rendered dispositions on 126 of them, with 66 currently in various stages of the review process. Eleven accepted manuscripts will comprise Numbers 1, 2, and 3 of Volume 40. We have two essay book reviews in preparation for Volume 40: (1) The first review is on August

and Shanahan's *Developing Literacy in Second-Language Learners: Report of the National Literacy Panel on Language-Minority Children and Youth* and (2) The second review examines the spate of national reports related to adolescent literacy. We have agreements with three translation teams who are writing abstracts for *JLR* articles in Chinese, French, and Spanish. We currently have 200 NRC members serving on the journal's editorial review board. At the 2007 NRC meeting in Austin, Texas we hosted a "Writing for *JLR*" session and a breakfast for the *JLR* editorial review board, and both were well-attended.

NRC Yearbook Update

The Vanderbilt editorial team for the *NRC Yearbook* resumed our second year of editorial service to the membership. Led by Youb Kim and Victoria J. Risko (two managing editors) and Julie Justice (managing editorial assistant), editors (Donald L. Compton, David K. Dickinson, Melanie Hundley, Kevin M. Leander, Robert T. Jiménez, and Deborah Wells Rowe) have been working diligently to prepare for this year's review process. As of February 11th, the deadline for submission, we received 91 manuscripts. Similar to last year, manuscripts will be read by editors and editorial assistants consisting of a new group of doctoral students at Vanderbilt. We will collectively select the most qualified reviewers for each manuscript. We will then send the manuscripts to 111 scholars who have agreed to serve on the editorial review board. Their reviews will be due by March 12th. As a new component of the review process this year, we invited 40 student reviewers whose reviews will be read by the editors and considered when making a final decision about each manuscript. Our purpose for inviting student reviewers is to nurture young scholars in our field by having them directly participate in the review process for a peer-reviewed publication. We appreciate the membership for submitting manuscripts as well as providing continuing support for the review process.

2008 NRC Election

Polls open March 1st through March 31, 2008 at 5 p.m. CST. The candidates who have been nominated for Vice President and the Board of Directors are (in alphabetical order):

Vice President:

Patricia L. Anders
Diane M. Barone

Board of Directors:

Janice F. Almasi
Gay Ivey
Marla H. Mallette
Marjorie Siegel
Laura B. Smolkin
Alfred W. Tatum

Each candidate's position statement appears in the following pages and will be available on the NRC website www.nrconline.org.

CANDIDATE STATEMENTS

Vice-President Elect

Patricia L. Anders

My first NRC, in 1975, marked my momentous transition from being a middle school teacher and a high school reading specialist to a university professor. After completing my doctorate at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, I joined the faculty at the University of Arizona. I moved through the ranks to a professor and department head in the Department of Language, Reading and Culture—a department committed to being a scholarly community for the study of teaching and learning of language and literacies in order to foster cultural and linguistic diversity and to address issues of social justice.

My research and teaching revolves around topics of literacy teacher education and adolescent literacy, with a focus on content area literacy. I was the co-principal investigator with V. Richardson of “A Study of Teachers’ Research-Based Instruction of Reading Comprehension.” This multi-year, mixed design project resulted in seminal articles, chapters, books and presentations that revealed the influence of teachers’ beliefs on reading instructional practices. “The Interactive Teaching Project” with C. Bos explored content area reading instructional practices. This mixed design project included teachers and students as participants across grade levels (4-10) and the content areas of social studies, science and vocational education. The results of these projects and of other research are published in the leading journals of the field (including the *Journal of Literacy Research*, *The Teachers College Record*, *Language Arts*, the *NRC Yearbook* and others). I have theorized about and extended these and other studies in chapters published in the *Handbook of Reading Research* and other scholarly books. In addition, I have co-authored the textbook, *Literacy Instruction in the Content Areas* and co-edited *Understanding Readers’ Understanding* and *Literacy Development of Students in Urban Schools: Research and Policy*.

The University of Arizona has provided many opportunities for leadership and service. For example, I have served as the Chair of the University Ethics Committee, a board member of the Association of Women Faculty, the Chair of the College Curriculum Committee, and the Chair of the College Strategic Planning Committee.

Professionally, I have served as President and Secretary of NCRL and Secretary of Division C of AERA, and on the Board of Directors of IRA.

My involvement in NRC activities has been continuous and includes being elected to the Board of Directors, serving as Treasurer (2 terms), and running for Vice-President Elect. I regularly serve on the editorial boards of the *Journal of Literacy Research* and the *NRC Yearbook* and have consistently reviewed for the conference program. I have actively participated in a range of organizational activities including Field Council, the Oscar S. Causey Committee, Kingston Award Committee, Diversity Committee, Newcomers Committee, and chaired the Contributions and Donations Committee.

I received the treasured Albert J. Kingston Award for Distinguished Service to NRC (1992). I also was elected to the Reading Hall of Fame, received an Outstanding Research Award from Division K of AERA, and was honored to receive the Outstanding Teaching and Mentoring Award from the Graduate College of the University of Arizona.

Position Statement

I am motivated to be a candidate for NRC Vice-President Elect for three reasons. One, I deeply appreciate those who have served before and recognize that we all need to serve when called upon so as to continue the meritorious work of the previous generations. Those who have stepped up to wear the mantle of NRC leadership are distinguished colleagues who have generously given of themselves to sustain the organization. I will continue that legacy.

Second, as a past treasurer of NRC, I have closely watched the fiscal health of our organization. I will continue that watch as the chief financial officer of the organization. I understand that our values as an organization are expressed through financial decisions. As a member of the executive board, I will remain continuously mindful of the financial consequences of board decisions.

Third, NRC’s history can be characterized as having four overarching organizational goals: to increase members’ participation, to be a scholarly home for a diverse membership, to be efficient and well organized, and to provide a program of conference presentations and publications that broaden conceptions of literacy scholarship and research. We have made tremendous strides toward realizing these goals, but much remains to be done. My third reason, then, for agreeing to run for office is to advance these goals. How? Here are a few possibilities:

One possibility is to support our participation on the global stage. The International Innovative Community Group is a great beginning; its members have many creative and generative ideas. As an NRC leader, I will support those ideas and help to move the organization toward encouraging scholars from around the world to play an integral role in the conference and in our publications.

Which leads to another area of potential growth and change for NRC—increased integration and use of technology. The technology committee is thoughtfully bringing to reality dynamic ways that technology can support and extend our mission. Given the power of digital technology, the Technology Committee has huge contributions to make toward increasing membership participation, improving accessibility of our conference program and publications, and contributing to the continual renewal and recreation of NRC.

As scholars we continue to be challenged by our lack of impact on literacy policy. I look forward to Vice-President David Reinking’s leadership as he works to implement proposals he described in the 2004 *NRC Yearbook*. Educational policy in the U.S. and around the world has constrained possibilities and limited opportunities for all but a very few. As socially conscious scholars we need to have an influence on these policies.

I am deeply devoted to the mission and members of the National Reading Conference. I look forward to the opportunity, should I be elected, to serve as Vice-President Elect of NRC—an organization that nurtures its members' professional and scholarly development and continues to be the space for the most compelling and important literacy research being presented and published. I am prepared to serve because of my experience as a researcher, teacher, department head, and active NRC member.

Diane M. Barone

I am a professor in Literacy Studies at the University of Nevada, Reno. I completed my B.A. at Case Western Reserve University in psychology, an M.Ed. at Kent State University in early childhood, and an Ed.D. in literacy at the University of Nevada, Reno. My classroom experience includes teaching preschool and first, second, and third grades. I completed my elementary teaching as the demonstration teacher for my school district, where I taught a multi-aged classroom (first, second, and third graders). I conducted my dissertation research on children's written response in this classroom. After completing my doctoral studies, I taught at California State University, Bakersfield, the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, and currently the University of Nevada, Reno.

My first research endeavor, centered on written response to literature, appeared in *Language Arts*, *The National Reading Conference Yearbook*, *Children's Literature in Education*, and *The New Advocate*. Following this dissertation work, I began a longitudinal study of the literacy development of 26 children prenatally exposed to crack/cocaine. Importantly, this work demonstrated that these children could be successful in school. Reports of this study have been published in *Research and the Teaching of English*, *Urban Education*, *The Reading Teacher*, *Educational Leadership*, *The National Reading Conference Yearbook*, *Reading Research and Instruction*, the *Journal of Literacy Research*, and in a book, *Resilient Children*. My recent work involved another longitudinal study (7 years) that centered on the literacy learning and teaching experienced by 16 children in a high-poverty school. This work has appeared in the *Elementary School Journal*, *The NRC Yearbook*; *Literacy, Teaching, and Learning*; and in the book *Narrowing the Literacy Gap*. It is evident through my longitudinal research that I am committed to learning from children who are considered at risk, so that their stories can result in more supportive and effective learning experiences for them.

I was an Editor of *Reading Research Quarterly* with John Readece for seven years. I am proud of this work because under our leadership, the journal returned to its prestigious place among educational journals. Less known to NRC members has been my work facilitating teachers seeking National Board certification. As part of this work, I edited a book, *The National Board Handbook*, with several teachers going through this process. In addition, I have written several other books that include: *Developing Literacy* with Donald Bear; *Research-based Practices in Early Literacy* with Lesley Morrow; *Literacy Instruction for English Language Learners in the Primary Grades* with Shelley Xu; *Expanding Boundaries: Combining Genres for Authentic Writing Purposes* with Suzette Youngs; *Practical Guide to Assessment in Reading and Writing* and *Writing K-8* with Joan Taylor; *Reading First*

in the Classroom with Joan Taylor and Darrin Hardman; and *Teaching Early Literacy: Development, Assessment, and Instruction* with Shelley Xu and Marla Mallette.

My connections to NRC began when I was still a doctoral student and presented my dissertation research. I have continued to present my current research projects each year and have mentored many doctoral students into the culture of NRC. I have been a member of the editorial review board and have reviewed NRC presentations since 1989. I was a Field Council representative for Nevada for several years. Most recently I was Chair of Publications and was responsible for leading the search processes for our current Editors of the *Yearbook* and *JLR*.

Position Statement

NRC is a place where I, as well as other scholars, can share tentative findings from our own literacy research knowing that professional colleagues will facilitate critical analysis and reflection of it. It is here that new scholars can engage with seasoned scholars in equitable dialogue. It is here that literacy researchers are challenged in their thinking as they listen to research presentations. This happens because NRC embraces new members and brings them into a forum that values divergent theories, methodologies, and interpretations.

NRC also faces challenges. In the past, one of the challenges was the controversy that centered on the reading wars. Today, the challenges are even more complex as they come from outside as well as inside the organization. One example is that politicians and the public have embraced the idea of scientifically-based reading research to support reading instruction. Unfortunately, politicians and the public are looking for simple recipes for quality instruction; those infrequently found in the research we create. I believe it is critical for NRC to synthesize this more complex research and make it accessible to audiences outside of NRC. Although this is not a process we regularly engage in, it is one that brings our work to a larger audience—one that influences students' lives.

NRC, like other organizations, will always face new challenges. The strength of NRC today is the way it has responded to past challenges. It has done so by respecting its members and working on difficult issues and events collaboratively. I feel fortunate to belong to such an organization, as I know you do.

As you consider your vote, I think it is important that you know the strengths I bring to this position. I have a strong work ethic that results in quality work done on time. I work collaboratively and listen carefully to the voices and positions of others. I value closure on minor items so that inquiry can focus on more important NRC issues. I bring only one agenda to this position, and that is to best support NRC by listening to the voices of its members.

Board of Directors

Janice F. Almasi

I am currently the *Carol Lee Robertson Endowed Professor of Literacy Education* at the University of Kentucky, where I teach graduate courses in literacy research and theory. My position also provides the opportunity to work closely with doctoral students, host an annual literacy research symposium, and assist with the research agenda for the Collaborative Center for Literacy Development. Previously, I was a faculty member at the State University of New York at Buffalo and was a Postdoctoral Fellow at the Learning Research and Development Center at the University of Pittsburgh. However, I began my career as a fourth-grade teacher and reading specialist in Maryland. My research interests are grounded in those teaching experiences, where I eagerly explored the theories, research, and instructional activities introduced to me while completing my graduate work at the University of Maryland. My research has examined the contexts in which children learn from text. More specifically, my research has focused on patterns of social interaction, discourse, engagement, and cognitive processing during peer discussions of text. My initial research endeavor was honored with NRC's Outstanding Student Research Award and IRA's Outstanding Dissertation Award in 1993. Since then my work has been published in journals such as *Reading Research Quarterly*, *Journal of Literacy Research*, *Educational Psychologist*, *Elementary School Journal*, the *NRC Yearbook*, and the forthcoming *Handbook of Research in Reading Comprehension* and the *Handbook of Research in Reading Disabilities Research*. I have co-authored or co-edited three books and numerous chapters. I have also served on the editorial review boards of *RRQ*, *JLR*, *NRC Yearbook*, *Research in the Teaching of English*, *Literacy Teaching and Learning*, and *Contemporary Educational Psychology*. I am currently working toward a developmental model of peer discussion in which social, cognitive, and affective influences are examined. I am also currently working as a co-principal investigator to evaluate the "Striving Readers" project in Kentucky.

I have been fortunate to work with gifted mentors, colleagues, and students throughout my career. Their influence has helped me understand the recursive nature of literacy theory, research, and practice and how they shape and are shaped by the participants and contexts in which they occur. Their mentorship has also helped me understand the importance of membership in a research community and of service to the profession. As a result, I found a professional family and home in NRC and welcome every opportunity to give back to the organization that has given me so much. I have served the NRC community as: Secretary for six years (2000-06), Program Area Chair for three years (1998-2000), a member of the Oscar S. Causey (1998-2001) and Student Research (1994) Award Committees, and have been a member of the Program Review Board since 1995. With each opportunity I have learned much about the organization and have more respect than ever for the hard work that not only ensures its smooth operation, but also creates the research community we value so dearly. I am honored to be nominated for the Board of Directors.

Position Statement

NRC has shaped literacy research, policy, and practice by conducting and disseminating rigorous research and providing leadership related to literacy issues for over 50 years. Three areas are important in helping NRC continue to accomplish its mission: (a) sustaining the intellectual climate of NRC on a year-round basis, (b) continuing to increase diversity, and (c) furthering NRC's role in mentoring emerging scholars.

The annual conference continues to be a valued space for scholarly dialogue, debate, and critique. However, we have struggled as an organization to maintain that same space beyond the boundaries of the annual conference. Though we have made great strides in terms of year-round electronic communication, the spirit of the annual conference and the renewal it brings often eludes us throughout the rest of the academic year. Collaboration on pressing literacy issues that evoke passion at the annual conference often fades quickly. The lack of sustainability makes it difficult not only to make progress on solutions to long-standing literacy problems, but also to respond quickly to new ones. It is important that NRC continue to seek innovative ways to sustain progress on initiatives on a year-round basis. Technology provides one way to facilitate such progress. Engaging more of the membership in the organization is also essential in solving the perplexing issues we face and in creating more inclusiveness. As well, we can collaborate with other professional organizations to work on literacy issues collectively.

NRC's reflectivity as an organization has led to many changes over the years. The annual conference continues to have greater attendance and is increasingly more diverse. This diversity is reflected not only in terms of racial, ethnic, gender, cultural, and linguistic diversity, but also paradigmatic and intellectual diversity. With greater and increasingly diverse membership comes the potential for new ideas, new approaches, and increased visibility, status, and influence nationally and internationally. Through the efforts of many talented people, NRC has increased awareness of and knowledge about issues of diversity and equity in literacy research, supported such research, and increased participation of scholars of diverse racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds. However, we must continue to expand our efforts not just by seeking new participants and members, but also by providing a welcoming environment, maintaining and sustaining the connections we make, and seeking ways to increase participation/leadership of diverse members in the organization.

NRC has always taken the responsibility to mentor emerging scholars in the field seriously. In the past several years NRC has taken steps to further extend that responsibility by hosting the Newcomer's and Graduate Student Luncheons and by offering research methodology sessions at the annual conference and pre-conference institute. We must continue these efforts and broaden them to include mentorship regarding grant writing, writing/reviewing for publication, advanced research methods, and leadership.

NRC serves a vital role as a respected research community, and I will work diligently to maintain and extend it should I have the opportunity.

Gay Ivey

I began my career in literacy education as a Title I teacher and reading specialist in a Virginia middle school. I had studied English literature, not education, in my undergraduate work at the College of William and Mary. However, my experiences in a Master of Education program at the University of Virginia's McGuffey Reading Center motivated me to focus on teaching and literacy, particularly for students who have difficulty learning to read and write. I received my doctorate in reading education from the University of Georgia, where I had the opportunity to serve as a research assistant at the National Reading Research Center. My first position was at Rutgers University, followed by several years at the University of Maryland at College Park. I am currently an associate professor of Reading Education at James Madison University. I teach courses in literacy-based learning for middle and secondary grade preservice teachers, and I serve as coordinator of the reading education graduate program.

I have a keen interest in the learning and teaching of older struggling readers that dates back to my time as a middle school teacher. My research revolves around the mismatch between inexperienced readers and writers, and the texts and instructional practices they face in so many classrooms. I have published a number of research studies in this area in *Reading Research Quarterly*. I have also written related articles aimed at audiences of teachers, administrators, and advocacy groups in journals such as *The Reading Teacher*, *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, *Educational Leadership*, *Language Arts*, *Phi Delta Kappan*, and the *Middle School Journal*. I have authored a number of book chapters and co-authored three books. I have served on the editorial review boards of *Reading Research Quarterly*, *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, *The Reading Teacher*, and *Voices from the Middle*.

I have been a member of NRC since 1993, and I have made presentations at the annual meeting every year since that time. In addition, I have organized and led study groups on struggling readers in the upper elementary and middle grades and on publishing for new scholars. I served on NRC's Long-Range Planning Committee (1999-2002) and on the Edward B. Fry Book Award Committee (2003-2006). I have participated significantly in developing the conference program, having served not only as a reviewer for various areas across the years, but also as the 1998 co-chair of Area 5 (then known as Learning and Teaching Processes), the 2003 co-chair of Area 5 (then known as Learning/Teaching Processes in Middle, Secondary Schools), and the 2004 and 2005 co-chair of Area 6 (Adolescent, College, and Adult Literacy Processes). I have reviewed for the *Yearbook of the National Reading Conference* and I have been on the editorial advisory board of the *Journal of Literacy Research* since 1998.

Position Statement

I am honored to be considered as a candidate for NRC Board of Directors. I have been profoundly influenced by the NRC members who mentored me in the early years of my involvement, and the organization has played a pivotal role in supporting my professional mission to improve the literacy learning of older struggling readers.

NRC has changed notably in the past 15 years, and I am eager to play a more active role in its continued evolution. As I envision serving on the Board, I can identify two main areas of interest with respect to the future of the organization. First, I am concerned about NRC's influence on the relationship between literacy research and policy. During the past several years, there have been consistent and relatively unanswered pleas from individual members to take a more cogent stand against the misrepresentation of research-based practices in politics and in the educational marketplace. Although there are no simple or quick responses for this very significant problem, I believe that NRC is uniquely well-positioned to make a difference through the way we conceptualize, conduct, and disseminate research. I would like to see us consider ways to more closely examine and underscore rigor in the studies accepted for presentation at the annual conference. In the past decade, our organization has embraced a broader notion of research. As we continue to explore and become more knowledgeable about a range of methodologies, I hope we will find more sufficient ways to demonstrate to those outside of the community how these newer approaches to research offer compelling levels of rigor and purpose. Related, I would like to see us capitalize on our collective knowledge base to identify the most essential and timely research questions aimed at improving the literacy of students whose needs are greatest and insufficiently addressed by existing research (e.g., English language learners, students with special needs, older struggling readers). This often happens informally among small groups of NRC members, but I believe we could plan for opportunities to conceptualize research studies together and with colleagues in related disciplines, both at the annual meeting and electronically.

Second, I am interested in how NRC will reap the benefits and negotiate the challenges of membership growth. I have heard many colleagues refer to NRC as their professional home. I am eager to participate in discussions of how to maintain a sense of community within the organization, but also to celebrate increased interest and involvement from young scholars and other new members. As we grow out of meeting rooms, hotels, and narrow visions of research, we will have a more pressing need to identify the most essential NRC traditions and figure out how to sustain them within the context of vital and exciting changes.

Marla H. Mallette

I am an associate professor of literacy at Southern Illinois University, Carbondale. I teach undergraduate and graduate classes in early literacy and intervention, and am involved in the supervision of literacy programs. In addition, I coordinate the Reading and Language Studies Graduate Specialty Area. Prior to beginning graduate school, I was a first-grade teacher in Clark County School District in Las Vegas, Nevada. In 1994, while finishing my master's degree at UNLV, my mentor, John Readence, encouraged me to consider doctoral studies. He suggested I attend NRC, which I did. For me, this was an incredible experience. As a young and potentially aspiring scholar, I was quite taken by the warmth and encouragement I received from the scholars I admired and respected. I felt immediately welcome into the literacy research community, and knew that this was the community in which I wanted to belong. The following year I took part in my first NRC presentation and have presented at the conference each year

since then. I feel extremely proud to be a part of the NRC community. In preparing this statement, I spent time reading the statements of others. Perhaps the most striking similarity in all of them was the idea of NRC as an academic home, a space to freely share ideas, receive quality feedback on our work, and generate new questions.

My research interests include literacy teacher education, literacy instruction and learning with students of culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and the convergence of early literacy and technology. I have published articles in the *Journal of Literacy Research*, *The Reading Teacher*, *Reading Research and Instruction*, *The National Reading Conference Yearbook*, and *Teaching and Teacher Education*. I have co-authored two books on literacy methods: *Helping Children Learn to Read* (4th. ed.) (with John Readence and Lynn Searfoss) and *Teaching Early Literacy: Development, Assessment and Instruction* (with Diane Barone and Shelley Xu). I have also co-edited two books: *Literacy Research Methodologies* (with Nell Duke) and *Innovative Approaches to Literacy Education: Using the Internet to Support New Literacies* (with Rachel Karchmer, Don Leu, and Julia Kara-Soteriou). My current research involves exploring how teachers at an empowerment school develop, negotiate, and enact literacy curriculum, and a longitudinal study on the literacy identities of first-grade students who began kindergarten at-risk. I am currently the Associate Editor and Book Review Editor of *Educational Researcher* published by AERA.

During the thirteen years I have been a member of NRC, I have been afforded many opportunities to serve the organization. Along with Rachel Karchmer, I co-edited the NRC Newsletter. I served on the Oscar S. Causey Award Committee and currently serve on the Outstanding Student Research Award Committee. I have reviewed proposals for the annual conference and the *NRC Yearbook* as well as served as an Area Co-Chair. I have also had the pleasure of hosting the town meeting. Yet, I think my greatest contribution to the organization was in establishing the "Literacy Research Methodologies" series with Nell Duke for the 2005 and 2006 conferences. This series of sessions was a unique addition to the NRC program. These sessions were designed for graduate students and focused on thinking about the various methodologies used in literacy research.

Position Statement

I am honored to be nominated for the National Reading Conference's Board of Directors. If elected, I will serve the organization with great enthusiasm and dedication. NRC is the premier organization in literacy research, and it would be a privilege to be a part of the leadership team that promotes excellence in literacy research.

Mentoring graduate students and continuing a commitment to methodological diversity are two issues that I am very passionate about. Through the years, I have been fortunate to act on these issues through the support and context of NRC. It was at NRC that I first met Nell Duke. We were at a dinner together with mutual friends. As young researchers do, we found ourselves talking about our work. We realized we were studying the same topic, but we did so from very different methodological perspectives. The supportive climate cultivated by NRC influenced our perspectives on each other's work and contributed greatly to our collaboration. We developed the "Research Methodologies Series" as one mechanism for both supporting new scholars

and maintaining a commitment to valuing the range of research methodologies. The sessions were well attended, and we received positive feedback. Interestingly, the audience for these sessions included new and accomplished scholars. As a Board member, I would like to continue to think of new and innovative ways in which the organization can build on these traditions.

I think it is the responsibility of a Board Member to listen to and act upon the concerns raised by the members of the organization. At the Town Meeting in Austin, one issue raised by many members was in relation to the organization's political involvement. While it was clear this was a problem that many members agreed upon, there was an array of solutions suggested. As a Board Member, I would like to further explore this issue. Throughout the years, NRC has made great strides in working to have a political influence (e.g., the White Papers and inviting prominent political figures to present at the conference). Yet, this is still an area in which we need to improve. We must be persistent in advocating for literacy, and we can best do this through raising the profile of NRC. It is critical that policy makers come to understand the importance and value of our work and our perspectives. The members of NRC conduct important and compelling research, which produces new knowledge and understanding of literacy learning and instruction. We need to work on disseminating our work to a broader audience and advance our political involvement.

Like so many others have stated, NRC is my academic home. I feel fortunate to be a part of the NRC community, and I am grateful for the many opportunities to serve the organization. Yet, serving on the Board would be the greatest honor and privilege.

Marjorie Siegel

I am an Associate Professor, and former Chair, in the Department of Curriculum and Teaching at Teachers College, Columbia University, where I teach courses on literacy education in pre- and in-service M.A. programs designed to prepare teacher-scholars for leadership in urban, public schools. I also offer seminars in literacy theory and research, and teach courses in qualitative research in the doctoral program.

I began my career as a Title I reading teacher in Madison, Wisconsin in the mid-1970s, and was fortunate enough to be introduced to Frank Smith's *Understanding Reading* by the lead teacher. It was this book that introduced me to powerful new explanations for reading, and to the idea of theory and research as a powerful influence on teaching, learning, and curriculum. I later pursued graduate studies in Reading Education at Indiana University-Bloomington, and taught at the University of Utah and the University of Rochester (NY) before joining the Teachers College faculty.

Throughout my career, my work has attempted to expand what counts as literacy and what matters in literacy education by crossing boundaries between language and other sign systems, between teaching and research, and between schools and universities. Drawing on interdisciplinary fields of semiotics, discourse, and learning, I have engaged in classroom-based research designed to unpack and re-imagine literacy education as a space where children and youth can bring what they know and who they are to the classroom, and engage with curricula

that stretch their repertoire of practices and identities. One line of work toward this goal examined the practice of transmediation (using one sign system to interpret another), another focused on the contribution reading could make to learning mathematics, and a third examined the subjectivities produced at the intersection of literacies and technologies.

My work has appeared in the *NRC Yearbook* and *Journal of Literacy Research*, as well as such journals as *Reading Research Quarterly*, *Language Arts*, *Journal for Research in Mathematics Education*, *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, *Canadian Journal of Education*, *For the Learning of Mathematics*, *Children's Literature in Education*, and *Journal of Early Childhood Literacy*. I'm the co-author (with Raffaella Borasi) of *Reading Counts: Expanding the Role of Reading in Mathematics Classrooms* (Teachers College Press, 2000) and (with Robert F. Carey) of *Critical Thinking: A Semiotic Perspective* (NCTE, 1989).

I have contributed chapters to a number of edited volumes, including a chapter on "Critical Approaches" to the third edition of the *Handbook of Reading Research*. I have served on the editorial boards of the *NRC Yearbook* and the *Journal of Literacy Research*, as well as on the editorial boards of *Reading Research Quarterly*, *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy*, *Literacy Studies Series* (a collaboration of the National Reading Conference and International Reading Association), and the *Journal of Teacher Education*.

Position Statement

It's a special honor to be nominated as a candidate for the NRC Board of Directors because I consider NRC my intellectual home. I can vividly remember the excitement (and anxiety) I felt when I attended my first NRC conference as a doctoral student in 1980. NRC was a community that took ideas seriously, and I wanted to belong. Since that time, I have attended and presented at more than 20 conferences, and look forward to the dialogue, challenge, rejuvenation, and friendship the annual conference offers.

In addition to my service as a member of the *JLR* and *Yearbook* editorial boards, I have also reviewed proposals for the annual meeting, served as a member of the Student Research Award and Ethics Committees, and chaired the Ethics Committee at a time (1991-1994) when the organization developed an NRC Code of Ethics. Under the wise mentorship of Becky Barr (who had resigned as Ethics Committee Chair to serve as Vice-President Elect), I helped navigate the committee's complex conversations about where NRC would stand on questions of professional ethics. This committee produced a Code of Ethics that was approved by the membership and serves an educative purpose for NRC. Taken together, these experiences have given me an appreciation for the hours of service the membership contributes so that NRC's scholarly agenda (organizing the annual conference, publishing the *Yearbook* and *JLR*) can be accomplished while simultaneously ensuring its vitality as an organization.

From my perspective, the most important responsibility of a board member is to advocate for policies and practices that promote an inclusive community of inquiry that addresses significant educational problems through diverse theories and epistemologies. This means

being open to the possibility of doing things differently if change seems warranted.

Transparency in decision-making, open communication, and listening carefully to the concerns and ideas of the membership are keys to accomplishing this goal. NRC's leadership has worked diligently to be transparent in policy-making and provide opportunities for all members to participate in the organization's activities. I am committed to doing everything possible to continue this practice so that NRC remains the vibrant literacy research organization that it is, and taps the knowledge, insight, and energy of the entire NRC community. I would look for ways to make it easy (e.g., online) for all members to indicate their interest in such things as serving on committees and reviewing proposals. In addition, I think it is important to review the roster of member involvement to see if NRC is indeed "walking the talk" and to make sure that committees and review boards include members at all points in their careers.

Finally, I think our attempts to address the inequities and injustices that pervade education can be strengthened by increasing the numbers of colleagues from underrepresented groups in our membership as well as in leadership positions. I would work to redouble NRC's commitment to becoming a community rich with diversities of race, ethnicity, language, professional identity, citizenship, and ableness, and to collaborate with all interested parties to develop and implement an action plan aimed at addressing this absence. I have benefited enormously from my involvement in NRC, and would welcome the opportunity to join with colleagues to contribute to its mission.

Laura B. Smolkin

I am a Professor in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction and Special Education in the Curry School of Education at the University of Virginia. At both the University of Virginia, where I have been a faculty member for 12 years, and at the University of New Mexico, where I was a faculty member for 6 years, I have been responsible for the reading and language arts preparation for preservice students. At both institutions, I have also taught children's literature at the graduate level. I was a first grade teacher in Baltimore City for three years. I completed my doctoral studies under the direction of Barbara Foorman, David Yaden, and Barbara Kiefer at the University of Houston in 1989.

Chiefly, I am known for my work examining various genres and their production and reception by adults and children. My investigations of texts and my long-standing multicultural interests have led me to explore the role of text in both mainstream and culturally diverse settings. My work has appeared in *Reading Research Quarterly*, *Elementary School Journal*, *Research in the Teaching of English*, *Reading Psychology*, *Reading & Writing Quarterly*, *Teaching and Teacher Education*, *Journal of Reading Behavior/Journal of Literacy Research*, *Bilingual Research Journal*, *Journal of American Indian Education*, the *NRC Yearbook*, *The Reading Teacher*, *Language Arts*, and *The New Advocate*. I have served on the editorial boards of *Reading Research Quarterly*, *The Reading Teacher*, and the *National Reading Conference Yearbook*. Additionally, I review for publications such

as *Research in the Teaching of English*, *Journal of Educational Psychology*, and *Language Arts*.

As to the National Reading Conference, I have been a member since 1986, when I attended my first conference. I regularly review conference proposals and Yearbook submissions. Over the years, I have served as a field representative, as a member of the multicultural committee, as a program area chair on three different occasions, and, for the last four years, as the Albert J. Kingston Award Committee chair.

Position Statement

I consider NRC to be my professional home, and it has been so since the first meeting I attended. NRC provides opportunities to hear high-quality research; it also reflects two important commitments—nurturing upcoming scholars and acting for social justice. From doctoral students to senior researchers, we interact with others in our particular fields, sharing our thoughts about their work and seeking advice about our own. To me, NRC is synonymous with dialogue—about our work and about our world. Although there are other conferences where reading researchers present their work and talk among themselves, the National Reading Conference affords the greatest opportunities to discuss the full range of literacy research. Those conversations continue year-round as we read and contemplate our colleagues' papers in the *Yearbook* and in *JLR*. Because of its unique place in my professional life, NRC is the organization for which I feel the greatest commitment and the greatest desire to serve.

I believe that NRC must continue to highlight the range of scholarship this organization represents. It is precisely because of this balance that consensus opinions of NRC's members should carry far greater weight in the national arena than they presently do. As a board member, I will support our leaderships' increasing efforts to position NRC in politically important roles.

As I contemplate the balance of NRC, I always think of our very special colleague, Michael Pressley. Mike was a man who respected diversity in research; he followed both data and methodology to find common ground between and among paradigms. I will work for the inclusion of an annual Michael Pressley Lecture that features a prominent figure in reading research, whose work, like Mike's, rises above methodological battles to answer questions that influence the lives of America's children.

Over my years in the organization, I have observed and participated in numerous changes to our annual program. Many of these changes have been marvelously successful. Our birds-of-a-feather meetings have become institutionalized as morning study groups on a range of topics. Our newcomers' luncheon provides an excellent opportunity for first-time conference attendees to learn about us and about each other. The share-a-thought, get-a-beer, light-hearted touch to our Town Hall meetings has increased their attendance.

In contrast to these well-attended events, our business meetings, where critical decisions are made about the operations of the National Reading Conference, have minimal attendance. For instance, NRC has discretionary monies, which might be spent to increase travel awards for international or emerging minority scholars. As a board member,

I will work to determine how best to engage more of the rank-and-file in what may have been seen as a less glorious part of the NRC conference.

Beyond these ideas, I have a great commitment to maintaining the spirit of dialogue and caring that exemplifies NRC. If elected to the Board, I will work diligently to maintain the qualities of NRC that have made all of us committed members.

Alfred W. Tatum

I am an Associate Professor and Reading Clinic Director at the University of Illinois at Chicago, where I teach undergraduate and graduate literacy courses. Prior to my current appointment at UIC, I served on the faculties of Buffalo State College, University of Maryland – College Park, and more recently Northern Illinois University. These professional appointments were preceded by a full-time appointment as a developmental reading instructor for three years at South Suburban College in Illinois and as an eighth-grade reading and social studies teacher for five years in the Chicago Public Schools. In each capacity, I always focused on examining literacy practices aimed toward advancing students' literacy needs, particularly students who were underperforming. Equally, my teaching, particularly at the university level, was and continues to be informed by the need to advocate for students beyond the classroom. Because of this focused advocacy, I have traveled throughout the U.S. since 2000 to support the literacy development of struggling adolescent readers, particularly African American adolescent males. One of my first venues was the National Reading Conference, where I presented my first professional paper titled "Breaking Down Barriers that Disenfranchise African American Adolescents in Low-Level Reading Tracks," a paper that was subsequently published. As a doctoral student at that time, I felt welcomed by the profession because of NRC's acceptance of the paper.

Since 2000, I have served NRC in several capacities, either as a reviewer for the *Journal of Literacy Research*, co-chair for Area 6 for two years, or as a conference presenter, respondent, or discussant. More importantly, I became confident in my scholarship as a result of being a member of NRC. I have written more than 25 publications over the past five years that focus on adolescent literacy, teacher professional development in urban middle and high schools, and the literacy development of African American male adolescents. Among them are: "Toward a More Anatomically Complete Model of Literacy Instruction: A Focus on African American Male Adolescents and Texts," *Harvard Educational Review* (in press); "Engaging African American Males in Reading," *Educational Leadership* (2006); *Teaching Reading to Black Adolescent Males: Closing the Achievement Gap*, Stenhouse Publishers (2005); and "A Roadmap for Reading Specialists Entering Schools Without Exemplary Reading Programs: Seven Quick Lessons," *The Reading Teacher* (2004).

I believe that it is imperative that NRC continue to support young, emerging scholars in the field of literacy education to ensure the vitality of the field. It is also important that NRC promotes diverse forms of scholarship that will enrich the profession and ultimately the lives of many who are sure to benefit from high-caliber research aimed at solving the field's most pressing questions. NRC is well positioned

to provide leadership for such aims, and this is where my advocacy would lie as a member of the Board of Directors.

Position Statement

I am deeply honored to be considered for the NRC Board. Becoming a member of NRC Board is not something to take lightly. I am willing to work to advance the mission and values of NRC while at the same time thinking of ways to bring additional benefits to NRC, such as by posing and thinking about critical questions that surface as literacy education continues to undergo productive changes. I am convinced that effective literacy instruction must be planned to close the reading achievement gap that persists throughout the world and to close the life outcome gap related to a lack of literacy skills. Models of literacy that have the interdisciplinary depth, theoretical grounding, and attention to responsive pedagogy that focus on “scoring with reading” and improving reading achievement must be developed. As young people and adults struggle to identify texts they find meaningful and significant to their development, I advance that this severing of texts must be interrupted because of the power texts hold, not only to shape an individual’s literacy, but also to shape their lives. This is only one agenda of many that needs our attention. However, I understand that members of the Board of Directors are not in place to set the agenda,

but to ensure that agendas are not suppressed or marginalized. Inclusion over exclusivity should rule the day—a lesson I learned from working in an elementary school, a two-year college, a master degree-granting institution, and in research in universities across the United States. These multiple perspectives will serve me well as a member of the Board of Directors.

Ultimately, rigorous research, advocacy, effective literacy practices, development of young scholars, knowledge from seasoned scholars, and the invitation and encouragement of talented, diverse membership should be the mainstay of any professional literacy organization. I find each of these in NRC and welcome the challenge of serving NRC to these ends.

VOTE starting Saturday, March 1st!

Voting ends March 31st, 2008, 5 p.m. CST.

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