

2007 Inglis Award Presentation: Lynne Alvine

Judith Hayne and Lynne Alvine

Judith Hayn:

Each year the National Council of Teachers of English gives the Rewey Belle Inglis Award to someone who is an Outstanding Woman in English Education. The recipient is selected by a committee of members of WILLA, the Women in Literacy and Life Assembly of NCTE, in response to a national call for nominations. This year's recipient is worthy of the honor for her many accomplishments, but it is a special privilege for me, as Chair of WILLA, to present the Inglis this year because the winner is also my friend, Lynne B. Alvine.

Lynne Alvine's dedication to English education is monumental; this is her 21st consecutive NCTE Annual Fall Convention. She has served as secretary of the Executive Committee of the Conference on English Education (CEE), has edited the "Conversations from the Commissions" Column in English Education, has served as chair of WILLA and of the Doctoral Student Assembly. Lynne initiated and was the first chair of what is now the Commission on Gender, Race and Class in Teacher Education Programs; she was a founder and charter member of WILLA and is still an active, productive member of that NCTE assembly. She co-edited the text *Breaking the Cycle: Gender, Literacy and Learning*.

She has been an English teacher educator since 1986, mentoring countless women into the profession at Virginia Tech, Hollins College, and presently at Indiana University Pennsylvania where she teaches undergraduate and graduate classes in English Education and serves as Coordinator of the Master of Arts in Teaching English program, advising both prospective and in-service secondary English teachers. Having served for 14 years as Director of the Southcentral Pennsylvania Writing Project, a site

of the National Writing Project, Lynne has worked closely with public and private school teachers for many years and she continues to be active in the NWP site at IUP. Since 2003, she has served as the Director of the IUP Oxford Summer Study Program; she has conducted workshops for teachers and worked in schools in Durban, South Africa. Finally, Lynne helped initiate the IUP Safe Zone Program for LGBT students and employees at IUP eight years ago and continues to be a sustaining member of the Safe Zone Program committee.

Lynne's contribution to my life reminds me of what Alice Walker's wrote about friendship: "No person is your friend who demands your silence, or denies your right to grow." Because she listens to me and other women she has mentored and because she has helped all of us grow, the Rewey Belle Inglis Award recipient for 2007 is rightfully, Lynne Alvine.

Lynne Alvine:

This is my 21st consecutive NCTE fall convention. I think my first CEE luncheon cost about \$10. We have come a long way!

I am honored to accept the 2007 Rewey Belle Inglis Award. When I think of those who have received this award in the past, I am, indeed, deeply honored and more than a little humbled.

Since this award was first given in 1989, I have known most of the recipients, and I believe I have seen all of the past Inglis Awards presented! Many of the recipients have been important to my work in the Council and in the profession: Jeanne Gerlach, Janet Emig, Nancy Martin, Leila Christenbury, Jo Gillikin, Patricia Kelly, and Nancy McCracken have all mentored me along the way.

Just yesterday Nancy McCracken led a dynamic NWP session titled "21st Century Girls in the Mix"

focused on the challenges that girls and young women continue to meet in school. Indeed, we may need to focus on the education of girls, now, more than ever.

Current world conditions suggest a global war on women and girls, and a need for strong leaders who are fully educated, especially a need for women with strong voices who will speak out against the brutal living conditions of others around the world.

Despite progress that has been made in this area, the cultural practice of female genital mutilation continues in developing nations and in the US.

The raping of Muslim women and girls as a weapon of war and as a strategy for ethnic cleansing continues.

A disproportional percentage of the victims of AIDS in African countries and in other developing nations are female. Contributing to the surge of the disease are poverty, the lack of education and other resources – and the denial of condom distribution, based on religious ideology and political expedience.

And, here in the US, we need to support women in the profession now, more than ever.

Federal “No Child Left Behind” legislation continues to bully the predominately female K-12 teaching force. Whether they have been overtly disingenuous or simply misled, politicians of both major parties have joined the cry for “tougher and tougher standards” and, in the process, have engulfed the public schools in a struggle that may best be understood with both a feminist and a Marxist lens.

Teaching to the test, deprives students of the engaged, more holistic learning that could empower them to be critical thinkers and informed citizens. Though the pressures of NCLB threaten to disempower and deskill all teachers, the demands have been especially demoralizing to veteran teachers who know so much more about real learning than they are being encouraged—or even allowed—to demonstrate in their teaching.

Finally, NCLB is taking its toll on English teacher educators, on you and on me. We are being disempowered, deskilled, and demoralized as well. We introduce holistic, integrative strategies for

literacy learning and our beginners are met with “teach to the test” mandates in the schools.

They look to us for guidance in how to survive, and we are busy trying to figure out how WE will survive the ratcheting up of expectations for our teacher education programs—designed by state legislatures and/or departments of education that are clueless as to how beginners best learn the art and craft of teaching English.

These are not easy times in which to be an English teacher educator. Thankfully we all have each other.

Peter Medway tells the story of a time when he thanked Jimmy Britton for all Jimmy had done to mentor him in his professional work. Jimmy jingled the change in his pocket and said, “Well, you’ll hitchhike along with me for a while and later you will give a ride to someone else.”

So, if I have been able occasionally to offer someone a ride, it was because so many others have cheerfully carried me.

Thank you.