

NCTE 2008 DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD

The Distinguished Service Award (DSA) is given to a person or persons, either volunteer or staff, who have exhibited valuable professional service (within the Council and outside), including scholarly or academic distinction at any level; distinguished use of language; and excellence in teaching. These criteria are good measures of acceptable candidates and help to assure that recipients have a wide range of “service” that they provide to the profession.

Established in 1950 as the W. Wilbur Hatfield Award, renamed the Distinguished Service Award in 1969, the award is presented at the November NCTE Annual Convention (announced at the Opening Celebration on Thursday and formally presented at the Board of Directors meeting on Friday). A complete list of past recipients may be found on the web at <http://www.ncte.org/about/awards/council/ec/106846.htm>.

President-Elect Kylene Beers and her 2008 NCTE Distinguished Service Award Subcommittee, consisting of Carol Jago, Susi Long, and Jude Okpala have selected:

Leila Christenbury

Professor, English Education, Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond

Excerpts from the letter of nomination for Christenbury:

I think that the Council would bring itself honor by presenting Leila Christenbury with the Distinguished Service Award because of her magnificent contributions to its well-being over the course of the past few decades. In particular, Leila has made three contributions that have had immeasurable impact on NCTE.

First, she served as editor of English Journal, which I believe to be the most demanding service that one could provide to NCTE. I can imagine no more onerous service to NCTE than editing EJ and believe that Leila’s editorship was among the finest the journal has experienced in my three decades in the profession.

Leila’s second major contribution to NCTE came through her presidency and service on the Executive Committee. Again, Leila took on this responsibility with her characteristic energy and charisma and brought the Council through a challenging financial and political era. While not unscathed by critics—and who could do this job with them?—she represented NCTE with wisdom, grace, and gusto. And as she did with English Journal, she took on one of the Council’s most vexing and demanding service roles and saw it through in exemplary fashion.

Finally, Leila has affected the lives of many Council members through her scholarship. She has written articles and books that have directly and positively affected how members view and experience their work. In particular, her book Making the Journey, now in its 3rd edition, has been assigned in many preservice teacher education programs and has helped get countless careers in our profession off the ground in informed and practical ways.

Any of these three accomplishments, or perhaps any of the other many achievements in Leila’s career, would qualify her for NCTE’s Distinguished Service Award. Together, they add up to an extraordinary history of service that merits the Council’s recognition.