

# VATE VOICES

February 2017

## Thank You for Reading Tori Otstot, Editor

Is there a busiest time of the school year for you, or is it just full throttle from September (or August, for some) until June? This is meant to start a great excuse about why it's been so long that you've heard from me....

Here's what you missed (or maybe didn't) – an awesome weekend at the VATE Fall Conference in Hampton, recognition of some folks who have made a tremendous impact on VATE, teachers advocating for students' right to read, and some new additions to our board. We've tried to fill you in here as best we can. Time to catch up!

## #LoveLearnVATE: Empowering Teachers, Empowering Students



Please join us in Fredericksburg, Virginia at the Fredericksburg Hospitality House and Conference Center October 20-22! Register NOW and book your room at <http://vate.org/annual-conference/>

### Welcome to Our New Board Members!

We'd like to extend congratulations to those ladies on our presidential track who have "moved up" a spot! We value your commitment to VATE and thank you for your continued service!

Past President: Kelly Trump  
President: Angela Cannady  
President-Elect: Ashlee Meredith

The new year has brought us some brand new board members who are ready to help us help teachers and students across the state. New board members, we are so excited to work with you!

Professional Development Chair: Jessica Lowden  
High School Member-At-Large: Laura Ramsey  
Advocacy and Outreach Chair: Ashlyn Kemp

### Open Positions

We are looking forward to filling a couple more vital roles on our board this year. If you are interested in the position of **Executive Secretary** or **Vice President**, please contact Kelly Trump at [kahtrump@gmail.com](mailto:kahtrump@gmail.com) for more information. We'd love to have you "on board"!

## Remembering Jan Suppa-Friedman

The Virginia Association of Teachers of English mourns the loss of former VATE president and NCTE liaison, Jan Suppa-Friedman, who died on November 26th. Jan was a long time member of the executive board, serving in several positions in a span of over twenty years. Jan was a high school teacher and department chair in the Prince William school division for 24 years and a highly regarded educational consultant after retiring from the classroom.

She first came to the board as the representative of the NATE affiliate, which stretched from Winchester to Fredericksburg. In 2004, while serving as president-elect, Jan put together a coalition of English/language arts supervisors from NATE and enlisted their aid in orchestrating one of the most successful conferences in VATE history, featuring such renowned authors as Orson Scott Card and Sharon Draper.

After concluding her commitment to the presidential track, Jan served as NCTE liaison, and during her tenure in that position, VATE won the first of eight "NCTE Affiliate of Excellence" awards, largely due to Jan's efforts. In fact, VATE garnered the coveted award five times on Jan's watch, a record that may never be equaled. As VATE's NCTE liaison, Jan instituted several new initiatives and coordinated VATE's participation in NCTE's Literacy Education Advocacy Day.

VATE will honor Jan's legacy of service at the 2017 annual conference, which fittingly will be held at the Fredericksburg Hospitality House, the same hotel which was the setting for the conference she spearheaded in 2004. In the meantime, VATE expresses its condolences to Jan's family, especially to her husband, Mike, and daughter, Julie.



Jan Suppa-Friedman (left) with former Virginia Congressman Tom Periello and then VATE president Sarah Tanner-Anderson at 2009 NCTE Literacy Education Advocacy Day

# The National Council of Teachers of English Presents The National African American Read-In Hosted by the Black Caucus of NCTE and NCTE



## Host an African American Read-In!

During the month of February, schools, churches, libraries, bookstores, community and professional organizations, and interested citizens are urged to make literacy a significant part of Black History Month by hosting an African American Read-In. Hosting an event can be as simple as bringing together friends to share a book, or as elaborate as arranging public readings and media presentations that feature professional African American writers.

## Host Responsibilities

As host, you are responsible for hosting an African American Read-In during the month of February and submitting a short report about your event that includes the location, number of attendees, and books featured. You do not need to register in advance. Note: The Host Report Card is to be submitted after your Read-In event.

## Host Report Card

The Host Report Card should be submitted after your African American Read-In and no later than March 15. Please include the total number of participants, including both readers and listeners.

## It's easy as 1,2,3!

To be recognized as an official African American Read-In Host:

- 1) Select books, poems, speeches (anything) authored by African Americans;
- 2) Hold your event during the month of February
- 3) Report results by submitting an African American Read-In Report Card.

## Program History

At its November 1989 meeting, the Black Caucus of the National Council of Teachers of English accepted the Issues Committee's recommendation that the Black Caucus sponsor a nationwide Read-In on the first Sunday of February. At the request of educators, Monday was designated for educational institutions. Dr. Jerrie Cobb Scott, an active member of NCTE and the Black Caucus, brought the idea to the Committee. It was envisioned that following a decade of rigorous campaigning for participants, the African American Read-Ins would become a traditional part of Black History Month celebrations. The commitment for nationwide promotion extends from 1990 to the present. In 1990, the National Council of Teachers of English joined in the sponsorship of the African American Read-In Chain.

"The African American Read-In (AARI) . . . is built on an ambitious yet confident premise: that a school and community reading event can be an effective way to promote diversity in children's literature, encourage young people to read, and shine a spotlight on African American authors" (NCTE Council Chronicle, November 2014).

## Honoring Charles Miller

If you've been around VATE for very long at all, you've been lucky enough to know or at least correspond with Charles Miller, better known around "our parts" as Chuck. I could write a book about Chuck, but instead, I'll share the kind words of another former VATE colleague, and let you see how we recognized him as he retired from service.

Dear Tori,

I am writing this letter on behalf of Chuck Miller, VATE's 2016 Service Award Nominee. Chuck Miller is the most dedicated and steadfast member of VATE I can recall in the more than 20 years of have been a member. He serves as executive secretary, yet can be relied on as historian, recruiter, conference planner, and most especially as everyone's friend in VATE.

As the longest standing board member of VATE as well, Chuck has helped transition our association from the twentieth to twenty-first century flawlessly. Chuck has reached out over the years to keep our membership strong by emailing members personally, attending affiliate meetings state-wide, and via face-to-face interactions during VATE conference events. Without a doubt, VATE would not be the award-winning, welcoming and hospitable, professional association it is today if not for the efforts of our one and only Chuck Miller.

Sincerely,

Christine Woods

VATE Past-President 2008-2009



President Kelly Trump presents the newly named Chuck Miller Service Award to Chuck Miller, long-serving Executive Secretary.

### VATE Resolution In Recognition of Charles Miller

Whereas Charles Miller has served as a member of the Virginia Association of Teachers of English Executive Board for 29 years from 1988-2017,

And over the course of that tenure, has fulfilled many significant roles within the organization, including those of President and Executive Secretary;

And whereas Chuck has supported numerous conference coordinators over his 14-year tenure as Executive Secretary and served as local arrangements chair for the NCTE annual convention ,

Hereby be it resolved by the VATE Executive Board in business session on Saturday, January 28, 2017 that Charles Miller be recognized and honored for his service to VATE and to English/Language Arts teachers throughout the Commonwealth.

Angela Moore  
President

### How Can YOU Help Us Honor Chuck's Service?

Currently, there is a bill in the Virginia legislature (HB 2191) which would require notification to parents regarding the teaching of "sexually explicit materials." VATE, along with NCTE and a number of other organizations, oppose this measure as we have opposed a number of previous measures intended to produce the same outcome. If you want to get involved in advocating for your students' right to read, visit [www.ncte.org/action](http://www.ncte.org/action) for more information about how to be "use your teacher voice" to advocate for our students, teachers, and schools.



*Virginia Association of Teachers of English*

Please contact Chuck Miller at [cmillercrz@roadrunner.com](mailto:cmillercrz@roadrunner.com) to update your email and post office address so that you will not miss a publication or announcement. Encourage others to join VATE online at [www.vate.org](http://www.vate.org).

### VATE VOICES

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The Virginia Association of Teachers of English is committed to enhancing the quality of the teaching of English and language arts in the Commonwealth.