



Excellent in New England

JOAN MENARD

It's that time of year when NEBHE honors people and programs with its annual New England Higher Education Excellence Awards.

This year, I'm very pleased that NEBHE is recognizing a colleague of mine with its annual Massachusetts State Merit Award. In his 25 years in the Massachusetts Senate, **Frederick E. Berry** has been known to his colleagues as the "conscience of the Senate." A lifelong champion of programs to make public higher education affordable, accessible and everlasting, Sen. Berry, now the state Senate majority leader, is also a determined advocate for people with disabilities. For his commitment to renewing "the foundation of a civilized society," Salem State College presented him with a Doctor of Humane Letters, *honoris causa*, in 2006. North Shore Community College bestowed its highest honor on him, making its Danvers, Mass., campus home to the Frederick E. Berry Academic and Administrative Building, echoing Thomas Jefferson's words "talent and virtue" — characteristics of the ideal public servant, which Fred Berry truly is.

On the regional level, NEBHE will honor former U.S. Sen. **George J. Mitchell** (D-Maine) with its 2009 Governor Walter R. Peterson Award for Leadership. The U.S. Senate majority leader from 1989 to 1995, George Mitchell wielded as much clout on Capitol Hill as any New England member of Congress during the period. In 1995, he established the Mitchell Scholarship Program (now the Mitchell Institute) to encourage young Maine residents to achieve a college education. In 1998, he brokered a long-elusive peace agreement in Northern Ireland.

This year's recipient of the Eleanor M. McMahon Award for Lifetime Achievement is **David S. Wolk**, president of Castleton State College in Vermont. Wolk has devoted his life to education and politics as a guidance counselor, teacher, principal, school superintendent and state commissioner of education, as well as a state senator and former Gov. Howard Dean's chief of policy.

NEBHE's Robert J. McKenna Award goes to **Sol Gittleman**, who was Tufts University provost for 21 years and the longest-serving provost in America. Gittleman's 2004 book, *An Entrepreneurial University: The Transformation of Tufts 1976-2002*, examines the emergence of Tufts from an underfunded teaching college to a billion-dollar university.

This year, NEBHE recognizes two individuals with the David C. Knapp Award for Trusteeship. Currently board chair of the Community College System of New Hampshire, **Paul J. Holloway** began his career in the automotive industry and shaped a multi-franchise dealership emphasizing customer service. The other trustee being honored is **Lawrence D. McHugh**, who is chair of the Connecticut State University System and president of the Middlesex County Chamber of Commerce, the state's largest chamber.

NEBHE is also proud to honor people and programs making a profound difference in the New England states:

- The Connecticut State Merit Award goes to **Merle Harris**, president emeritus of Charter Oak State College, who has been a pioneer in distance learning.
- The Maine State Merit Award goes to **Robert L. Woodbury**, former chan-

cellor of the University of Maine System, former chair of NEBHE and a member of the *NEJHE* Editorial Advisory Board.

- The New Hampshire State Merit Award goes to **The Marlin Fitzwater Center for Communication** at Franklin Pierce University for its dedication to educating leaders in public communication.

- The Rhode Island State Merit Award goes to state Sen. Pro Tempore **John C. Revens Jr.**, who has served in the state senate since 1990 and chaired NEBHE from 1977 to 1981. Sen. Revens has always stood up not only for Ocean State students and families but for students all over New England.

- The Vermont State Merit Award goes to the **Vermont Manufacturing Extension Center**. The nonprofit center, headquartered on the campus of Vermont Technical College, seeks to improve manufacturing in the state and strengthen the global competitiveness of Vermont's smaller manufacturers.

Each year the New England Board of Higher Education recognizes higher education's greatest champions. With the economy in its worst shape since the Great Depression, the values exemplified by the 2009 award recipients are more important now than ever.

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