

Press Release

**Coalition on Government Information
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1994 FREEDOM OF INFORMATION DAY

The **John R. Finnegan Freedom of Information Award** will be presented this year to the Urban Coalition for its longstanding commitment to using information as a tool for individual and community development.

The Minnesota Coalition on Government Information sponsors the award annually to honor a Minnesotan or a Minnesota institution whose work demonstrates leadership and commitment to the power of information to effect change. The award will be presented at a ceremony in the Heritage Hall of the Minneapolis Public Library, 300 Nicollet Mall at noon, Wednesday, March 16, 1994. This event is free and open to the public.

Hennepin County Commissioner Peter McLaughlin will present the award. Accepting the award on behalf of the Urban Coalition will be Yusef Mgeni. Minneapolis Mayor Sharon Sayles Belton will make remarks at the award ceremony and Mary Doty, President of the Minneapolis Public Library Board of Trustees will welcome guests. Keynote speaker will be Gary Sudduth, executive director of the Minneapolis Urban League and a member of the National Commission on Libraries and Information Science.

The award is named for John R. Finnegan, former senior vice president and assistant publisher of the St. Paul Pioneer Press, for his dedication to openness in government and work on behalf of the people's right to know.

Freedom of Information Day is celebrated each year on the anniversary of the birth of James A. Madison, fourth president of the United States and main author of the Bill of Rights.

This is the sixth annual presentation of the award. Previous recipients are Julia Wallace, Government Publications Library and Regional Depository Librarian, University of Minnesota Libraries (1993), the late Alan Robinette, former director of the State of Minnesota's Land Management Information Center (1992), retired Chief Justice Peter S. Popovich (1991), Sue Holbert, former State Archivist, Minnesota Historical Society (1990) and Mary Alice Harvey, retired Director of the Grand Marais Public Library (1989). This is the first year the award has been given to an organization.

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The **Minnesota Coalition on Government Information** is a network of individuals and organizations concerned with access to information and the role that the State plays in ensuring that access. The Minnesota Coalition is based on a National Coalition of organizations concerned with stemming the trend toward less public access to government information.

Other related events on Freedom of Information Day:

"Information Power for Young People: the Challenge to Collaborate". Harlan Cleveland will be the keynote speaker for a community planning forum on access issues for youth at 4:00 at Johnson High School 1349 Arcade, St. Paul. Sponsored by Metronet in conjunction with the St. Paul Planning Commission's Library Plan Task Force.

"Does Political Correctness = Censorship?" A public forum for discussion of intellectual freedom and current controversies concerning freedom of expression. The forum features Kathleen Baxter, Anoka County Library; Doug Grow, Star Tribune; Paul Spencer, Minnesota Museum of American Art; with Paul Murphy, University of Minnesota as panel moderator.

Bonfire of Liberties: Censorship of the Humanities. a travelling exhibit from the Library of Congress Center for the Book and the Minnesota Center for the Book. The exhibit is now on display at the Minneapolis Public Library.