2004 FREEDOM OF INFORMATION AWARD GOES TO MARVIN ROGER ANDERSON

The annual John R. Finnegan Freedom of Information Award will be presented on Freedom of Information Day, Tuesday, March 16, 2004, to Marvin Roger Anderson, former Director of the Minnesota State Law Library, The presentation ceremony will be at 12 o’clock noon in Room 230 of the Minnesota Judicial Center, 25 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. All are invited to attend, and a reception will follow the ceremony.

Marvin Anderson receives the award for his exceptional leadership as Minnesota State Law Librarian from 1980 to 2002, and for his local and national activities that promoted his commitment to access to legal information for all citizens. He saw the public law library as the *first rung on the ladder of justice.* In Marvin’s own words, “What we have tried to do in Minnesota is to make the law library the first rung in the administration of justice. We are the first place where people go to find out the rules, the statutes, and the regulations that govern the relationship between citizens and society.”

Included among major programs and activities instituted by Marvin at the State Law Library were the County Law Library Program, the Law Library Services to Prisoners Program, the Shared Government Documents Program, the Peter S. Popovich Rare Book Fund, and the Law Library’s World Wide Web presence on the Internet, which archives the decisions of the Minnesota appellate courts.

Freedom of Information Day is celebrated each year on the anniversary of the birth of James Madison, fourth president of the United States and the principal author of the Bill of Rights. Minnesota’s Freedom of Information Award is sponsored by the Minnesota Coalition on Government Information. The award is named in honor of John R. Finnegan, Sr., retired senior vice-president of the St. Paul Pioneer Press, co-founder and chair of the Minnesota Joint Media Committee; it recognizes his dedication to openness in government and his work on behalf of the people’s right to know.

The Minnesota Coalition on Government Information, an interest group of individuals and organizations committed to open access to public information in print, electronic, and digital forms, is modeled on a national coalition initiated in 1986 by the American Library Association. Both the national and the Minnesota groups present awards each year to those individuals and organizations whose efforts have made a difference in the ability of citizens to receive and access government information. Coalition members include Metronet, the Minnesota Library Association’s Government Documents Roundtable and Intellectual Freedom Committee, the newly formed MN Association of Federal Depository Libraries, and others. For more information about the Coalition or Freedom of Information Day, contact Laurel Stiebler of the MN State Law Library, 651/297-7661, laurel.stiebler@courts.state.mn.us