



Kevin B. Harrington Award for Excellence in Democracy Education

About the Award for Excellence in Democracy Education

Sponsored by the National Conference of State Legislatures' (NCSL) Trust for Representative Democracy, the **Kevin B. Harrington Award for Excellence in Democracy Education** is to be awarded annually by the NCSL to an individual or organization for advancing public understanding of state or local level representative democracy. Individual legislators, legislative staff, legislative chambers or entire legislatures are among eligible recipients. Nominations may include other individuals or organizations with a clear record of activity advocating state and/or local efforts to promote representative democracy. [Current officers and members of the NCSL Executive Committee are ineligible for the award during their terms of office].

Nominees for the award should demonstrate outstanding efforts to advance state/local democracy education that furthers the understanding of the principles and practices of representative democracy for students of all ages and the general public including, but not limited to:

- advancing NCSL's Legislators Back to School Program;
- promoting civic engagement and education through legislative activities;
- encouraging internships and fellowships in state and local level representative bodies;
- developing and disseminating publications or video productions which educate the public on the role of state and/or local legislatures; and
- creating websites or other electronic communication to further public understanding of representative democracy.

The Trust for Representative Democracy will issue a call for nominations on the NCSL web site and in various publications. Anyone may submit a nomination, including self-nominations. Nominations must be submitted by a date determined by the Trust, but in no case later than the NCSL Fall Forum. Nominations must include the name and contact information of the nominee, a biographical sketch and a short essay or explanation of why the nominee is deserving of this prestigious award.

Award nominations will be reviewed by a special committee of legislators and legislative staff appointed by the NCSL President and the NCSL Staff Chair. The Kevin B. Harrington Award recipient will be selected at the Spring Executive Committee meeting and will be presented at NCSL's Legislative Summit annually.

Donations to support the Kevin B. Harrington Award of Excellence in Democracy Education are to be made to the NCSL Foundation, a non-profit, tax-exempt 501 (c) 3 corporation and earmarked for the Trust for Representative Democracy. Donations, which are tax deductible under the IRS Code as charitable contributions, may be made payable to the NCSL Foundation for State Legislatures with the note that the contribution is for the Harrington Award. The contribution should be sent to: the NCSL Foundation, 7700 East First Place, Denver, CO 80230.

Donations for the award may be used to fund the award, travel stipends for award recipients to attend the award ceremony, for promotional materials to publicize the award, for a distinguished speaker on the topic of state/local representative democracy at the NCSL Spring Forum, and for editing/producing the distinguished lecture and award presentation ceremony for the NCSL web site.

About Senate President Kevin B. Harrington

Kevin B. Harrington of Salem, Massachusetts was the founding President of the National Conference of State Legislatures in 1975. He was an educator by profession and, as President of the Massachusetts Senate (1971-1978), organized the Legislative Education Office which is responsible for training for State House interns, the Citizens Legislative Seminar, and the NCSL Legislators Back to School program in Massachusetts. He was a leading advocate of civic education and of the role of government in promoting education of its citizens. Throughout his career in the Senate and in his public service activities afterward, he was dedicated to improving public understanding of American democracy.

Born in Salem and a lifelong resident of the city, he was the youngest of six children of the late Cornelius J. and Mary (Whalen) Harrington. He was a graduate of St. Mary's Boys High in Lynn and St. Louis University in St. Louis, Mo., where he met his future wife. Upon graduation, he taught government and history and coached basketball at Merrimack College.

A member of a well-known political family on the North Shore, Mr. Harrington was elected to the Salem City Council in 1957 and to the Mass. State Senate in 1958, where he served for 20 years. From 1970 to 1978, he served as president of the Senate. He also founded and served as first president of the National Conference of State Legislatures, an organization representing more than 7,500 legislators from all 50 states.

He was well known throughout his legislative career for his commitment to public education. In the early 1960s, he was co-chairman of the Willis-Harrington Commission, whose recommendations led to widespread reform in public education in the state. Among the many reforms mandated by the legislation filed by the Commission was the granting of full state college status to the former Massachusetts state teachers colleges. He also authored legislation establishing minimum pay standards and certification requirements for teachers, mandating kindergarten education throughout the state, and was a key sponsor of legislation that created the METCO program and regional vocational schools.

Close to home, he secured the funds that allowed Salem State College to build its library, its main campus academic building, its dormitories, the O'Keefe athletic complex, outdoor tennis courts and soccer field. He also guaranteed the funding that allowed the College to acquire the former Ste. Chretienne Academy property, which is now the College's south campus. The College named the main academic building there in his honor.

Mr. Harrington was renowned for his prolific knowledge of Massachusetts' political history, often regaling colleagues and students with colorful stories of elected officials and public policy debates stretching back almost 70 years. He was also very proud of the dozens of young people from his district whose own careers in public service began with summer or other part-time employment in his office.

He had a lifelong association with basketball, playing weekly with a close group of friends until he reached age 50. He also coached for several years at the former St. Mary's School and in the Salem Recreation League and was a fixture at his children's and grandchildren's games for more than 30 years.

After retiring from the Legislature in 1978, Mr. Harrington founded Issues Management Inc., a highly successful lobbying and consulting firm. Over the years, he served on numerous business, civic, educational and philanthropic boards, including: trustee of Salem Hospital, overseer at the Peabody Essex Museum, trustee of Museum of Science, on the board of directors of the Associated Industries of Massachusetts, on the Executive Committee of the Mass. Taxpayers Fund, member of the Essex National Heritage Commission, and member of the Clover Club of Boston.

Throughout his life, he kept active in educational circles, serving as a teacher and guest lecturer at several colleges and universities, including Harvard, UMass, Tufts, Clark, MIT, Brandeis, Boston University, Salem State and North Shore Community College. He was the recipient of 10 honorary degrees.

Although a poor student in school, Mr. Harrington developed a lifelong love of learning. An omnivorous reader, he stocked the library in his home with hundreds of books, many of which he received as gifts on holidays and anniversaries, and he would often read a half dozen books at a time. He subscribed to the Chronicle of Higher Education for more than 25 years.

In recent years, he became quite active as a member of the Board of Trustees of Bishop Fenwick High School in Peabody, where he helped to raise the funds necessary to construct the school's athletic fields. He also served on the Board of Trustees of St. Anselm College, in Manchester, N.H., where he was instrumental in the establishment of the New Hampshire Institute of Politics.

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