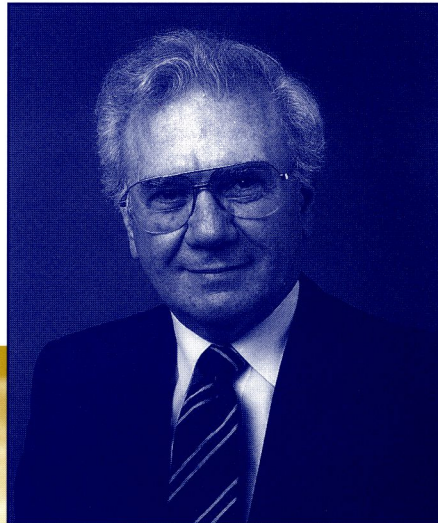


Ernest L. Boyer, Ph.D



ACCEPTANCE REMARKS



The
*Harold W.
McGraw, Jr.*

Prize in
Education

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The McGraw-Hill Companies

The
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McGraw, Jr.**
Prize in Education

Washington, D.C.

September 27, 1995

The Harold W. McGraw, Jr. Prize in Education was established in 1988 in celebration of The McGraw-Hill Companies' 100th anniversary and in honor of Harold W. McGraw, Jr., chairman emeritus, The McGraw-Hill Companies.

The McGraw Prize in Education annually recognizes outstanding educators whose accomplishments are making a difference today, and whose programs and ideas can serve as effective models for the education of future generations of Americans.

Each year, a distinguished Board of Judges presents up to three \$25,000 awards to individuals who have made significant contributions to the advancement of knowledge through education.

Ernest L. Boyer, Ph.D

*Ernest Boyer was recognized as one of the foremost educators in the nation. He spent the last four decades devoting his life to strengthening education — as president of The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, as a U.S. Commissioner of Education, as Chancellor of the State University of New York, as a college teacher, as director of the Center for Coordinated Education at the University of California, as a clinician working with deaf children, and as a trustee to arts and education organizations. Boyer's work dramatically influenced U.S. education policy and helped shape the debate on school reform in all areas, including school-to-work initiatives. He was the author of landmark books covering education from preschool through college, including *High School: A Report on Secondary Education*; *College: The Undergraduate Experience*; *Scholarship Reconsidered*; *Ready to Learn*; and, most recently, *The Basic School*. A Distinguished Fulbright Scholar to both India and Chile, Boyer was the recipient of over 130 honorary degrees and numerous awards, including the Encyclopedia Britannica Achievement in Life Award, the President's Medal from Tel Aviv University, and the Charles Frankel Prize in the Humanities, a presidential citation.*



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ACCEPTANCE REMARKS

Ernest L. Boyer, President

The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching

This evening I'd like to express my profound gratitude to Harold McGraw, and to all the panelists, for this outstanding recognition. The Harold McGraw Prize has, in just a few short years, become the nation's premier tribute in education, and I am deeply humbled by this honor, which carries with it such uniqueness and prestige.

I also wish to thank colleagues from New York to California, and more recently, those at the Carnegie Foundation, for their support, and most especially, I thank my family. Above all I thank my wife, Kay, who, for forty-five years, has been not only my best friend, but wisest counselor as well.

My father ran a small family business, and when I was very young, he occasionally encouraged me to consider business as a career. As I grew older, his enthusiasm for this idea seemed to wane, which I always suspected had something to do with the grade I got in a high school mathematics course—at a time when playing shortstop seemed far more important than mastering equations. Possibly it was because he observed that I always seemed far less interested in paperwork than in people.

In any event, after beginning a career in speech pathology and medical audiology, I found myself, quite unexpectedly, in education, which for more than four decades has been a source of endless inspiration for me.

Throughout the years, I've received from others far more than I have given. With this in mind, I wish to accept the Harold McGraw Prize in honor of all the teachers in my life who have helped shape my own philosophy of education and, indeed, who continue to shape my ideas.

Just last week, while visiting Jackson-Keller Elementary School in Texas, I was first greeted at the door by the custodian, Louis DeLeon, and joined by parents and teachers, while Alicia Thomas, the principal, stood modestly on the side. This reception reinforced my conviction that an effective school is, above all else, a community—a place where everyone works together on behalf of children. At Jackson-Keller we walked down colorful corridors and visited classrooms filled with books and teddy bears and computers, and, as I was leaving, Mr. DeLeon said in a quiet, understated way, "All we want is a good environment for our children"—which says it all.

Looking back, I'm also grateful to a small group of courageous deaf and hard-of-hearing children who taught me, as they struggled to communicate, that language is our most essential social function. Those children taught me that literacy is the key to lifelong learning and to the world of work—something Harold McGraw has affirmed for many years. They also taught me that the most essential goals of education must be to help all children become proficient in the written and the spoken word and to accurately compute.

Speaking of communication, I should pay tribute to my fourth-grade teacher at Fairview Avenue Elementary School in Dayton, Ohio, who had an absolutely contagious love of music. She would, spontaneously, gather us around the piano to sing our lessons. She taught me that through the majestic language of the arts we communicate our deepest feelings and ideas.

But it was my grandfather Boyer who taught me that language bonds us to each other. When Grandpa talked with children, he'd kneel down, look deeply into their eyes, and listen patiently and enthusiastically as they spoke. He taught me that honesty is the obligation we assume when we are empowered with the miracle of words.

I'd also like to thank a core of university students. During the turbulent protests of the 1960s, these students forced me to think about the curriculum in our colleges and schools, which was, they said, far too fragmented and often unrelated to consequential issues.

At first I resisted these “quarrelsome critics.” However, through the years I’ve become increasingly convinced that to be truly educated, all students should not only acquire a solid core of common knowledge, but also see connections across the disciplines and relate learning in the classroom to the realities of life. Mark Van Doren observed, on one occasion, that the student who begins early in life to see things as connected has begun the life of learning.

Looking back, I also feel deeply indebted to the late Ralph Tyler, distinguished director of the Center for the Study of the Behavioral Sciences. Forty years ago he taught me that a curriculum begins with goals, that assessment should be imbedded in instruction, and that evaluation should tap the potential of each student, rather than restrict it.

Speaking of lessons I have learned, I’ll always remember my visit to a sixth-grade classroom in New Haven, where excellence and creativity were blended. Walking in unannounced, I discovered thirty streetwise students studying the classics. They had just finished reading Charles Dickens’s *Oliver Twist* and were all crowded around the teacher’s desk, vigorously debating whether little Oliver could survive in their own neighborhood. After going back and forth, prodded by the teacher, they finally concluded that while Oliver had beaten the odds in London, he’d never make it in New Haven, which was, they agreed, a much tougher city. I am convinced that great teachers who stir such creativity and connections are the unsung heroes of the nation.

In the end, quality education focuses on the whole child. And I thank Kay for teaching me that good education begins with good nutrition—even before birth itself.

Years ago while visiting John F. Kennedy High School in New York City, I discovered, once again, the importance of building character in education. The principal told me that a large wall running along the playground had been, for months, covered with obscene graffiti. Finally, in desperation, he called in the student leaders and told them, “The wall is yours.” Almost overnight, a magnificent mural appeared, which, he said, remained untouched—reminding me that social and civic responsibility must be taught not just by word, but by example.

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And so this evening I am deeply grateful to all the mentors in my life who, throughout the years, taught me that excellence in education means a community for learning, the centrality of language, a curriculum with coherence, high standards authentically assessed, a creative climate, support services for children, and a focus not just on the intellectual but also on the ethical and moral development of students.

The face of young America is changing. We are becoming richly more diverse. It is my urgent hope that in the century ahead this nation will significantly reaffirm public education as our most essential democratic institution and that we will have, in every neighborhood, schools of excellence to serve every child, not just the most advantaged.

Tonight I feel more grateful than I can ever say for the opportunity I’ve had to be a part of American’s great experiment in education. And, once again, I wish to thank Harold McGraw, and everyone assembled, for this special recognition, which I shall always cherish.

1988

The Honorable Terrel H. Bell

Former U.S. Secretary of Education

Helen "Jinx" Crouch

President, Literacy Volunteers of Americas

Senator Claibourne Pell

Rhode Island

1989

Dr. Kenneth B. Clark

Distinguished Professor of Psychology Emeritus,

City University of New York

The Honorable Richard W. Riley

Former Governor of South Carolina

Dr. Kathleen A. Ross, snjm

President, Heritage College

1990

James P. Comer, M.D.

Maurice Falk Professor of Child Psychiatry,

Yale University Child Study Center

Clark Kerr

President Emeritus, University of California

Dr. Richard C. Wallace, Jr.

Superintendent, Pittsburgh Public Schools

1991

Dr. Judith Taack Lanier

Dean of Education, Michigan State University, and

President, Michigan Partnership for New Education

Dr. Robert H. McCabe

President, Miami-Dade Community College District

Dr. Theodore R.Sizer

Professor of Education, Brown University, and

Chairman, Coalition of Essential Schools

PAST PRIZE RECIPIENTS

1992

Dr. Shirley A. Hill

Curators' Professor of Education and Mathematics,

University of Missouri-Kansas City

Dr. Thomas W. Payzant

Superintendent, San Diego Schools

Dr. Edward Zigler

Sterling Professor of Psychology, Yale University

1993

Sister Mary Brian Costello, R.S.M.

Chief of Staff, Archdiocese of Chicago

Sharon Darling

President, National Center for Family Literacy

The Honorable Booth Gardner

Former Governor of Washington

1994

Patricia M. Bolaños

Principal, Key and Renaissance Schools, Indianapolis

Harold Howe II

Former U.S. Commissioner of Education

Alicia Thomas

Principal, Jackson-Keller Elementary School,

San Antonio, Texas

1995

Dr. Ernest L. Boyer

Former President of The Carnegie Foundation

for the Advancement of Teaching

Dr. Mary E. Diez

Dean of Education, Alverno College, Milwaukee

Dr. James E. (Gene) Bottoms

Director of High Schools That Work,

a program of the Southern Regional

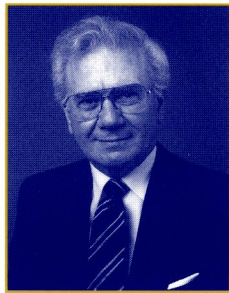
Education Board-State Vocational

Education Consortium



The McGraw-Hill Companies

In memoriam



Ernest L. Boyer, Ph.D
1928 – 1995

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Macmillan/McGraw-Hill

SRA/McGraw-Hill
CTB/McGraw-Hill

McGraw-Hill School Systems
McGraw-Hill/London House