

## The AATE Conference and the Lin Wright Special Recognition Award to CETA

The AATE Conference held in Atlanta from July 23-27, 2009 was at the Hyatt Regency in downtown Atlanta. Atlanta is a beautiful city that reminded me of LA with a similar sprawling urban area that included tall buildings and lots of traffic plus great shops, restaurants and boutiques interlaid with green space and neighborhood pockets. An added bonus was the fact that the AATE Conference was concurrent with the Atlanta-based National Black Arts Festival.

What a wonderful celebration of the arts, in which we found ourselves immersed from the moment we arrived! Right in the Hyatt Regency, alongside the AATE conference offerings, was the Arts Marketplace featuring row upon row of black artists and artisans displaying incredible pieces inspired by their cultural heritage. [Ask me about the quilt I couldn't resist.] Walk 3-4 blocks and there was Centennial Park filled with crowds of people of all ages and walks of life, playing in the syncopated spurts of water erupting from the concrete plaza and listening to the jazzy sounds of musicians and combos sharing their music while listeners danced to the beat in their own fashion on the verdant field of grass from morning to night. The days were sunny and hot (but not the sweltering heat I had been told to expect) and everyone who could was out enjoying the summer fun. I love Chicago Steppin' [a black, urban dance rooted in the Bop and Swing] and found a thriving Steppin' scene there as well. And the theatre offerings—my, oh my! *The Color Purple*, *Hallelujah Street Blues*, *The Amen Corner*, and *Gee's Bend* were all ticket offerings at the AATE Conference. I chose *Gee's Bend* and saw an absolutely riveting performance about the women of *Gee's Bend*, a small rural community in the South, whose quilts are on display at the Whitney Museum in New York and at the High Museum in Atlanta. As I indulged all my senses at this festival and the conference, I find myself echoing the feeling expressed in the *Gee's Bend* printed program, that all this outpouring of energy “demonstrates that love turns work into art.”

Some of the highlights of the AATE conference that we were present for were Friday night's keynote speaker, Stephanie Hughley, Founder and Executive Director of the National Black Arts Festival, the Awards Luncheon on Saturday and the closing panel on multi-cultural and diversity issues on Sunday. Gai and I were honored guests along with all the other recipients of the 18 awards presented. As you might imagine, even with each of us only speaking for two minutes, what with introductions, walking to and from the stage, and making the speeches, it was little wonder that the awards luncheon ran long! However, it was not only an honor to be there but also an incredible testament to the value of theatre and education as a combined force in our society. Awards ranged from those given to individuals in recognition of service in specific areas to organizations who present children's theatre having a powerful impact on their community and state to awards selecting distinguished plays, books, and dissertations. It was with pride that Gai and I sat at the table with fellow Californian Anne Gesling of the Youth Educational/Entertainment Series—Y.E.S. at the Morgan-Wixson Theatre in Santa Monica. Y.E.S. received

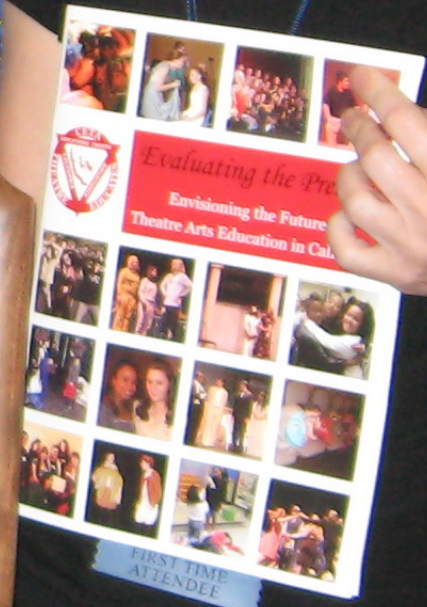
the Winifred Ward Outstanding New Children's Theatre Company Award. I personally was most impressed with the 2008 Winifred Ward Scholars—two young women of outstanding scholarship, impeccable credentials and very eloquent, heartfelt acceptance speeches.

Certainly showing “that love turns work into art” is what we theatre educators do and this was truly resonant at the AATE Awards luncheon the afternoon of Saturday, July 26, 2008 during which we were presented with one of two Lin Wright Special Recognition Awards given this year, based upon the following selection criteria:

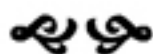
- **LIN WRIGHT SPECIAL RECOGNITION AWARDS:** Honors persons who have established special programs, developed experimental works, made distinctive educational contributions or provided meritorious service thus furthering theatre and drama for young people. This award recognizes and supports these unique contributions of artists, educators, and advocates wherever they are found. **THREE AWARDS** may be given annually.

As Gai and I sat at the awards ceremony, we both missed having Amanda and Carolyn there to share the experience with us. We are also very appreciative that CETA sent us to represent our state organization in recognition of our work as writers of the CETA Position Paper—*Evaluating the Present: Envisioning the Future of Theatre Arts Education in California*. While we may be the only state with a position paper written to be a straightforward, concrete statement justifying the value of theatre arts education taught by highly qualified teachers credentialed in theatre and providing the key qualities and components of an excellent theatre arts education program at the elementary, middle, and high school levels, it is truly our mission to join the ranks of other 34 states who offer a single subject theatre credential and have the pre-service and professional training to support credentialed theatre arts educators. Our Position Paper is but one step forward in achieving that mission.

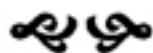
One footnote to attending the AATE Conference, a national conference devoted to theatre and education, and that is our CETA state conference right here at home measures up well when compared to the workshop offerings, vendor exhibits and all the various conference activities one could hope to experience. I rarely get to attend a national conference but it was very gratifying to realize that my annual attendance at the CETA state conference is as fully rewarding and, as an added bonus, addresses very specifically the issues confronting us as theatre educators every day as we work with our students here in California. I encourage you to take advantage of this wonderful and exciting “Bay Area Blast,” our 2008 CETA State Conference.



American  
**ALLIANCE**  
OF THEATRE & EDUCATION



*2008 Awards Luncheon*



*Saturday, July 26, 2008*

*12:30 - 2:30 pm*

*Centennial Ballroom*

*Hyatt Regency Atlanta*



**ANN FLAGG MULTICULTURAL AWARD**

José Cruz Gonzáles



**BARBARA SALISBURY WILLS ALLIANCE AWARD**

Carol T. Jones



**DINA REES EVANS THEATRE IN OUR SCHOOLS  
AWARD**

Illinois Theatre Association



**JOHN C. BARNER TEACHER OF THE YEAR AWARD**

Keith Taylor



**LIN WRIGHT SPECIAL RECOGNITION AWARDS**

Karen Libman

California Educational Theatre Association



**MONTE MEACHAM AWARD**

Kim Peter Kovac



**SARA SPENCER ARTISTIC ACHIEVEMENT AWARD**

The Growing Stage:

The Children's Theatre of New Jersey





**WINIFRED WARD OUTSTANDING NEW  
CHILDREN'S THEATRE COMPANY AWARD**  
Youth Educational/Entertainment Series (Y.E.S.)



**DISTINGUISHED BOOK AWARD**

Theatre for Living: The Art and Science of Community-  
Based Dialogue  
By David Diamond  
Published by Trafford Publishing



**DISTINGUISHED PLAY AWARD**

**Category A: Plays Primarily for Middle and Secondary  
School Age Audiences**

*Brave No World: Community. Identity. Stand-up Comedy.*  
By Laurie Brooks  
Published by Dramatic Publishing



**DISTINGUISHED PLAY AWARD**

**Category C: Adaptations**

*The Bluest Eye*  
Adapted by: Lydia R. Diamond  
from the novel by Toni Morrison  
Published by Dramatic Publishing



❧  
**AATE RESEARCH AWARDS**  
**The Distinguished Dissertation Award**  
Takeo Fujikura

**Distinguished Dissertation Honorable Mention Award**  
David T. Montgomery

❧  
**2008 WINIFRED WARD SCHOLAR**  
Wendy Bable  
Oona Kersey

❧  
**DON AND ELIZABETH DOYLE FELLOWSHIP**  
Meriah Sage

❧  
**CAMPTON BELL LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD**  
Ruth Beall Heinig

**Awards Chair: Amy Ressler**  
**General Awards Chair: Rachel Briley**  
**Research Awards Chairs:**  
Manon van de Water and Christine Warner  
**Book Awards Chair: Barbara Jo Maier**  
**Play Awards Chair: Kat Matassarini**  
**Committee Members:**

Cecilia Aragon	Max Bush	Abigail Bigham
Jennifer Chapman	Robert Colby	Stephen Gundersheim
Laura Steenveld Hamilton	Charlotte Harvey	Leigh Jansson
Xan S. Johnson	Oona Kersey	Jeanne Klein
Katherine Krzys	Christina Marin	Debra McLaughlan
Amy Oakeson	Rachel Prouty	Laura Gardner Salazar
Pamela Sterling	Gus Weltsek	Michelle White