

From Our Past

At the Third Annual Spring Conference held on the campus of the University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, on May 4-5, 1962, concerns and needs of teachers were addressed: censorship, discussed by David Berninghauser, Director of the Library School, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis; articulation; English for the retarded student; a multi-sensory approach to the teaching of reading; phonics in teaching reading; teaching of literature in ungrouped classes; teaching of writing and theater arts. Key speakers at the banquet and luncheon were Brom Weber, Professor of English at the University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, who spoke on "American Humor" and Donald K. Smith, Chair of the Speech and Theater Arts Department, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, who spoke on "Teaching the English Language."

During 1962 the *Minnesota English Newsletter* informed teachers of important developments in education. In September the *Newsletter* announced the establishment by the Office of Education of four Project English Centers, a federal program to improve the teaching of English. The University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, was selected as one of the centers with Dr. (Stanley) Kegler as director and Dr. (Harold) Allen and Dr. (Donald) Smith as associate directors. In other issues the *Newsletter* alerted teachers to censorship problems and the help available through two publications – NCTE's *The Students' Right to Read* and the American Library Association's *Library Bill of Rights*. In addition, it reported on recommendations of the State Language Arts Advisory Committee, explained new certification requirements and copyright laws, and recognized state winners of the NCTE Achievement Awards Program. The *Newsletter* also editorialized on the need for school districts to release teachers to attend educational conferences and to subsidize travel expenses for teachers attending conferences.

On April 26-27, 1963, at the University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, the Fourth Annual Spring Conference focused on the implications of Project English in evaluating high school curriculum. Three resolutions were adopted:

1. MCTE expressed support of the recommendations of the State Language Arts Advisory Committee regarding standards and certification.
2. MCTE supported the recommendations of the Committee on Fifth Year Programs.
3. MCTE supported NCTE's publication, *The Students' Right to Read* and the philosophy upon which it was based.

ring the presidency of Anna Lee Stensland in 1963-1964, MCTE shed out for more members, expanded its activities to serve teachers and exerted more influence on the profession. Dr. Stensland urged local area organizations and affiliates to fill a number of needs of English/language arts teachers by disseminating information about new subject matter and new approaches to learning; by learning of interesting and valuable programs neighboring schools were working on; by reducing teaching loads; and by fighting censorship.

In January, 1964, two helpful reports appeared – a directory of MCTE members published in the *Minnesota English Newsletter* and results of a survey by the Articulation Committee of college freshman English programs.

Action of an aggressive council was shown at the Fifth Annual Spring Conference held at St. Cloud on April 17-18, 1964. MCTE passed a resolution supporting the work of the State Language Arts Advisory Committee to upgrade the profession by requiring those teaching in their majors to earn a major in seven years. The State Advisory Committee on Teacher Education earlier had rejected this proposal. Other resolutions sought means to improve articulation between elementary and secondary schools between secondary and college teachers and explore ways of establishing closer unity between MCTE and its affiliates. MCTE recognized five high schools for their excellent English programs – Duluth, Duluth, Hopkins, Northfield, North St. Paul, and the University of Minnesota, Minneapolis.

Excerpt from: *A History of the Minnesota Council of Teachers of English: First Twenty-Five Years* by Edna C. Downing.