

# NCLR Newsletter for Presidents

*For the executive administrators of community colleges*

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## The One Book Concept at St. Louis Community College

*Dr. Henry D. Shannon, Chancellor  
St. Louis Community College, St. Louis, Missouri*

What if everyone at our college read the same book? This question was asked by staff and faculty members of St. Louis Community College in 2004. The idea of a common reading program has been around for a number of years. Communities of all shapes and sizes have adopted the concept of people coming together through reading and discussing a common book. Intrigued by this idea, we explored how to promote literacy and unite our own district with a common purpose. Our explorations resulted in the design of a year-long program called "One Book, One College."

Our goals are to promote reading, discussion, critical thinking, and foster new alliances within the campuses and district. We emphasize academic elements, such as student writing assignments and other projects, to ensure there is no misconception that this is little

more than a social book club. Activities and events are designed to create opportunities for faculty, staff, and students to engage in learning and create a sense of community. In the first two years, we chose James McBride's memoir *The*



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St. Louis Community College

*Color of Water* and Barbara Ehrenreich's *Nickel and Dimed: On Not Getting By in America*, a non-fiction book about working in minimum wage jobs. Our choice this year, *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Nighttime*, by Mark Haddon, is a fiction title that illuminates the life of an autistic British teen.

The first selection in our series supported our initiative on diversity: exploring themes of race, religion, and multicultural families. The book was adopted as the reading for an ESL program, with students writing personal essays related

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### **One Book Concept, continued from page 1**

to the topic. Events included an informational kick-off (with bottles of water given away to promote the program), library and bookstore exhibits, book discussions, a jazz concert, and concluded with a book signing, reception, and lecture by the author. Qualitative information from feedback forms and quantitative data from the bookstores and libraries were used in our assessment of the program.

Later programs have incorporated findings from previous

assessments. We are now announcing our book selection earlier in the year so faculty can plan to integrate it into their syllabi. Activities are designed to provide a casual setting that encourages conversation and debate yet maintains an academic focus. Events have included a student art exhibit, panel discussions, film showings, and presentations from local experts on themes from the books.

The participation of faculty and staff in the program encourages student awareness that reading is a way to continue learning and that as educated,

informed adults we should continue to learn about other people and the world; it demonstrates how reading can connect classroom work to meaningful discussions with others whom the students may not normally interact; and, lastly, it shows that reading can be a lifelong pleasure.

Our program's success can be attributed to district-wide involvement, curriculum connection, and the dedication of program leaders and committee members who organize creative events that support the visions and values of our College.

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## **More Good Reads**

*Cary Sowell, Head Librarian and NCLR Chair  
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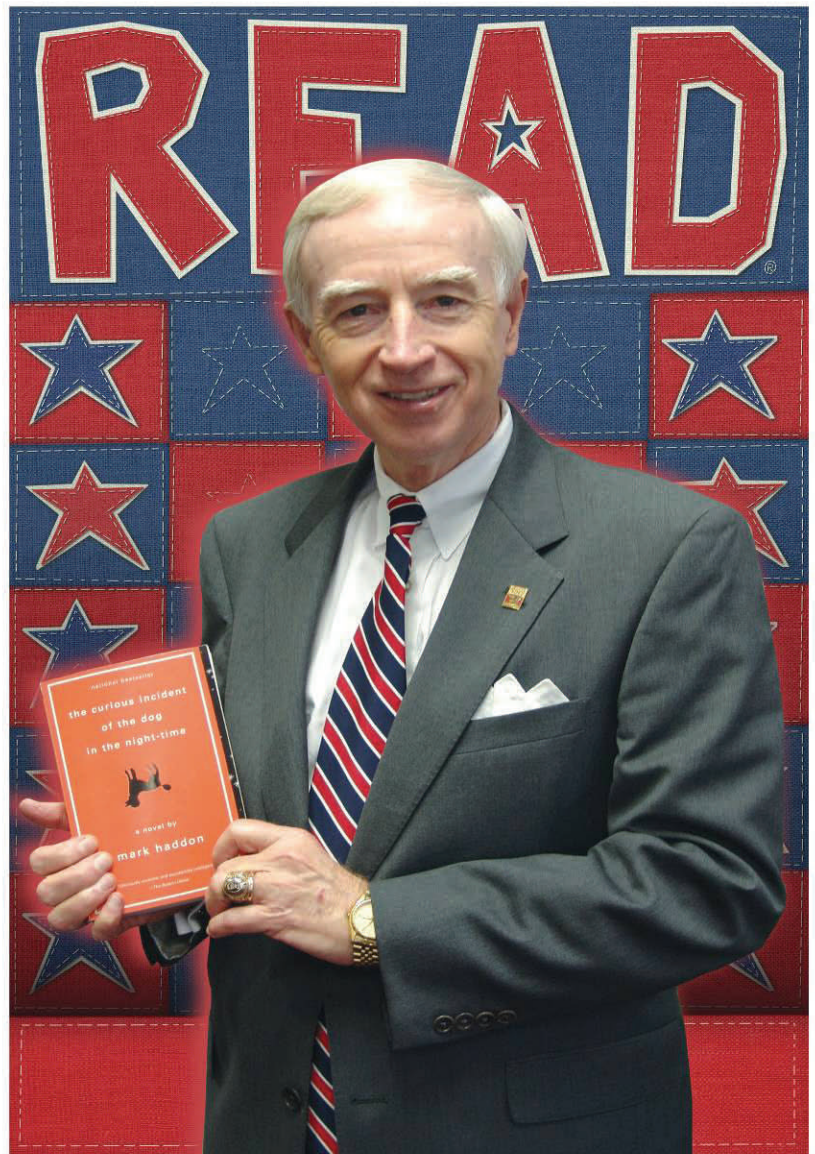
At the recent AACC Conference in Tampa, Florida two colleges presented their participation in a one book one college program. Midlands Technical College in Columbia, SC has had a program they call MTC Reads since spring 2004. An English instructor presented the idea and the College adopted it, because it would be fun, educational, and would help build community. They have several recurring events each year including kick-off events, book discussions, guest speakers, and movies or docu-

mentaries as appropriate. The library gets multiple copies and also integrates questions related to the book in their College 105 class instruction on use of the library. The bookstore makes copies of the books available for purchase. The English department integrates assignments in appropriate classes, and it is used in some of the developmental reading classes. They are hoping to expand the classroom impact beyond English, and to do more community outreach. They have been exploring ways to work with the

**More Good Reads,  
continued from page 2**

University of South Carolina and tie in with their freshman book program. Books they chosen have been *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* by Douglas Adams, *A Lesson Before Dying* by Ernest Gaines, *The Water Is Wide* by Pat Conroy, and this spring 2007, *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* by Mark Haddon. Information about MTC Reads can be found at <http://mtcreads.lib.midlandstech.edu/>.

Baton Rouge Community College in Louisiana got involved this spring 2007 by tying their program to a city-wide initiative with the local public library spearheading the program. The public library received an NEA grant to help fund this program and many agencies including the College partnered with them to make this one big community project. The book chosen was *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee. The gala kick-off event was a screening of the film on the College campus with a panel discussion following. The library had a hundred copies of the book for students to check out. Many of the English classes had this book incorporated into the curriculum. A Criminal Justice class staged a mock trial as part of their course. Students created portfolio material to show how they had participated in the reading of this book and events surrounding this initiative. It was such a success that they plan to participate with the public library again next year. Information on *The Big Read*, as it was called, can be found at <http://www.ebr.lib.la.us/circ/advisory/onebook/onebookinfo.htm>.



Dr. Marshall (Sonny) White, Jr., President  
Midlands Technical College, Columbia, South Carolina

### ALA READ Posters

Your school can create its own promotional READ posters, such as the one pictured above, with the purchase of a software CD from the American Library Association (ALA). You can use the included designs or come up with your own. Available for purchase at the ALA Online Store at <http://www.alastore.ala.org/> (look for "READ CD Information" near the bottom left of the page). One CD is \$149 (\$134.10 for ALA members) or a set of two is \$220.



## Announcements



Cary Sowell, NCLR chair, presents Herlinda Glasscock (left) with the NCLR 2007 Administrative Leadership Award.

### Dr. Glasscock wins NCLR 2007 Administrative Leadership Award

The NCLR 2007 Administrative Leadership Award went to Dr. Herlinda Glasscock, President of North Lake College, part of the Dallas County Community College District in Irving, Texas.

She received this award for her strong support in rebuilding the Campus Library when it was left with a "bare bones" collection and staff in 2004 after a "parting of the ways" with the local public library over a joint use facility. In just two short years, through her leadership, the library received the funding to build back up to be an excellent facility that serves the needs of its College community.

## Upcoming Events

- June 21 - 27, 2007      **American Library Association - 2007 ALA Annual Conference**, Washington, DC.  
<http://www.ala.org>
- June 24 - 27, 2007      **League for Innovation in the Community College - Learning College Summit 2007: The Learning College in Action**, Dallas, TX.  
<http://www.league.org>
- November 11 - 14, 2007      **League for Innovation in the Community College - 2007 Conference on Information Technology (CIT)**, Nashville, TN.  
<http://www.league.org>
- January 11-16, 2008      **American Library Association - 2008 ALA Midwinter Meeting**, Philadelphia, PA.  
<http://www.ala.org>
- April 5 - 8, 2008      **American Association of Community Colleges - 2008 AACC Convention**, Philadelphia, PA.  
<http://www.aacc.nche.edu>
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