

REVIEW & PREVIEW

The Newsletter of the Public Policy Institute at Southern Illinois University, Carbondale. Spring/Summer 1999

A Message From Paul

News From the Literacy Front

Dear Friend:

What university in the nation had Barbara Bush and Michael Dukakis on its campus within two weeks? Southern Illinois University Carbondale. And if that was all that was accomplished, it would be a small plus for our University and for the Institute that played a key role in bringing them here. But their presence did more than that.

In the case of Barbara Bush, she joined literacy leaders from around the nation in looking at what we can do to significantly improve the reading and writing abilities of those who have problems. By the most conservative estimate, 23 million adult Americans cannot read a newspaper and cannot fill out an application form. And obviously, they cannot help their children with schoolwork, so the problem is perpetuated. The gathering, sponsored by the Public Policy Institute, made a number of concrete suggestions that should cause improvement in this national picture.

The importance of basic skills is shown by a few simple statistics. First, 82 percent of those in our prisons and jails are high school dropouts. When they improve their basic skills—even while in prison—the probability of their returning to a life of crime and to prison drops fairly dramatically. Second, about 21 percent of the nation's children live in poverty, a far higher percentage than any other western industrialized democracy. But of parents who have some college, 9 percent of their children live in poverty; of



Former First Lady Barbara Bush speaks at SIUC.

those who are high school graduates, 29 percent of their children do, and of those with less than a high school education, it is 61 percent. (*Statistics from the National Center for Children in Poverty.*)

The demand for unskilled labor is diminishing. We need to lift the level of skills of our people so that they will have more and better opportunities.

Where our Public Policy Institute differs from almost all others is that we do not simply gather people for great intellectual discussion; we make concrete recommendations. Since the literacy meeting a few weeks ago, I have already met with the Director of the Federal Bureau of Prisons and three top officials there to discuss, among other things, what can be done to improve the educational product available to

prisoners.

Former Massachusetts Gov. Michael Dukakis participated in a health care forum here and then spoke to students in the Master of Public Administration program, as well as other students and faculty members. The health care issue is one that the Institute is considering exploring in greater depth.

Later this year, we will have a symposium on a problem hardly noticed by most people that will become a huge barrier to world stability in a few years: the shortage of water. We will focus specifically on the process of desalination, a process that is now inexpensive enough to produce drinking water. But 85 percent of the water the world uses is for agricultural and industrial purposes. How great a burden will it be to desalinate that water? We



Secretary of State Jesse White, Illinois First Lady Lura Lynn Ryan, and Celeste Stiehl, a member of the SIU Board of Trustees, at the Literacy Symposium.

Continued from page 1

anticipate having leaders from our country and other nations here for this important symposium.

The contributions our Institute is able to make to the region and to the nation—and in some instances to the world—are made possible in large part by your assistance through your ideas and contributions. We value both.

Let me add that the Institute has been fortunate to assemble a small but quality staff that has made possible what we have been able to do. Assistant Director Mike Lawrence and I come up with ideas, many from you, pull in other people to refine the ideas, and then our staff has to follow through, and they do that well. I am grateful to them—and to you.

Sincerely,
Paul

Literacy Symposium Draws National Attention to Improving Literacy Rates

Literacy experts and advocates from throughout the nation came to Carbondale in March for the Public Policy Institute's National Forum on Literacy. During the two-day symposium, the experts proposed an action agenda designed to assure that Americans of all ages possess the reading skills vital to economic prosperity and the democratic ideal of participation by all citizens.

"The United States faces its most critical skills gap in this century," the joint statement read. "Nearly 40 million adult Americans lack the skills to be fully productive members of local communities, to be effective workers, citizens and parents."

A highlight of the conference was the public address by former First Lady of the United States Barbara Bush, who is a long-standing champion of literacy programs in America.

"Today, unfortunately, the 'to-do' list is still very long. But like me, I'm sure you've noticed a new energy around the country when it comes to literacy, and to education in general," Bush said in her remarks. "Everyone from corporate CEOs, to Hollywood

celebrities and best-selling authors, to working moms and dads, and retired grandparents come up and ask the familiar question, 'What can we do to help?' You'll be happy to know I'm pretty quick on the answer: Give money, give time, give support."

In addition to Mrs. Bush, participants included Rep. Tom Sawyer (D-Ohio), who joined Simon in co-sponsoring the National Literacy Act; Illinois Secretary of State and State Librarian Jesse White; First Lady of Illinois Lura Lynn Ryan; leaders of national literacy and adult education organizations; teachers; and adults who dramatically changed their lives by overcoming illiteracy.

Sawyer and other speakers stressed that millions of Americans either do not—or will not—possess the fundamental skills needed to attain and perform good-paying jobs in the 21st century. Without an able work force, they added, the nation will be unable to sustain economic growth in an increasingly competitive global economy and assure a high quality of life for all Americans.

A literacy group comprised of



U.S. Rep. Tom Sawyer (D-Ohio)

panel members and other national literacy experts brainstormed that evening and the next morning at Giant City Lodge, formulating their recommendations to promote greater literacy rates and more successful programs in the United States.

Sponsoring the forum were GTE, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Illinois, the National Institute for Literacy, Illinois Secretary of State and State Librarian Jesse White, and the Public Policy Institute.

Work on Literacy Recommendations Continues

Follow-up was evident just two days after the Public Policy Institute's National Forum on Literacy concluded.

On March 29, 1999, the American Library Association (ALA) immediately addressed the challenges of the new literacy campaign outlined in the Public Policy Institute's National Forum on Literacy. In mid-May, the ALA convened a strategy session in Washington, D.C. to discuss the important role of libraries in the literacy movement. The outcome of the meeting could be the emergence of an organized, nationwide, county-by-county literacy campaign beginning on January 2, 2000.

The Public Policy Institute is pleased that additional discussions are being held regarding the implementation of the literacy recommendations. For more information on ALA's efforts, contact them directly at 800/545-2433 or visit their home page: www.ala.org.

Recommendations from the Conference

Literacy Recommendations included some of the following:

- Strengthen and clarify the role of libraries in providing literacy programs and services.
- Increase the numbers interested in this massive national problem and organize more effectively.
- Family literacy programs should be expanded.
- Local religious groups, community action agencies and the media should play a larger role in encouraging those who have problems to seek help to develop skills.
- Diagnostic tools to identify learning disabilities, particularly in early childhood, should be much more widely available.
- Recognize literacy training and education as an effective anti-crime tool that has been demonstrated to reduce recidivism in our prisons.
- Encourage computer skills, which can help develop literacy and enhance opportunities for employment.
- Launch a major campaign to encourage people who have skill deficiencies to seek help.
- Incorporate the opportunity to obtain basic literacy skills into all human service activities, particularly at welfare offices and employment offices.
- Work to increase the availability of adult education in geographic areas of greatest need.
- Provide tax incentives to employers to offer work-place literacy



Panelists John Zickefoose and Joyce Harper at the literacy conference.

and educational opportunities.

- Encourage more literacy volunteers, while developing a greater cadre of well-trained professionals in

the field of higher education.

- Publish a National Literacy Report Card every two to three years to monitor progress of our efforts.

Other Voices

Excerpt from the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* editorial, "Illiteracy: Tougher than a moonshot," Sunday, April 11, 1999:

"Solutions to the literacy problem require private courage and public action.

Public solutions have been elusive so far. Former Sen. Paul Simon and Barbara Bush, who have been in the forefront of literacy awareness, led a conference at Southern Illinois University Carbondale last month that made a score of recommendations. Among them was a call for the library director in the largest community in every county in the nation to convene leading educators, ministers, welfare officials, business groups, labor union and service organizations to mobilize a grass-roots approach to literacy.

Mr. Simon also wants the federal government to require prisoners to take more education courses. He wants employers to offer incentives to work-place literacy. And he wants churches and the media to promote openness about literacy to counteract the embarrassment felt by many poor readers."



Former Massachusetts Gov. Michael Dukakis (left) and Paul Simon speak to reporters at the health care conference.

Partnerships Help Institute Succeed In Helping Others

Michael Dukakis, former presidential candidate and governor of Massachusetts, came to the Carbondale campus of Southern Illinois University to discuss the challenges of providing adequate health care for all Americans.

Joseph Hartzler, who spearheaded the prosecution of Oklahoma City bomber Timothy McVeigh, joined criminal justice experts from throughout the nation in addressing the issue of how we can stop building one prison after another without compromising public safety.

Author Studs Terkel is booked for a special lecture on Nov. 11 on what he has learned and wants to pass on to others.

Experts from throughout the world are being gathered for a major symposium on heading off a water shortage that could throw the world into turmoil.

These and other good things happen when the Institute becomes partners with others in the University community.

Dukakis accepted Paul Simon's invitation to participate in a health care forum co-sponsored by the Institute and the Master of Public Administration Program.

Hartzler appeared at a symposium co-sponsored by the Institute, the SIU School of Law and SIU's Center for the Study of Crime, Delinquency and Corrections.

The lecture series that will feature Terkel and many other notables from

widely diverse perspectives is a joint project of the Institute and the Southern Illinois University Press, which is planning to produce a book based on the lectures.

The symposium on water is a combined venture of the Institute and the International Water Resources Association, which is headquartered at SIU.

Meanwhile, the Institute and SIU's College of Education are partners with public schools and members of the business community in Harrisburg, Ill., in developing a pilot program to emphasize positive character traits in educating youths from kindergarten through high school.

Moreover, the Institute joined with the SIU's Office of International Development to win a grant for a program to bring Bangladesh teachers to the campus to learn about American democracy and how women have achieved positions of influence.

"These are just a few examples of what we can accomplish by working with others in the SIU community and beyond," Simon said. "Mike Lawrence and I are pleased that, through the associations we have made in the media and government over the last several decades, we are able to enhance programs at the University and work with others to make a positive difference in the region, the state, the nation and even the world."

Lawrence Appointed To Courts Commission

Mike Lawrence, the Institute's associate director, has received a gubernatorial appointment to the Illinois Courts Commission, which decides cases in which disciplinary charges have been brought against judges.

Lawrence and Paula Wolff, president of Governors' State University, are the first non-judges appointed to the commission.

Illinois voters last November changed the Illinois Constitution to allow non-judges to serve on the panel, which previously had been comprised exclusively of judges.

Lawrence previously had served as one of three members of the State Board of Ethics.

In announcing the appointments, then-Gov. Jim Edgar said, "I can think of no two people who are better prepared or more qualified to serve in the public seats on this important commission than Paula Wolff and Mike Lawrence. Both have provided exemplary service to the people of Illinois in several capacities over the years, both are well educated in the judicial process, and both have carried out their duties throughout their careers with the utmost attention to moral and ethical responsibility."



Mike Lawrence (right), associate director of the Institute, introduces former Gov. Jim Edgar to his Public Policy Reporting class.

Institute Announces John and Muriel Hayward Fellowship



Muriel and John Hayward are the inspirations for a new guest lecturer fellowship.

Friends of the Public Policy Institute have donated funds to create the John and Muriel Hayward Fellowship. This new fellowship program will bring a distinguished guest to SIU annually to lecture in the general area of politics and religion or politics and the arts.

"For many years Jack and Muriel Hayward have generously given their time and money to community organizations committed to citizen participation in government and to the common good in the realms of justice, health, the environment, education and the arts," Paul Simon said. "This fellowship program honors them for the significant things they have done to make ours a better society."

Dr. Hayward joined SIU in 1968 as a professor and later served as chairperson of the religious studies program. He retired from the University in 1983. He and Muriel are both members of the Public Policy Institute Regional Advisory Board. They have four children.

Director Receives National Awards

On March 10, Paul Simon received the Paul H. Douglas Award, a national award given annually. Past winners have included former U.S. Sen. Mike Mansfield of Montana, Archibald Cox, former solicitor general of the United States who left his post because of his disagreement with Richard Nixon on the Watergate matter, and Abner Mikva who was a distinguished federal judge and former chief counsel at the White House.

The University of Chicago honored Simon with the Benton Award, given annually for distinguished public service. The award was named for U.S. Sen. William Benton, who was active with the University of Chicago and who, as senator from Connecticut, was the first member of the Senate to speak up against the tactics of Sen. Joseph McCarthy. Past winners of the Benton Award include Katharine Graham, former publisher of the *Washington Post*, and John Callaway, host of "Chicago Tonight" on WTTW, a public television station.



Paul Simon

Jack Kubik Speaks For 1999 John White Fellowship and Lecture

Former legislative leader and newspaper owner Jack Kubik spoke to faculty and students as the second fellow in the John White Fellowship and Lecture on March 25th.

"Throughout his 14 years in the Illinois House of Representatives and his experience in the private sector as a newspaper owner, Jack Kubik has displayed the kind of political courage and dedication to the public interest that we strive to honor through the John White Fellowship," Paul Simon said. "He was one of four legislators who worked with the Institute last year to shape a package that became the most substantial campaign finance reform legislation in 24 years."

During his seven terms as state representative from LaGrange Park, Kubik was a champion for the rights of seniors and disabled citizens and a leader in

property tax reform and judicial reform.

Kubik, who was recently appointed by Gov. George Ryan as executive director of the Illinois Racing Board, spoke to several classes and exchanged views with faculty and students from the journalism and political science programs at a dinner session. Discussion centered on campaign finance reform, the pros and cons of a campaign code of ethics and what role the media plays in elections.

Two friends of the Public Policy Institute established the John White Fellowship and Lecture to honor outstanding citizens. It is named in honor of John White, president of Midland Manufacturing, former president of the Better Government Association of Chicago, and an active participant in civic and political life. Mayor Dannel McCullom of Champaign was the first Fellow in the program.

Water Symposium Slated for Fall

The Public Policy Institute and the International Water Resources Association are co-sponsoring a fall symposium on "The Role of Water Desalination in Averting a Global Water Crisis" Sept. 19-20, 1999, on the SIUC campus.

"If we are heading toward a grave water crisis, which we are, and if 97 percent of the world's water is seawater, which it is, then one of the seemingly obvious answers to our looming catastrophe is to utilize seawater. The answer is correct, but not simple," Paul Simon said in his book *Tapped Out: The Coming World Crisis in Water and What We Can Do About It*. "Another way to understand where we are is that desalination plants provide about one-quarter of 1 percent of the world's freshwater needs—better than nothing but leaving a long way to go."

Symposium participants will analyze the role of desalination in meeting global water supply needs, discuss future challenges and opportunities for desalination and international cooperation, and develop appropriate policy responses for governments on these issues.

Registration materials and updates on the schedule of speakers can be found at: www.iwra.siu.edu/conferences/desal.html



Lt. Gov. Corinne Wood presents a check to Paul Simon and SIUC President Ted Sanders.

Severns Scholarship Grows

As honorary chairman of the fund drive to establish a memorial scholarship at SIUC for the late state Senator Penny Severns, Paul Simon accepted a personal check for \$5,000 from Lt. Gov. Corinne Wood on May 3.

Wood is a vice chair of the drive to raise \$150,000. It is headed by Secretary of State Jesse White. The funds will endow a full-tuition scholarship awarded annually to a junior or senior female student majoring in political science and interested in entering public service.

Her contribution boosted the amount raised to more than \$60,000. Senator Severns, who received her bachelor's degree in political science from SIUC, died last year after a long battle against cancer.

Poverty Symposium Participant Speaks Out

The Rev. John A. Buehrens, president of the Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations in the United States, recently spoke at a gathering of Unitarians in Iowa City, Iowa, and concluded his message with the following, which grew out of his experience with the Public Policy Institute. He said:

"James Luther Adams wrote these words almost 50 years ago. 'We of the middle class are tempted, indeed, almost fated, to adopt the religion of the successful. This religion of the successful amounts to a systematic concealment of and separation from reality—a hiding of the plight of those who in one sense or another live across the tracks. In the end, this concealment comes from a failure to identify correctly and to enter into combat with what St. Paul called 'the principalities and powers of evil.' The religion of the successful turns out to be a sham spirituality, a cultivated blindness, for it tends to reduce itself to personal kindness and philanthropy costing little. Thus it betrays the world with a kiss.'"

Recently, at a meeting here in the Midwest at which many of America's religious leaders gathered to address issues of poverty, I read these words aloud to my colleagues and then distributed copies.

The meeting was convened by former Senator Paul Simon of Illinois. The religious diversity of the leaders present was quite striking: from Armenian Orthodox, to Evangelical Christian, Orthodox Jewish to Lutheran, Methodist, Mormon, Muslim, Reformed—not to mention yours truly and Pat Robertson.

"We gather to sound a moral alarm," said the joint statement we issued. "While our nation enjoys unprecedented prosperity, fully 21 percent of America's children live in poverty. Even in these good economic times, the growing disparity between the rich and the poor is evidence that all is not well."

We met in a state park lodge constructed during the Depression by the Civilian Conservation Corps. Prof. William Julius Wilson, author of *When*

Work Disappears: The New Plight of the Urban Poor, joined us for an evening. So did some single mothers who have experienced first-hand the difficulties of trying to move from welfare to work.

Our six-page statement—which

We have not yet done enough as religious leaders and communities.... (We are) calling upon elected leaders of this land to join with us in a rebirth of the spirit of the civil rights movement—in a quest for justice, for economic opportunity open to all. Spiritually, morally, politically, our nation needs that spirit again, desperately.
—Rev. John A. Buehrens

was crafted in the presence of a group of observers including Catholic sisters, office holders, welfare workers and recipients, local citizens of all sorts and conditions, a White House staffer, and a member of the press—addressed itself to both state and church.

"We come together in a rather confessional mode," I said at the closing press conference, as one of the spokespersons for the group, "admitting that we have not yet done enough (as religious leaders and communities), and calling upon elected leaders of this land to join with us in a rebirth of the spirit of the civil rights movement—in a quest for justice, for economic opportunity open to all. Spiritually, morally, politically, our nation needs that spirit again, desperately."

We called for job creation programs—with public/private partnership in providing such vital elements as adequate childcare, transportation, training, health care and insurance, and social supports. We must get started now, I said, while the economy is good. For as Jesus put it, "If they do as much in a green tree, what shall

they do in a dry?"

The group agreed to extend invitations to other religious leaders (especially Catholics and women) who weren't adequately represented at this first gathering, and to meet again this winter, in Washington, D.C.

One memorable moment in the meeting came when Robertson spoke about "the epidemic of promiscuity and illegitimacy" and tried to insert that phrase into the joint statement. An African-American minister from the very poorest neighborhood in Chicago replied: "Brother Robertson, that word 'illegitimate' bothers me. Some folks would use it about me. I never use it; I don't find it pastorally useful. I tell my people, 'We're all children of God.' Could we find another way to phrase your concern?"

By the end of that meeting, Robertson was thanking that colleague for reminding him that economic justice and combating poverty are vital to our shared moral future—"so that we don't have two Americas—but we have one America with a sharing in the riches and blessings of this nation."

To which I could only add, "Amen!" May all our efforts to that end become, as Marian Wright Edelman put in her Beacon book of the same title, "the measure of our success." It's the standard by which the children, the future, perhaps God, shall judge us."

On The Horizon

√√ **Sept. 16, Fred Korematsu, civil rights crusader, What I Have Learned and Would Like to Pass On Lecture Series.**

√√ **Oct. 20, C. Everett Koop, former U.S. Surgeon General, presentation on tobacco issues.**

√√ **Nov. 11, Studs Terkel, Chicago-based author, What I Have Learned series.**

Sinclair to Aid Institute with Planned Giving

The Public Policy Institute is pleased to have the services of Jerry Sinclair, an experienced Illinois banker and financial investor, to help potential donors contribute through wills, trusts, and annuities.

Jerry served as president, chairman, and chief executive officer of Salem National Bank until it was sold in 1980. He later owned a private investment company. Jerry's experience in the financial arena includes serving as chairman and president of the Association for Modern Banking and on the executive committee of the American Banking Association.

As a long-time supporter and adviser during Paul Simon's career in public office, Jerry is well aware of the positive impact the SIU Public Policy Institute has throughout Illinois and the nation.

If you are interested in learning more about how you can help support the Public Policy Institute through planned giving, please contact the Institute at (618) 453-4009 or return the form at right.

Paul Simon asks for your help to support the Public Policy Institute

Yes, I believe the work of the Public Policy Institute is important and I want to support its work with the following gift: (all gifts are tax deductible)

\$100 \$500 \$1000 Other amount _____

(Please make your checks payable to the SIU Foundation.)

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