



From the President

Sharon Coleman

Get Connected.
Please bear with

me as I borrow the advertising slogan from the marketers of technology and other products. The fact that “making connections” is an important part of my *M.O.* makes it difficult to resist using the phrase as an underlying theme for this year. Connections have added richness to my life, both professionally and personally. GCSS connections are responsible for, among other things, evolving my sparse instructional portfolio of the early 1970’s into a silver platter of endless possibilities available to me when I returned to the classroom this fall after years of working in other positions.

Upon arriving at Patterson Elementary School last August, I immediately called Laura McCarty at Georgia Humanities to borrow leftover *We the People* textbooks; signed up for Stock Market Game and downloaded the lesson plans from the GCEE website; placed an order for a C-SPAN Presidents’ Timeline; duplicated pages of the GCSS Social Studies Fair guide; and previewed the GPB *Georgia Stories* DVDs—taking advantage of just a few of the outstanding GPS-related resources I had discovered through GCSS associations. The kids and I were set for a good semester.

I know that there are *many* members who have found what they have needed from the social studies spectrum through their GCSS associations over the years.

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Gwen Hutcheson Outstanding Educators

GCSS has recognized amazing individuals in both 2009 and 2010. Read their stories and be inspired!

2010 : JANET NORMAN AND MINDY LEWIS

It was readily apparent from her initial interview that Fayette County’s **Janet Norman** was exceptional, wrote Cathy Geis in her nomination letter. Skillfully weaving graphic organizers, pictures, stories, simulations, debates, and primary sources into her teaching, Norman adds a dash of humor and the result is teaching and learning that led one colleague to state, “Perhaps the highest compliment that I can pay Janet Norman is that every day I long to cross the hall and join her students on the front row. She is the teacher I longed for in high school, yet never experienced.”

Recognized as a master Social Studies teacher by colleagues in Gwinnett County and throughout Georgia, **Mindy Lewis** has proven herself in many ways. Her use of innovative, research based strategies and her skillful use of data to improve instruction has benefited her fellow teachers and administrators. In her nomination letter, Debbie Daniell quoted William Butler Yeats, who stated that “Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire.” Daniell added enthusiastically that Mindy “lights the fire” in Social Studies education.

Meet the 2009 Gwen Hutcheson Award Winners on page 3.



GCSS Program of Excellence Award



The Georgia Council on Economic Education was awarded the 2009 GCSS Program of Excellence. Dr. Debbie Daniell wrote in her nomination letter that the programs from the GCEE “have served as a catalyst in student achievement in our district” and her praise is echoed by numerous schools and districts around the state. Thousands of teachers credit the GCEE with helping them become better teachers.

Outstanding GCEE programs include the Georgia Stock Market Game, Georgia Economic History, as well as programs for Micro and Macro Economics and Virtual Economics. Congratulations to the GCEE team!

(From the President, from pg. 1)

There are, however, still many who have yet to benefit from the *who and what* we know. In these days of little funding and lots of technology, expanding access may require new approaches. GCSS is a “coalition” of people links, and this year our Board of Trustees will be looking for innovative ways to connect the existing resources and opportunities to those we have not yet reached. For those longtime members who are looking for more, perhaps the following events of the past months will give you some ideas as to how to expand your involvement.

Mickey Boyd ended his year as President of GCSS on a high note with a successful October conference for 600+ (thanks to conference coordinator Diane Sloan), continuation of the election CD and social studies fair projects, and GCSS involvement in the re-launching of a professional journal. Mary Stakes, longtime GCSS secretary, relinquished the position to an enthusiastic JoAnn Wood, but will represent GCSS on the *Georgia Social Studies Journal* editorial board, along with Dr. Glen Blankenship. Glen and Mary have been GCSS standard bearers for years and will represent us well. (If *you* are an expert with something to share, stay tuned to www.gcss.net for the call for conference proposals or go to www.coe.uga.edu/GSSJ for more information about the online journal.)

In November, several GCSS members traveled to Denver for the NCSS conference. Eddie Bennett, Pat Guillory, Cathy Geis, Lois Wolfe, Debbie Daniell, and JoAnn Wood, among others, continued to receive accolades a year later on behalf of the 2009 Atlanta NCSS host committees. Georgia also received its 5th Gold Star Council award at the House of Delegates. Jennifer Dawson, a Cobb County middle school teacher and member of the GCSS Board of Trustees, was

also impressive on the podium in the House of Delegates when she presented her position statement as a candidate for the NCSS Board of Directors.

If you are wondering where social studies education stands in the common core standards movement, you may be reassured to know that our social studies professional organizations are pursuing the establishment of standards that will provide guidance. In addition to publishing and distributing National Curriculum Standards for Social Studies last year and advocacy efforts concerning the reauthorization of ESEA, NCSS has joined with other social studies agencies and organizations whose goal is the development of our own Common State Standards for Social Studies. Representatives of fifteen state educational agencies and fourteen professional organizations, including NCSS, met in Savannah on October 10-14, 2010, to initiate the Common State Standards process. Shaun Owen, DOE ex-officio member of our board, is monitoring developments.

There is no doubt that the Georgia Council for the Social Studies has connections that can take our professional experience to a new level. From effective classroom teaching to research to working in social studies-related fields to curriculum development to student programs to social studies education advocacy, we know someone who does it well and who would welcome your involvement and support. In becoming part of the GCSS network, we are better equipping ourselves to prepare our students to be knowledgeable, rational, effective, and caring citizens of our country and world. We have been entrusted with a monumental responsibility. Here's to a successful and rewarding year for us all!



2010 President's Award

Mickey Boyd, in one of his last acts as GCSS President, awarded the 2010

President's Award to Diane Sloan. Citing Diane's many contributions to the GCSS over the years, especially her extensive efforts in planning the annual conference, Mickey presented Diane with her well-deserved plaque.

GCSS BRINGS HOME THE GOLD

NCSS has named the Georgia Council as a Gold Star Council for five consecutive years, including 2010!

MARY STAKES HONORED

Mary Stakes, GCSS Board Secretary and *News & Notes* editor since 1989, was honored during the 2010 Fall Conference for her hard work and dedication to the Board of Trustees and to GCSS. Presenting an engraved plaque, executive director Eddie Bennett stated that "Mary Stakes is always willing to do whatever she can ensure that the work of the Council is advanced. She is a highly skilled professional who always wears a smile, regardless of the task." Stakes will remain active in the field of social studies as the state director of Project Citizen.



2009 GWEN HUTCHESON AWARD WINNERS:
MELISA JEFFERS, BETSEY KENNEDY, &
CATHY POWELL



L to R, Melisa Jeffers, Betsey Kennedy, & Cathy Powell

Meet a teacher whose “expertise and dedication to elementary social studies education is unsurpassed,” wrote Gwinnett County’s Social Studies Curriculum and Instruction Director Debbie Daniel, who nominated **Melisa Jeffers**. This Walnut Grove Elementary School fourth grade teacher’s classroom features fresh and innovative social studies teaching, but her work does not stop at the classroom door. She has written curriculum, helped review adoption materials, differentiated to meet the needs of her students, and taught professional development courses. Her principal wrote that “In addition to being a master teacher, Melisa is a master individual ...truly an amazing person.”

Fifth grade teacher **Betsey Kennedy**, at Big Shanty Elementary in Cobb County, brings Social Studies to life in myriad ways. Highlights include her students’ 1920’s silent movie projects, webquests, and a class movie on the Holocaust. Betsey has instilled in her students civic engagement through their participation in the Heifer International Program. The ways in which she goes beyond content mastery to help build students’ minds AND hearts is what distinguishes Betsey’s work from that of a merely “good” teacher, lifting her to the ranks of those whose influence and teaching will linger in the minds of her students for years to come.

Cathy Powell has accumulated laurels for her exceptional teaching and leadership throughout her teaching career. Currently teaching high school in Bulloch County, Cathy has taught a variety of high school grades and courses in the social studies, and has presented to fellow teachers at GCSS, NCSS, and the Southern Center for International Studies. Her students have been actively involved in Habitat for Humanity, Learn and Serve projects, regional History Day competitions, and Geography Awareness activities. She helped to develop and write state frameworks for World Geography, and has developed social studies test items and curriculum maps for her district. Diane Sloan, who nominated Ms. Powell, sums up her nomination of Cathy as “a knowledgeable, caring, and extraordinary individual that I am honored to know.”

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*Gwen Hutcheson Outstanding Social Studies Educator Award:
the story behind the name*

Gwen Hutcheson, for whom the GCSS’s Outstanding Social Studies Awards are named, has truly earned a name for herself in education. From an early career teaching at the high school, junior high, and college levels, she moved into professional development in pre-RESA days. In 1971, she became the Social Studies Coordinator at the Georgia Department of Education, a position she held for 22 years. During her tenure at the Georgia DOE, she worked with a variety of innovative programs. After her retirement from the DOE in 1993, she was not content to rest on her laurels but has worked extensively with the Georgia Council on Economic Education, the “We the People” program, and the Southern Center for International Studies. Hutcheson’s legacy continues as her name graces the GCSS Outstanding Educator Awards.

Gwen Hutcheson’s family joins her as she is recognized for her contributions to social studies in Georgia.



2009 President’s Award

Nadine Wright, former GCSS President, presented



President’s Award winner Eddie Bennett with a specially engraved name plate at the 2009 Awards reception. Bennett was praised for his unwavering commitment to

social studies in Georgia.

Have you seen a student project called “Water Wars?” A large binder disappeared from the Athens Classic Center exhibit hall during the GCSS Annual Conference in October. Call if you have information about its whereabouts, or it can be returned to the Classic Center, care of Mary Stakes, GCSS, 706-546-9339. You will make a class of eighth-grade students very happy.

Mark Your Calendar:

Georgia Social Studies Fair - Saturday, March 19, 2011 at Dutchtown High, 149 Mitchell Rd., Hampton, GA 30228. More details at www.gcss.net

Civil War: America's Long Struggle - A Civil War Symposium and more at the National Archives at Atlanta on April 16, 2011. More details at 770-968-2100 or www.archives.gov/southeast

GCSS Conference – this year's theme is *Social Studies Matters*. Session proposal deadline is April 29, 2011. More details at www.gcss.net

NCSS Conference, December 2-4, 2011 - this year's theme is *Dimensions of Diversity*. Session proposal deadline is February 22, 2011. More details at www.socialstudies.org

5th Annual WorldQuest Academic Competition: On March 5th Georgia State University will host the Metro Atlanta WorldQuest Competition in partnership with the World Affairs Council of Atlanta. The program is designed to inspire high school students to explore international issues in depth and prepare them to internationalize their education at a higher level. We're sure you'll want to keep this event on your calendar this spring and for 2012. For further details go to www.gsu.edu/worldquest or e-mail WorldQuest@gsu.edu.



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Past-President Mickey Boyd shows off one of our GCSS t-shirts.

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