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I Love My Librarian!

2008 Award

Nominations for Dr. Margaret "Gigi" Lincoln

Library Media Specialist
Lakeview High School Library
Battle Creek, Michigan

Nominator:

Scott Durham
Battle Creek, Michigan

1. How long have you known the nominee and how did you come to know him or her?

I came to know Margaret "Gigi" Lincoln in the late 1980's as a high school student at Lakeview High School. She was our school's librarian and had a reputation of running a tight ship. I am not sure how it happened, but I became a Library Assistant during my high school career and was put to work stacking books, filing microfiche, assisting my fellow students – and of course, helping Mrs. Lincoln run that tight ship. Thirteen years ago I began teaching at the same school I graduated from; the same school that Mrs. Lincoln is still the Media Specialist and Librarian. So I have known Gigi Lincoln for over twenty years, the last thirteen as a friend and colleague.

2. Please list a few ways in which the nominee has helped you and others and made your experience of the library a positive one.

Gigi Lincoln has had a profound impact on me and my students. During my first few years as a teacher, Gigi asked me if I might be interested in applying for a Fellowship with the Library of Congress' American Memory program. Of course I was surprised that of all the teachers in the building, many more experienced than I, Gigi asked me. This action in and of itself had a profound impact on me. It was a huge boost of confidence in my ability. Our application was accepted and we enjoyed a week long experience at the Library of Congress designing a unit on WWI using

primary sources from their American Memory collection. That unit still resides on the Library of Congress' website.

But that is not where our collaboration ends. Later in our careers, we decided that we had to work together again on something of significance. So we turned our attention to WWII and the Holocaust. This collaboration has grown in many different ways over the years and has affected dozens of teachers and their classrooms. We first worked to bring a traveling exhibit from the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum about Oskar Schindler to our city. Thousands of students and members of the general public toured the exhibit. That project went so well that we decided to bring a larger exhibit from the Holocaust Museum. This time, the "Hidden Children" exhibit was awarded a stop in New York, Chicago, and our city of Battle Creek. We quickly went to work to develop supporting activities in our schools and in our community to support the exhibit. We brought education specialists from the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum to our local public library to train dozens of teachers in the area in how best to teach about the Holocaust. Next, we brought in Pierre Sauvage, an award winning documentary filmmaker to present his Holocaust film, "Weapons of the Spirit," to over 4,000 students during the day and again to a packed house of the community at night. Next, we partnered with the Battle Creek Symphony Orchestra to bring cellist Alisa Weilerstein and actor and musician Theodore Bikel to Battle Creek in support of the Hidden Children Exhibit. We brought in Miriam Winter to give a book talk about her Holocaust memoir "Trains," and artist Miriam Brysk to display her Holocaust inspired art. Finally, Rene Lichtman came to host a panel discussion of Holocaust survivors - all of this on top of the actual exhibit which was toured by thousands of students and members of the general public.

But we were not done. Just a few years ago, we began a collaboration with Gerda Weissman Klein, the Klein Foundation, and MAGPI to participate in the series of videoconferences through the "Stand Up! Speak Out. Lend A Hand!" program. The project features a videoconference with Holocaust survivor Gerda Weissmann Klein, who asks students to help make the world a better place. Students, usually with no more additional motivation, take it upon themselves to figure out how they can make the world a better place. Our students have helped build houses with Habitat for Humanity, volunteered at our local V.A. Hospital, and even collected school supplies for Iraqi children among other things. The second part of the videoconference series is to report back to Gerda what the students did as a result of the first videoconference. This was such an emotional and meaningful project that Gigi decided that we needed to bring Gerda to our school. So,

once again, Gigi developed a program and plan to bring Gerda Weissmann Klein to Battle Creek. Before her visit, Gigi bought copies of Gerda's book, "All But My Life," worked with both Social Studies and English classes in our school and around the country to read Gerda's book and discuss it on a Blog. This project is still being used by teachers today. Of course, Gerda's visit to our town included a talk to thousands of students (which was broadcast live across the internet), a talk with the general public, and informal personal exchanges with students who had been inspired to do good as a result of Gerda Weissmann Klein. But more to the point of this response, it is Gigi Lincoln that has inspired many teachers and students and it has been Gigi Lincoln who has opened the doors to a world of knowledge and experiences that otherwise would have remained closed. Her work, as you see, may start in our school library, but it extends into our work as teachers, our minds as learners, and our hearts as human beings.

3. How has the library, and the nominee, improved the quality of your life?

Gigi Lincoln's impact on students and the learning process has been immeasurable. What is most amazing is that after thirty years as this school's librarian, it is Gigi Lincoln who is coming up with the new ideas. It is Gigi Lincoln who is pushing us younger teachers to try exciting and innovative strategies to connect with students. I have mentioned the Book Blogs she set up to provide a forum for students from various cities and backgrounds to discuss a book they are reading together. She has pushed for the use of videoconferencing in our classrooms. She has sought out new research materials for teachers and students, especially electronic academic journals and the like. She has maintained a love of books and of reading all the while updating our library with the latest technology. She has championed information literacy and has helped us teach the skills of judging the value and validity of information to our students. In every professional development workshop and endeavor our teachers engage in, Gigi is always there in the middle out of it, seeking ways for the library to be supportive of our endeavors. All in all, Gigi Lincoln has had a huge impact on the learning process in almost every field of academics in our school.

4. How does the nominee make the library a better place? Please be specific.

Our school is a better place because of Gigi Lincoln. There is no doubt about that. Besides being ready to assist ANY student or teacher at a moment's notice at all times, Gigi makes sure that people are recognized for their work, their successes, and their professional and personal accomplishments. If a teacher or student wins an award, Gigi makes sure

they are recognized. If a teacher gets married or has a child, it is Gigi who buys the staff gift and presents it. Gigi Lincoln organizes staff lunches, gift exchanges, cookie exchanges, etc. Gigi organizes our National Honor Society. She runs our Quiz Bowl team. Gigi Lincoln is an example of a selfless individual who will do anything for anybody at anytime and expects nothing in return. It is time she got something in return.

5. How has the librarian made a difference in the community?

Gigi Lincoln has continued her to educate herself and educate others. She earned a Distance-Independent Interdisciplinary Ph.D. in Information Science in 2006 from the University of North Texas as well as earning an Educational Technology Certification from Michigan State University in 1996. She has been published in many trade publications and books, including, but not limited to:

“The traveling museum exhibitor: A resource for learning; The digital doctorate in library/information science,” in *Thinking Outside the Book: Essays for Innovative Librarians* (2008).

“Virtual reference service at Lakeview High School,” in *Virtual Reference on a Budget* (2008).

“All But Her Life,” in *School Library Journal* (2007).

“Media Makeover: Lakeview High School,” in *Media Spectrum* (2006).

“Witness to History,” in *School Library Journal* (2006).

“A Proactive Response to Plagiarism,” in *Guiding Students from Cheating and Plagiarism to Honesty and Integrity: Strategies for Change* (2005).

“Weeded Books Inspire Student Art Projects,” *Library Media Connection* (2004).

“A Tragedy Revisited: Students Reflect on the Painful Lessons of the Holocaust,” in *School Library Journal* (2003).

And this is just a sample of all that Gigi has done to both inform fellow teachers and librarians and in the process document, reflect, and evaluate her own performance. She has presented at numerous conferences, including the 6th International Conference on Holocaust Education in 2008 and the World Federation of Jewish Child Survivors of the Holocaust in 2006.

In addition, she is always there to train teachers in our own building on how better use the resources available to us in our school and in our classrooms. All in all, there is no question that Gigi Lincoln has had a tremendous impact on her profession and the field of education as a whole.

Nominator:

Sarah Kolassa
Battle Creek, Michigan

1. How long have you known the nominee and how did you come to know him or her?

I have known Margaret (Gigi) since I began my internship in the English department at Lakeview High School in August 2001. I was then hired by the district in January and have had a close friendship with Gigi ever since.

2. Please list a few ways in which the nominee has helped you and others and made your experience of the library a positive one.

Gigi is an invaluable resource to all staff members at Lakeview. Although she is primarily in the media center, she interacts with students and teachers throughout the building. For example, Gigi has helped facilitate an exit skill assignment in English 3 involving reading and presenting a fiction book. Details of the assignment are available at <http://mltoolbox.org/unitcreator/printable.taf> about_ unit_ uid1=202&lesson_id To introduce students to a student-friendly book selection process, Gigi visits all English 3 classrooms during the first month of school. She demonstrates the use of our school's Web-based Destiny catalog which has a graphical interface. Students learn how they can browse for enjoyable reading material online, viewing book covers, annotations, reviews and even 1st chapter excerpts of books. These features can be viewed at <http://follett.bc-lakeview.k12.mi.us/common/welcome.jsp?site=100> Gigi also shows students how to place interloan requests through MeLCat, Michigan's statewide resource sharing network. Students appreciate the fact that Lakeview High School is one of just a handful of K12 libraries in Michigan that have been selected as a MeLCat participant. Lakeview students and staff thus have access to over 30 million items which can be borrowed and delivered directly to our library. Gigi also gives students a handout summarizing book selection through Destiny and MeLCat. The handout is available on the LHS Library Website at <http://remc12.k12.mi.us/lhslib/DestinyOverview1.pdf> She points out Websites accessible from the Reading page at <http://remc12.k12.mi.us/lhslib/Traditional.htm> that offer suggestions for free reading, for example the Gale database What Do I Read Next. The classroom visit is popular with students who have a chance to meet Mrs. Lincoln, face-to-face. They remember the seasonal bookmarks and miniature candy bars that she brings along! Gigi returns to the classroom when book reports are underway, recording student presentations and posting these oral reviews to the Reading page of the LHS Library Website.

See example at

<http://media.switchpod.com/users/mlincoln67/ACDoesMyShirts.mp3>

Another example of Gigi's assistance is with the English 4 exit research paper. This exit skill assignment is a four-week unit involving five days in the library. Gigi not only introduces the class to online and print resources but also works individually with students, guiding them in the research process throughout the unit. The assignment is described at

http://mltoolbox.org/unitcreator/printable.taf?dbouc_unit_uid1=186&lesson_id

Students gather in the library where Mrs. Lincoln gives a presentation highlighting the following resources: Destiny catalog (including LHS library books, ebooks and suggested Webpath Express sites), MeLCat, CQ Researcher, Issues & Controversies from Fact.com, Infotrac, Gale Virtual Reference Library, and MLA source citations. Students are provided with a handout summarizing these resources and are also directed to online instructional tutorials which Mrs. Lincoln has created at

<http://www.schooltube.com/video/6240/Michigan-eLibrary-Databases> and

http://www.teachertube.com/view_video.php?viewkey=4c475f4729d0e2b42a14.

3. How has the library, and the nominee, improved the quality of your life?

The library has further impacted students and the instructional process through its own venture into online learning. During the academic year 2007-2008, a hybrid online course was piloted by Gigi at Lakeview High School. The Introduction to Information Literacy course was created in response to a newly mandated Michigan Department of Education online learning graduation requirement. Blackboard Learning Management System was utilized for instruction. Students included 11th and 12th graders who also gained real world library work experience. As Introduction to Information Literacy proved a successful curricular offering, Gigi made it a priority to collaborate with colleagues in the interest of impacting student achievement in other courses. She worked with fellow teachers to incorporate various online information literacy activities from the Blackboard course into instructional units taught in other academic departments at Lakeview High School. For example, Dawn Goodman in the Social Studies Department shared with me that as part of an assignment for a unit focusing on Web 2.0 tools (coinciding with the observance of Teen Tech Week, March 2-8, 2008), library assistants in the Blackboard course learned how to set up Blogline accounts. Students in a Global Economics course then engaged in a similar project, co-taught by Gigi and Dawn. Students created aggregators to bring in news feeds and also search alerts from the library's subscription databases. The Global Economics course is designed to provide students with knowledge and

tools needed to make rational economic decisions for themselves and our nation while also developing critical thinking skills with which to address the challenges and complexities of globalization. The inclusion of the Bloglines project allowed students to demonstrate mastery of technology tools for accessing information and pursuing inquiry. Gigi also gave a paper about the online Introduction to Information Literacy course at the International Association of School Librarianship Conference held at Berkeley this past August 2008. An introductory clip about her presentation is available at <http://www.librarymedia.net/IASL.html> and the entire session was recorded at

<http://www.schooltube.com/video/9087/Introduction-to-Information-Literacy:-An-Online-Course> In another assignment that took place in the context of the Information Literacy course, a Lakeview High School student gained national recognition for her entry in the 2008 Library of Congress Letters About Literature contest. Senior Katelyn Wright was one of three winners from the state of Michigan in a contest that saw more than 59,000 winners nationwide.

<http://michigan.michigan.gov/som/0,1607,7-192--190761--,00.html>

Through her background in Holocaust education and her position as a Museum Teacher Fellow with the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Gigi has designed some important supplemental activities impacting students and the learning process at Lakeview High School. She developed blogging projects involving the works of Elie Wiesel and Gerda Weissmann Klein that have enriched Holocaust studies while supporting meaningful technology integration into the curriculum. During the school year 2005-2006, 10th grade students from Cold Spring Harbor High School, New York, participated with Lakeview students in an online blog while reading Elie Wiesel's memoir, *Night*. Gigi set up and monitored the blog at: <http://nightwiesel.blogspot.com>. Historical and literary 'prompts' allowed students to address such topics as Dehumanization, A Memorable Quotation, and Spiritual Resistance and Faith. Additional links encouraged students and teachers to do research related to Wiesel's memoir. At the conclusion of this collaboration, students in both schools exchanged class photos; they wrote articles for their high school newspapers; the "Great Blog" was published in *An End to Intolerance*, the online global magazine of Cold Spring Harbor's Holocaust/Genocide Project, <http://www.learn.org.il/hgp> Elie Wiesel wrote letters to the students and teachers to congratulate them on their fine work together. Following a presentation about the *Night* blog at the National Council of Teachers of English in November 2007, a new round of blogging began between Lakeview and Cold Spring Harbor but also bringing in Columbia Falls High School from Montana. While the organization of posts on the blog remained the same, a new feature included an Unanswered Questions section (similar to Ask the Expert). Additionally, at the conclusion

of the reading of Night, Lakeview students were privileged to hear Holocaust survivor and artist Dr. Miriam Brysk give a moving and informative presentation. Students shared with Miriam some of their own writings and reflections which were also published on the Night blog. See <http://www.lakeviewspartans.org/webpages/milcoln/files/ReflectionsLHS08.pdf> Gigi developed an additional blog project for Lakeview students focusing All But My Life, the memoir of Holocaust survivor Gerda Weissmann Klein. Mrs. Klein was invited to speak at Battle Creek's W.K. Kellogg Auditorium in April 2007, corresponding to Holocaust Remembrance Day. Funding was obtained from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation. Other Michigan students were given the opportunity to attend Klein's address and to participate in a blog set up at <http://milcoln.lishost.org>. Over 3400 requests were received for students to attend the April event while the seating capacity of the auditorium was only 1900. Lakeview High School students in a history class taught by Scott Durham read All But My Life and were joined in blog discussion by two other high school classes and by senior citizens from the Lifelong Learning Program at the local Kellogg Community College. Discussion topics focused on Historical Relevance, Life and Religion, the Power of Good, the Power of Evil, Family and Friendship, and Individual Characters. Lakeview students also participated in a Klein videoconference organized by the University of Pennsylvania (MAGPI) and were challenged to engage in service learning projects. Gerda Klein's April 16, 2007 address had a lasting impact and was video streamed and archived by MERIT Network via Internet2 at <http://www.merit.edu/events/archive/specialevents/kleinwebcast/> Gigi has further had an impact on students and the learning process through her involvement in School Improvement work (SIP). Lakeview High School will soon be undergoing a Quality Assurance Review (QAR) by a visiting team from AdvancEd, the accrediting organization that has taken over for the North Central Association. To facilitate SIP collaborative work, Gigi first set up a wiki at <http://nca.wikispaces.com> in 2006 and has updated and maintained this site. The Research page at <http://nca.wikispaces.com/Research> connects to library databases and brings in live news feeds from CNN, New York Times, and Michigan Department of Education. Newer pages for AdvancEd Standards 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7 provide a place to organize electronic files and links to practices and artifacts, examples of evidence.

4. How does the nominee make the library a better place? Please be specific.

Through her involvement in special projects that have brought several renowned individuals and supplemental resources to our community, Gigi has helped to make Lakeview a school of choice in Southwest Lower

Michigan. For example, in 2002, she wrote and received funding for a Kellogg Foundation Expert-in-Residence Grant to bring Big6 co-founder Robert Berkowitz to Battle Creek, Michigan. Berkowitz provided information problem solving training for area librarians and educators in a Big6 workshop. Gigi then led professional development training in the Big6 approach for Lakeview staff and created a Big6 introductory video along with Lakeview's Theater Arts students. The video is published on the Big6 site at <http://www.big6.com/2005/03/31/a-student-dramatization-in-two-acts-from-lakeview-high-school/> Gigi was responsible for the Battle Creek community's hosting of two major traveling exhibitions from the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum: Oskar Schindler in 2003 and Life in Shadows: Hidden Children and the Holocaust in 2005. In each instance, she created instructional materials for teachers to use in support of their students' visits to the exhibitions. In conjunction with the Life in Shadows exhibition, she received additional grant funding to bring filmmaker and child survivor Pierre Sauvage to speak both at Lakeview High School and to the adult community. Gigi contributes to the betterment of Lakeview High School through her work as National Honor Society Advisor, a position which she has held since 1975. Within the context of NHS, she developed the first All-City Quiz Bowl program for Battle Creek schools and organized a Quiz Bowl conducted over DIAL (Distance Interactive Learning) fiber optic network. She initiated an annual project whereby National Honor Society students escort senior citizens to school musicals each year and established an ongoing tutoring program. Lakeview's NHS Induction Ceremony has seen such noted guest speakers over the years as U.S. Senator Carl Levin, U.S. Congressman John Schwarz and Rice University Head Basketball Coach Ben Braun (formerly at Eastern Michigan University). Gigi has also encouraged and supported student-led service learning projects. For example, Lakeview High School National Honor Society members received funding for a student run free ACT tutoring program modeled after a similar program operated by Sylvan Learning Center. As one of the senior staff members at Lakeview High School, Gigi has welcomed the chance to be in charge of a Sunshine fund, providing gifts for colleagues (teachers, administrators, and secretaries) and is always certain to acknowledge important life cycle events in our lives. For many years, she organized staff luncheons, cookie exchanges, holiday activities and this year even created a Lakeview High School social network at <http://lakeviewhs.ning.com> to facilitate staff get-togethers.

5. How has the librarian made a difference in the community?

Gigi has demonstrated leadership in the school community and library media profession through her pursuit of lifelong learning. For example, in 2004, she was one of 10 librarians in the United States chosen to receive a

full fellowship to pursue a Ph.D. in Information Science through a distance-based interdisciplinary program at the University of North Texas (UNT). With funding from the Institute of Museums and Libraries, the program covered tuition, technology support and travel to Denton, Texas, over a two-year period. The group of librarians or “cohort” members participated in a doctoral program that went beyond the traditional brick and mortar setting by creating a blended learning environment of online education and onsite interaction. Like other cohort members while engaged in the program, Gigi continued to work full-time as a library media specialist at Lakeview High School. Her research was connected to another fervent interest and project that took place in Battle Creek coinciding with her involvement in the UNT program. Through her position as a United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Teacher Fellow, she helped bring a traveling exhibition about Hidden Children in the Holocaust from the Museum in Washington, DC to the local Battle Creek Art Center in 2005 and organized an accompanying educational outreach program. The topic of her dissertation thus became “The Online and Onsite Holocaust Museum Exhibition as an Informational Resource: A Comparative Analysis.” After receiving her degree from UNT, Gigi accepted a part-time position to teach online at the School of Library and Information Science at San José State University (SJSU).

<http://slisweb.sjsu.edu/people/faculty/lincolnm/lincolnm.php> At the 2008 International Association of School Librarianship Conference held in Berkeley, she gave a presentation about her first experience of teaching a cohort of 29 classroom teachers (newly appointed library media specialists from San Francisco Unified School District) who had entered the master’s program at SJSU. Gigi has also assumed an active role in the library media profession through her position as a database trainer for the Library of Michigan since 2001. Her knowledge of updates to online resources made available to Michigan libraries benefits users at Lakeview High School. Gigi has served as chair of the Regional Media Center (REMC) 12 Council since 2002, a group of library media professionals who meet regularly throughout the school year and engage in collaborative work. For example, the REMC 12 Council recently submitted an entry to a contest that was organized by Dr. David Loertscher through Teacher Librarian and that sought visual representations of new AASL Learning Standards. Gigi has been a frequent conference presenter at the Michigan Association of Media in Education (MAME) and at the Michigan Association for Computer Users in Learning (MACUL). She has contributed professional articles to such publications as Library Media Connection and School Library Journal. Her complete resume is available at <http://academic.kellogg.edu/k12lincolnm/Resume%20webX.htm>