

Brazil's Educator Paulo Freire Gets US Award 8 Years After His Death

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The Center for Education Outreach & Innovation (CEO&I) of Teachers College at Columbia University today announced the four winners of its first annual Lifelong Learning Award, among them a Brazilian who died in 1997.

The winners are the Chautauqua Institution (and its president Thomas Becker), Brazilian educator Paulo Freire (posthumously), educator Maxine Greene and PBS (Public Broadcasting Service). The awards will be presented at an early evening cocktail reception at The Princeton Club of New York on Tuesday, November 22.

"This prize was created to honor notable leaders and institutions for their innovative and sustained contributions to lifelong learning," said Arthur Levine, president of Teachers College.

"In today's information and global society, knowledge and education are the twin engines that drive our economy and shape our lives. In this environment the half-life of knowledge is becoming shorter and shorter. This makes education throughout life essential. And it makes strong lifelong learning programs imperative."

Levine noted that in a 1996 study by the International Commission on Education for the 21st Century, the concept of lifelong learning was described as education that is flexible, diverse and available at different times and places throughout one's life.

The report, called the Delors report, identified four pillars of education for the future: learning to know, learning to do, learning to live together (and with others), and learning to be.

"The contributions of our honorees have addressed these four essential elements of learning throughout their lives, helping to change the way education is conceived and delivered," he said.

Selected by CEO&I's Advisory Committee on Lifelong Learning, a group of 20 leaders in national and international business, health, education and media, honorees were judged according to the reach and scope of their impact, how they had nurtured and demonstrated beliefs and practices that support lifelong learning, if they had been engaged in life learning for more than 20 years, if their contributions have been widely recognized.

In their awards document the Advisory Committee noted the contributions of each honoree:

The Chautauqua Institution, founded more than 130 years ago as an educational experiment in vacation learning is today recognized as a kind of "American soapbox" where the discussion addresses some of society's most compelling global issues.

Its president, Thomas Becker, has proved to be a true 21st century leader, matching and marrying the historic charter and adapting it to address current concerns.

Paulo Freire had a distinguished career as a progressive educator in Brazil, proposing that education move beyond the elite of society and into the poorest communities.

In addition to his academic and institutional life, he participated in a movement for popular education in the early 1960's, encouraging literacy among the country's peasant population.

Throughout his life, until his death in 1997, this controversial man was engaged in unceasing intellectual labor and inspired by the struggle of the Brazilian people for an equitable and democratic government.

A 1938 graduate of Barnard College, long-time educator Maxine Greene has had a distinguished career in education, combining philosophy, education and the arts to enhance the education process.

In her words, "If we enlist the arts and imagination in teaching, we allow students to take advantage of their lived experiences."

Involved in many spheres of the education world, Greene founded and directed the Center for Social Imagination, the Arts and Education at Teachers College.

She has been philosopher-in-residence at the Lincoln Center Institute of the Arts in Education for more than 25 years, and was the editor of the Teachers College Record. Among her many affiliations, she is past president of the Philosophy of Education Society, the American Educational Studies Association and the American Educational Research Association.

At age 87, Greene is still a practicing educator - as Professor Emeritus of philosophy and education and the William F. Russell Professor Emerita in Foundations of Education at Teachers College.

Since it was founded in 1969, the Public Broadcasting System has been dedicated to providing the nation's public television station with the best in children's, cultural, educational, history, nature, news, public affairs, science and skills programming.

PBS works with the nation's school systems and the U.S. Department of Education to help parents and teachers prepare children for success in school, and to provide quality professional teacher development through a series of online courses.

Its Adult Learning Service involves local PBS stations and colleges in an effort to provide college credit TV courses to almost half a million students each year.

"Today, dynamic learning across one's lifespan is influenced by technology and innovation, changing population demographics, quality of life and workforce needs. To keep pace, individuals must find learning to be enlightening, engaging, ongoing, and, most of all, relevant," said Mary Rose Barranco Morris, Ed.D., Director of Lifelong Learning for CEO&I.

"Our honorees have succeeded in this and as a result, have made great contributions to the development of intellectually, socially and aesthetically enriched and responsible citizens."

Founded in 1996 to extend the historic mission of Teachers College (TC) locally, nationally and globally, The Center for Educational Outreach & Innovation builds on the many and diverse talents of the TC faculty and professional staff to conduct over 250 Lifelong Learning programs each year in a variety of formats, including traditional classes and distance learning courses, institutes and lectures, symposia, conferences, film series and debates.

The largest graduate school of education in the nation, Teachers College is affiliated with Columbia University, but it is legally and financially independent.

The editors of U.S. News & World Report have ranked Teachers College as one of the leading graduate schools of education in the country.

Teachers College is dedicated to promoting equity and excellence in education, overcoming the gap in educational access and achievement between the most and least advantaged groups in this country.

Through scholarly programs of teaching, research, and service, the College draws upon the expertise of a diverse community of faculty in education, psychology and health, as well as students and staff from across the country and around the world.

The Center for Education Outreach & Innovation - www.tc.columbia.edu