

Celebrate 1995 Minnesota Freedom of Information Day

The Minnesota Coalition on Government Information will be celebrating the seventh annual Minnesota Freedom of Information Day with a ceremony and program at noon on Thursday, March 16, 1995. The event, free and open to the public, will be held at the Minnesota Judicial Center, located at 25 Constitution Avenue in St. Paul (across from the State Capitol). Featured speaker is Chief Justice A.M. (Sandy) Keith of the Minnesota Supreme Court.

The event will also feature presentation of this year's John R. Finnegan Freedom of Information Award to the Legislative Gopher Design Group. Composed of 17 individuals in state government, the group created a service that enables citizens to use the Internet computer network to gain access to legislative information. This includes information from the Minnesota Senate and House of Representatives, the Legislative Reference Library, the Revisor of Statutes and several joint legislative commissions. The goal of the service is to provide electronic information in a user-friendly form to increase citizen participation in the legislative process.

The Freedom of Information Award is named for John R. Finnegan, retired senior vice president of the *St. Paul Pioneer Press*, for his lifelong dedication to openness in government and his work on behalf of the people's right to know. Finnegan is now chair of the Minnesota Joint Media Committee.

This is the seventh annual presentation of the Award. Previous recipients are the Urban Coalition (1994); Julia Wallace, Head of the Government Publications Library and Regional Depository Librarian, University of Minnesota (1993); the late Alan Robinette, former Director of the State of Minnesota's Land Management Information Center (1992); retired Chief Justice Peter S. Popovich of the Minnesota Supreme Court (1991); Sue Holbert, former State Archivist with the Minnesota Historical Society (1990); and Mary Alice Harvey, retired Director of the Grand Marais Public Library (1989).

Freedom of Information Day is celebrated each year on the anniversary of the birth of James Madison, chief author of the Bill of Rights and fourth president of the United States. The Minnesota Coalition on Government Information is a network of individuals and organizations dedicated to open and fair access to government information. The Minnesota Coalition is based on a national coalition of organizations founded in 1986 by the American Library Association.

For more information, contact Ross Corson at 612/224-4801 (until February 13) or 612/646-0475 (after February 13) or at ross.corson@metronet.lib.mn.us (anytime).