

Academic and Industry Educators Honored by Printing Industries of America

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Printing Industries of America has named the 2010 Education Awards of Excellence academic and industry recipients, Dennis Dougherty and Katherine Gekker, respectively. The awards are presented annually to an academic representative and an industry representative in recognition of outstanding contributions to education and training in the graphic arts.

Academic Recipient

Dennis Dougherty is a professor in the Graphic Communications and Printing Technology program at Thaddeus Stevens College of Technology in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, where he uses his twenty-five years of teaching experience and ten years of industry experience to inspire and motivate his students.

Mr. Dougherty is an educator determined to see his students unlock their greatest potential. He has personally driven students to visit and tour the NC A&T printing and publishing facility and strongly encourages students to continue their education after completing their associate degree. He recognizes students as people with individual needs, and he tries to appeal to their interests and backgrounds in reaching out to them through life-long learning endeavors.

Mr. Dougherty's strong connection and personal investment into his students earned him the *Who's Who Among America's Teachers: Honoring Our Nation's Most Respected Teachers*, an award based on nominations from student recipients of the *Who's Who Among America's Students*.

Professionally, Mr. Dougherty has provided leadership to the International Graphic Arts Education Association (IGAEA) and the Susquehanna Litho Club. From 2000 to 2004, Dennis served two terms as Second Vice President of IGAEA, then in 2004 he was elected to a three-year term as President-elect, President, and Immediate Past-President. Currently, Mr. Dougherty serves as the Second Vice-President of the IGAEA. Mr. Dougherty also served as President of the Susquehanna Litho Club (SLC) from 1999 to 2000 and continues to serve on the board of directors where he directs the annual SLC Student Night industry tour and dinner for local high school and college students in graphics programs.

Industry Candidate

Katherine Gekker is the director of the Ambassador for Print & Graphics program launched in 2007 by the Virginia Printing Foundation. The Ambassador for Print & Graphics program was designed by Ms. Gekker and aims to align education, workforce, industry, and economic growth strategies statewide so that more students take advantage and participate in the opportunities afforded by careers in the printing industry.

Ms. Gekker tours the Commonwealth of Virginia educating students and teachers as well as raising awareness about the many benefits of working in the printing industry. Since 2007 when this program began, Ms. Gekker has increased teacher morale, worked closely with graphic communications programs to increase student awareness and enrollment in graphic programs, ensured graphic communications programs persist from one year to the next, and secured scholarship funding for instructors and programs for teachers' continuing education and capital expenditures. In doing so, Ms. Gekker hopes to avoid future workforce shortages and help the industry flourish.

Some key accomplishments of the Ambassadors for Print & Graphics program include:

- PrintED accreditation applications have increased dramatically,
- Two new scholarship programs have launched (The Progress Printing Education Scholarship and the E. Worth Higgins, Jr., Print Educators' Scholarship)
- The Education Summit has adopted the program as a key initiative that can be duplicated elsewhere
- Several Virginia high schools have added graphic communication courses to their curriculums.

Ms. Gekker personally handles every part of the ambassador process—she mentors students, persuades parents, supports teachers, communicates with advisory and school boards, and advocates for statewide programs.

Education Awards of Excellence will be presented in front of academic educators and industry trainers at the 2010 GASC/Printing Industries of America Teacher's Conference, October 2–4 in Chicago, IL. For more information about the Education Awards of Excellence, please contact Chrystal Senay at 800-910-4283, ext. 736 or csenay@printing.org.

About Printing Industries of America

Printing Industries of America is the world's largest graphic arts trade association, representing an industry with approximately one million employees. It serves the interests of more than 10,000 member companies. Together with its nationwide affiliate network, Printing Industries delivers products and services that enhance the growth, efficiency, and profitability of its members and the graphic communications industry through advocacy, education, research, and technical information.