

December 14, 2004

**CONTACT: Kelly Burkett
202 667 0901
Dwight Bachman
860-465-5114
Ed Osborn
860-465-5043**

**MRS. LAURA BUSH HONORS EASTERN CONNECTICUT STATE
UNIVERSITY YOUTH ARTS PROGRAM**

**Honorees participate in awards ceremony held at the Capital Hilton Presidential
Ballroom in Washington, D.C.**

(WASHINGTON, DC) Utilizing unique arts, sciences and humanities studies to prepare teens from low-performing schools for college, Eastern Connecticut State University's ConnCAP Program has earned national recognition as a recipient of a 2004 Coming Up Taller Award. Yesterday, Mrs. Laura Bush, who serves as the Honorary Chair of the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities, recognized each recipient at a Washington D.C. awards ceremony at the Capital Hilton Presidential Ballroom.

"I congratulate this year's Coming Up Taller Award recipients for the exemplary work they are doing and the outstanding opportunities they are providing to enrich the lives of young people," said **Mrs. Laura Bush**.

Floyd Bagwell, executive director of ConnCAP and director of the Learning Center at Eastern calls the Coming Up Taller Award "a remarkable honor" for his program, which has been a part of the University for more than eight years. The program, **which Connecticut's Department of Higher Education funds annually through its Minority Advancement Program**, combines peer and professional tutoring in math, English, civics, and study skills with a student-centered arts experience. Each summer a different thematic approach is used.

"We are truly honored by this recognition," said **Eastern's President David G. Carter**. "For many years, Floyd Bagwell and his staff have given area high school students the kind of role modeling and one-on-one attention the children need to learn the value of a college education, and what it takes to make their dreams happen. This Coming Up Taller Award tells us we are on the right track."

Coming Up Taller is an initiative of the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities (PCAH). The President's Committee partners with the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), and the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) to administer the program, which was founded in 1998.

The Coming Up Taller Awards recognize and support outstanding community arts and humanities programs that celebrate the creativity of America's young people, and provide them with new learning opportunities and opportunities to contribute to their communities. The awards also highlight the contributions that historians, scholars, librarians and visual and performing artists make to families and communities by mentoring children. More than 300 nominations were received by the program in 2004.

Building on the need for early intervention to ensure that students from low-income communities aspire to and achieve admission to college, ConnCAP offers students in grades 7 to 12 from Windham, New London and Norwich intensive summer courses and after-school tutoring throughout the year in courses ranging from the arts and humanities to math, science and physical education, all built around a contemporary theme. A field trip related to the theme is also incorporated into the instruction. For a recent theme around “Synergy,” for example, students studied Tocqueville’s *Democracy in America* in class, then worked in groups to form their own government before heading off to Washington, DC for further study of America’s democracy.

As evidenced by the direct impact of the program on children’s continuing education, ConnCAP is making a tangible difference in participants’ lives. Many students are in their fourth year with the program. In Windham, more than half of the active high school participants made the honor roll in a recent marking period. Collectively, participants have gone on to become class presidents and published poets and writers, and many have also become involved in extracurricular activities such as student government and community organizations. In 2004, approximately 100 ConnCAP students enrolled in summer courses for college credit at Eastern Connecticut State University.

“It has been great to see my son excited about getting a college education,” said **Angelina Gardner of New London**, whose son Adrian participated in the summer 2004 program. “It is a great opportunity for Adrian to be exposed to positive educational and personal experiences that can help him be a better student and a better citizen.”

ConnCAP 2004 was a collaboration with The Writer’s Block InK, a program that uses theatrical production to allow students to express their learning and their personal experiences. Working with **Clarissa Beyah-Taylor, founder of the The Writers Block InK** and director of global communications for Pfizer, Inc., ConnCAP students wrote a script from their own experiences, and developed a play, “Chastity’s Choice,” which dealt with the issue of teenage pregnancy and promiscuity. The students were responsible for all aspects of the production, including lighting, set design, acting, and promotion.

“What excites me about partnering with ConnCAP is the realization that we must find creative, new ways to reach youth and demonstrate the benefits of academic excellence while addressing serious social issues,” said Beyah-Taylor. “Throughout this process, the students taught one another, directed each other, learned to take criticism, give feedback and work as members of a team. All of these skills are critical to success in the professional, academic and personal realms.”

The President’s Committee on the Arts and the Humanities bridges the interests of federal agencies and the private sector, supports special projects that increase participation, and helps incorporate the humanities and the arts into White House objectives.

The National Endowment for the Arts exists to foster, preserve and promote excellence in the arts, to bring art to all Americans, and to provide leadership in arts education.

The National Endowment for the Humanities, an independent grantmaking agency of the U.S. Government, supports learning in history, literature, philosophy, and other areas of the humanities.

The Institute of Museum and Library Services is an independent Federal grantmaking agency dedicated to creating and sustaining a nation of learners. For more information, please visit:

Coming Up Taller: www.cominguptaller.org
Eastern Connecticut State University: www.easternct.edu.