

# THE 57TH ANNIVERSARY NORTHEAST CONFERENCE AWARDS

## 2010 Northeast Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages Annual Award for Outstanding Leadership in the Profession, in memory of Nelson H. Brooks: Yu-Lan Lin, Boston Public Schools



**Yu-Lan Lin**

Dr. Yu-Lan Lin has been a teacher and administrator for the Boston Public Schools for the past 31 years. She began her career as a bilingual teacher in 1979, and later became a department chair of World Languages in 1983; in 1997 she was promoted to her current position

as district director for World Languages.

Dr. Lin is currently the Executive Director of the Chinese Language Association of Secondary-Elementary Schools (CLASS), a national K-12 Chinese teachers' organization. She has previously served on the Board of Directors for the Massachusetts Foreign Languages Association (MaFLA), Northeast Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (NECTFL), and the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL).

Dr. Lin has been an active participant in the development and the subsequent revision of the Massachusetts Foreign Languages Curriculum Framework; the development of the K-12 Standards for Chinese Language Learning and the K-16 Standards for Chinese Language Learning. She has also taken part in several national projects, including the design of foreign language assessment by the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), the development of professional standards by the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC); and the revision of standards for world language teachers by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standard (NBTC). Dr. Lin's involvement has also extended into the College Board's AP Chinese Program, where she was an original AP Task Force Committee member, the Content Advisor; and currently serves as a Curriculum and Assessment Development Committee member and its National Consultant.

Dr. Lin's professional work has encompassed the spectrum of local, regional, national, and international educational settings. She has audited language programs in Hong Kong, Beijing, and Bangkok; provided workshops in Singapore, China and Taiwan; participated in an international textbook materials review in Guilin; and presented a report on US K-12 Chinese education in Osaka.

Dr. Lin's most current work includes co-authorship of the *CLASS Professional Standards for K-12 Chinese Teachers* and K-12 Performance Tasks, both collaborative projects with the Ohio State University; the development of

CLASS Performance Standards for PreK-12 Students, and CLASS K-12 Thematic Unit Curriculum Design.

### NECTFL TRIBUTE

The Northeast Conference Board of Directors is moved, proud and deeply honored to present the 2010 Brooks Award to our friend, colleague and hero, Dr. Yu-Lan Lin in this, the Year of the Tiger! Yu-Lan's biographical statement above focuses, with her characteristic humility, on her work. She does not reveal the seven major awards that preceded the conferral of the Brooks this year. Twice a Fulbright Group Project recipient, Yu-Lan has been selected by a broad and diverse range of peers for recognition and honor: she got the Calesa Foundation's Terrific Teachers Making a Difference Award, but also the National Teacher Award from the Academic Alliance in Higher Education, the Massachusetts Foreign Language Association's Distinguished Service Award, and a first place in the Outstanding Dissertations Award Competition of the National Advisory Council on Bilingual Education, among others.

Yu-Lan made outstanding contributions to the Northeast Conference during her tenure as Director, chairing the committee that ensures communication with our 14 state associations as well as the critically important Program Committee. She was a much-appreciated contributor to discussions and a willing innovator. Yu-Lan never turned down a request. Her "Give Chinese a Try" session introduced NECTFL attendees to this now-burgeoning foreign language very early in the game. She is one of those brilliant teachers who persuades you that learning her language is easy! Xie-xie!

Yu-Lan's true dedication to NECTFL and to her fellow teachers of Chinese was demonstrated several years ago when she singlehandedly arranged for two distinguished scholars from Beijing to travel to New York to present a fascinating and brilliant workshop on the ancient tea routes. Yu-Lan dealt successfully with sponsors, with U.S. state department officials, with Chinese university administrators ... and with NECTFL headquarters staff! ... to bring together a group of passionate teachers thirsty for knowledge and two eminent experts eager to share their research. It was a highlight of that year's conference and has led to significant increases in the presence of Chinese at the conference. Are the ancient tea routes worth studying? Apparently so, as New York's American Museum of Natural History is currently featuring an exhibit on them!

Yu-Lan Lin has presented everywhere from Los Angeles to New York, from Texas to Massachusetts, from Taipei to Beijing. She has served many different associations and engaged in a wide variety of professional endeavors. As we honor her, we are thus compelled to share this space with the many colleagues and friends who have clamored to add their tributes to ours.

### TRIBUTES FROM COLLEAGUES AND FRIENDS

In the field of Chinese language pedagogy, it is not an overstatement to say that any initiative of any importance over the past quarter century has had the benefit of Yu-Lan's enthusiastic input and intelligent insights. From the establishment of CLASS, to the creation of the Chinese *Standards* (both student and teacher), to the AP Chinese Task Force — all of these vital projects are in some way better for her contributions.

Yet I count as one of the genuine joys of my own professional careers the precious opportunities I have had to work with her on things that were not exclusively Chinese, the Northeast Conference foremost among them. In our three overlapping years as members of the Board of Directors, I was constantly reminded that her perspectives were not narrowly defined only by her experience as a teacher of Chinese. Indeed, it is my recollection that she spent some time teaching Japanese as well as Mandarin. Yu-Lan reflects the best in what we as language teachers should strive for — namely, that we are not in competition with each other for students, but rather engaged in a collective and comprehensive endeavor as teachers of languages.

— Scott McGinnis

*Defense Language Institute—Washington Office*

It is a personal and professional honor to share in this recognition of Yu-Lan Lin as the 2010 recipient of the Nelson Brooks Award for Leadership in Foreign Language Education. I have had the pleasure of working with Yu-Lan in Massachusetts, regionally, and nationally for many years. Yu-Lan's leadership style is collaborative. She works with colleagues as a wonderful team member, the sign of a real leader. Others know that they can count on her and this is very motivating. She is very generous with her time commitments to the profession as she shares her expertise with teachers and administrators both in the United States and beyond. We often wonder how she manages to do all of this! It is wonderful to welcome Yu-Lan to the list of Brooks recipients which I was proud to join in 2006. A most deserved recognition.

— Dr. Kathleen M. Riordan

*2006 Brooks award recipient and the Past President of ACTFL*

Dr. Yu-Lan Lin is a remarkable woman. We have been cherished colleagues and dear friends for thirty years in the Boston Public School System. From 1983 to 1996 I preceded her in the position she has held since then. I could not have had a more supportive teacher and department head than Yu-Lan throughout those years. Her work ethic was consistently exemplary in all aspects of our profession. And now, as the principal promoter of foreign language instruction in the City of Boston, she is the outstanding example of unselfish leadership. Nothing is too difficult for her to undertake if it will help someone else. Her reputation for