

# Plenary Speakers

## Liz Murray

From Homeless to Harvard  
Wednesday, March 15,  
11:30 am–12:30 pm



From homeless to Harvard . . . it is an unlikely turn of events. Liz Murray's life is a triumph over adversity and a stunning example of the importance of dreaming big. Liz's life as the child of cocaine-addicted parents in the Bronx was bitterly grim. There was never food in the house, everything was filthy, drugs were everywhere, and the welfare checks were spent before they arrived. By age 15, Liz's mom had died and Liz was living on the streets, riding the subway all night, and eating from dumpsters. Amid this pain, Liz always imagined that her life could be much better than it was. "I started to grasp the value of the lessons learned while living on the streets. I knew after overcoming those daily obstacles that next to nothing could hold me down." Determined to take charge of her life, Liz finished high school in just 2 years while camping out in New York City parks and subway stations. She went on to earn a scholarship from *The New York Times* and began attending Harvard in 2000. In order to be closer to her ill father, Liz has since chosen to attend Columbia University. Her story is exhilarating and her delivery innocently honest, as she takes audiences on a very personal journey during which she achieves the improbable. Her story sounds like a Hollywood movie—and it practically is. Lifetime Television produced a movie about Liz's life story, titled *From Homeless to Harvard*, which premiered in April 2003. She is currently writing her memoirs for Hyperion, due out in 2005, and she recently received Oprah Winfrey's first ever Chutzpah Award.

## Jim Key

Hitting the Mark:  
The Quest for Excellence  
Thursday, March 16,  
11:30 am–12:30 pm



What's the big deal about striving for personal excellence? What can it do for me? These are good questions with a straightforward answer: Developing a predisposition for high and focused expectations, along with goal-oriented "stick-to-it-iveness," can bring higher levels of success to your personal pursuit of excellence. In this session, I examine the principles of personal excellence and share the rewarding lessons I have learned, lessons that can also apply to you.

Jim Key comes from a background in computer technology, sports, leadership, music, and public speaking. After entering the world of information technology (IT) in 1987, Jim developed an IT consulting practice, working with leaders and managers from national nonprofit organizations, manufacturing companies, and service companies across the United States. He has volunteered for many years in his community and church, working with children and teenagers in various capacities for more than 20 years. His volunteerism and IT background converged in 1996, when he brought much-needed automation to a national youth development program. His efforts led to 6 years of service on the

national steering committee for this youth program and a cutting-edge computerized solution that is still in use today. He believes in passionately pursuing excellence without reservation and in enabling others to do likewise. This passion drove him to become an award-winning speaker. Reaching the finals of the World Championship of Public Speaking an unprecedented three consecutive times, Jim went on to become the 2003 World Champion of Public Speaking.

## Barry O'Sullivan

Roehampton University  
London, England  
Testing Times: Daring to Lead  
or Failing to Follow?  
Thursday, March 16, 2–2:45 pm



For many years, TESOL members have participated in the ever-changing world of teaching and its interaction with the emerging discipline of language testing. In this talk, I trace the major changes in testing during the past 40 years, focusing on its competing philosophies. While exploring testing's successes and failures, I look at its power to lead, for example, through the development of operational models of language ability, as well as its ability to follow, for example, through the communicative testing of language. I hope to demonstrate that despite its apparent failure to follow often-radical movements in the teaching of language, testing has provided dynamic and practical leadership in the perception of language and how people use it.

Barry O'Sullivan is director of the Centre for Research in Testing, Evaluation and Curriculum at Roehampton University. He is particularly interested in issues related to performance testing, test validation, and test-data management and analysis. He has published widely on language testing and has presented his work at international conferences around the world. Cambridge University Press published his book *Issues in Business English Testing*, and he is currently coauthoring a book on examining speaking. He is active in language testing around the world, working with government ministries, universities, and examination boards.

## PRESIDENTIAL PLENARY

### Elliot L. Judd

University of Illinois  
Chicago, Illinois, USA  
Turning 40: A Midlife Crisis for  
the Profession?  
Friday, March 17,  
11:30 am–12:30 pm



As TESOL celebrates its 40th anniversary, it is time to assess TESOL, both the profession and the association. Do we in ESOL belong to a real profession or is ESOL merely an occupation? Through a review of the literature on the sociology of professions, this plenary identifies a list of traits that characterize a profession. I then compare TESOL to this list to see how we measure up. By doing so, we can determine where we have been, where we are, and where we should be going as a profession.

Elliot L. Judd is the director of the MA TESOL program at the University of Illinois at Chicago and the 2005–2006 president of TESOL. He has been a member of TESOL since 1971. He was the founding editor of *TESOL Journal*, associate chair of the 1984 TESOL convention, and director of the 1982 TESOL Summer Institute. His research interests include language policy in the United States and sociopolitical issues affecting TESOL.

### Keith Folse

University of Central Florida  
Orlando, Florida, USA  
Almost Everything I Know About  
Teaching I Learned From My  
Own Teachers  
Friday March 17, 2–2:45 pm



You are a teacher and you have most likely thought about why you became a teacher. But have you thought about why you became the kind of teacher that you are today? Perhaps you often tell jokes in class. Perhaps you give quite a few tests. Perhaps you focus on vocabulary. Have you ever reflected on why you do these things? For most of us, the greatest influence has come from those who taught us—our own teachers. We are an accumulation of influences—some good and some bad—of all the teachers who have taught us throughout the years. Some teacher behaviors we seek to emulate; others we choose to reject. In this talk, I share my reflections and hope to spark some in you.

Keith Folse is the coordinator of the MATESOL Program at the University of Central Florida in Orlando, where he has received six awards for best teaching and best research practices, including Graduate Professor of the Year for 2004. He has taught ESL and EFL for more than 25 years in places such as Japan, Saudi Arabia, Malaysia, Kuwait, and the United States. He is a frequent conference presenter and the author of 34 textbooks, including *Vocabulary Myths* (University of Michigan Press, 2004) and the new *From Great Paragraphs to Great Essays* (Houghton Mifflin, 2006).

## JAMES E. ALATIS PLENARY

### Michael McCarthy

University of Nottingham  
Nottingham, England  
Spoken Fluency in Theory  
and in Practice  
Saturday, March 18,  
11:30 am–12:30 pm



Fluency is a word that is used often in language teaching, and speaking a language fluently is seen as the ultimate goal for many learners. But what exactly is fluency in spoken language? Does it mean that language flows from someone without practice or rehearsal? Is it the ability to speak fast, to speak smoothly, to speak without faltering and hesitating? If so, then many native speakers fail the test. In this presentation I look at notions of fluency, present examples of native and nonnative spoken fluency, and conclude that fluency is a property of conversations rather than simply a talent that individuals possess. Given the right strategies, and with the right degree of cooperation, even relatively low-level learners can engage in fluent conversations. But do teachers dare lead their students into the world of fluency by exposing them to examples of conversational language and teaching conversation strategies based on what real fluent speakers do? Not often, because real conversations frequently seem too messy, unstructured, and disorganized. But beneath the choppy waters of everyday talk is a gently flowing stream that teachers can help learners enter with confidence, right from the earliest stages.

Michael McCarthy is emeritus professor of applied linguistics at the University of Nottingham, adjunct professor of applied linguistics at Pennsylvania State University, and adjunct professor of applied linguistics at the University of Limerick. He is author, coauthor, and editor of more than 30 books and 70 academic papers. From 1994 to 1998 he was coeditor of *Applied Linguistics*. He is codirector (with Ronald Carter) of the five-million-word CANCODE spoken English corpus project and the one-million-word CANBEC spoken business English corpus. He has lectured on language and language teaching in 37 countries and has been actively involved in English language teaching for 40 years.