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# GEMBERLING RECEIVES FREEDOM OF INFORMATION AWARD

Donald E. Gemberling, “guru” of the state’s Data Practices Act, is the recipient of the 2005 John R. Finnegan Freedom of Information Award. Since 1989 the Minnesota Coalition on Government Information has conferred the award to recognize individuals and organizations whose efforts have helped to ensure that citizens have access to public information.

**Gemberling, who retired in May 2004, from the Minnesota Department of Administration, served for three decades as the “go to” person on the Data Practices Act. A 2002 cover story in City Pages, noted that “since 1974, when the Legislature passed the first incarnation of the law, Gemberling has weighed in on virtually every significant debate affecting its makeup, subtly and sometimes not so subtly shaping the ways the state government handles the ever-increasing volume of information it collects and maintains.” Retiree Gemberling will still be found pounding the marble halls of the State Capitol as data practices issues increasingly emerge on the public agenda.**

**The award will be presented at the 2005 Freedom of Information Day awards ceremony which will be held at Noon on March 16 at the Minnesota History Center. The award will be presented by Kit Hadley, Director of the Minneapolis Public Library. The ceremony event is sponsored by the Coalition each year on March 16, the birthrate of James Madison, advocate for the citizens’ right to know. The awards ceremony is free and open to the public.**

**The Freedom of Information Award is sponsored by the Minnesota Coalition on Government Information. The award is named in honor of John R. Finnegan, retired senior vice president of the St. Paul Pioneer Press, co-founder and chair of the Joint Media Committee. It recognizes his dedication to openness in government and work on behalf of the people’s right to know.**

**The Minnesota Coalition on Government Information, an interest group of individuals and organizations committed to open access to public information in print, electronic and digital format, is modeled on a national coalition initiated in 1986 by the American Library Association. The Minnesota Coalition on Government Information has recently been designated recipient of the inaugural Eileen Cooke State and Local Madison Award.**

**Contact:**