## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE - FEBRUARY 12, 2006

# COGHLAN RECEIVES FREEDOM OF INFORMATION AWARD

**Librarian Colleen Coghlan is recipient of the 2006 John R. Finnegan Freedom of Information Award conferred by the Minnesota Coalition on Government Information. Coghlan is most recently a member of the faculty of the Library Science Department at the College of St. Catherine in St. Paul. She has also served during the 1980’s and 90’s as University Librarian for Metropolitan State University where she described herself as “the librarian without a library in the University without walls.”**

**A stalwart defender of the First Amendment and open access to public information Coghlan has spoken and written extensively on access issues; her letters appear regularly (though less often than they are written) on the op-ed pages of the local press. As an educator Coghlan has introduced generations of students to the principles of freedom of information and the role of an informed citizenry in a democracy.**

**The award will be presented at the 2006 Freedom of Information Day awards ceremony on Thursday, March 16, 2006, in the Atrium of Coeur de Catherine Center at the College of St. Catherine. A reception honoring the lifetime achievements of Coghlan will begin at 6:00 p.m. with the awards ceremony set for 7:00. The award will be presented by Donald A. Gemberling, recipient of the 2005 award for his longtime enforcement and enhancement of the State Data Practices Act.**

**The ceremony event is sponsored by the Coalition each year on March 16, the birth date of James Madison, advocate for the citizens’ right to know. The awards ceremony and reception are open to the public. Reservations ($10) required. Call 651 690 6649.**

**Since 1989 the Minnesota Coalition on Government Information has sponsored the annual Freedom of Information Award. The award is named in honor of John R. Finnegan, Sr. retired senior vice president of the *St. Paul Pioneer Press*, co-founder and chair of the Minnesota Joint Media Committee. It recognizes Finnegan’s dedication to openness in government and work on behalf of the people’s right to know.**

**The Minnesota Coalition on Government Information is an interest group of individuals and organizations committed to open access to public information in print, electronic and digital format. It is modeled on a national coalition initiated in 1986 by the American Library Association. On Freedom of Information Day 2005 the American Library Association named the Minnesota Coalition on Government Information as the inaugural recipient of the Eileen Cooke State and Local Madison Award, named to honor Eileen Cooke, Minnesota native and long-time Washington spokesperson for libraries.**

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