For Immediate Release.

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**Mary Liz Holberg is MNCOGI’s 2015 John R. Finnegan FOI Award recipient**

The Minnesota Coalition on Government Information is pleased to recognize retired Representative Mary Liz Holberg as this year’s champion of government transparency.

Holberg’s consistent advocacy for government transparency and accountability are among the reasons the Minnesota Coalition on Government Information chose her as the recipient of the 2015 John R. Finnegan FOI Award.

As chair of the Civil Law Committee and the Data Practices Commission, Holberg frequently called representatives of government to task on their failure to comply with the Data Practices Act.

In nominating her for the award, MNCOGI board member Don Gemberling noted Holberg “used her position in the legislature, in committee hearings and elsewhere, to educate the public on a variety of issues and on the importance of holding government accountable through laws advancing and protecting the principles of freedom of information.”

One early example of her accomplishments is bringing to light mismanagement of the Multiple Jurisdiction Network Organization (MJNO) database. Holberg endured significant backlash from law enforcement advocates who touted the network as a crime-fighting tool even though it was a clear violation of state law, not to mention a hugely inaccurate source of information on individuals that members of the public had no access to.

Her command of open government issues was so great that Holberg was the unanimous choice to be the first chair of the Legislative Data Practices Commission.

The awards will be presented at MNCOGI’s annual Freedom of Information Day event Monday March 16, noon to 1:00, at Minneapolis Central Library's Pohlad Hall, 300 Nicollet Mall. The keynote speaker for the event is Pulitzer Prize-winning editorial cartoonist Steve Sack. Sack knew two of the cartoonists killed in the attack on Charlie Hebdo office in Paris. The title of his talk is "An Appreciation from an End User."

MNCOGI is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization committed to the public’s right to know, the promotion of public access to government information and transparency of government operations. MNCOGI Board members are Gary Hill, Chair; Helen Burke, Treasurer; Art Hughes, Secretary; John Borger; Hal Davis; Pat Doyle; Duchesne Drew; Matt Ehling; Don Gemberling; Nancy Herther; Jane Kirtley; Amy Riegelman, Sharon Schmickle and James Shiffer.

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