



Meet Mary Beth Tinker

Mary Beth Tinker grew up in Iowa, where her father was a Methodist minister. Her parents believed that religious ideals should be put into action, and her entire family became involved in the civil rights movement in the 1960's. One of Ms. Tinker's early memories is of her parents going to Ruleville, Mississippi in 1964 as part of Freedom Summer, an effort organized by Robert Moses and the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) to register African-Americans to vote.

By 1965, about 170,000 U.S. soldiers were stationed in Vietnam. Graphic footage of the war was carried into household's everyday in this first nationally "televised" war. As a 13-year-old student in eighth grade, Ms. Tinker was strongly affected by news of the war. She and her brothers and sisters, along with other students in Des Moines, decided to wear black armbands to school to mourn the dead on both sides of the Vietnam War. The armbands were also in support of a Christmas truce called by U.S. Sen. Bobby Kennedy that year.



The Des Moines school board tried to block the students from wearing the armbands, and most of the students who wore them were suspended. Litigation ensued and the case eventually went to the Supreme Court, which ruled in a landmark decision in 1969 that students in public schools do have [First Amendment](#) rights. Justice Abe Fortas wrote in the majority opinion: "Students don't shed their constitutional right at the school house gates."

Today, Ms. Tinker continues to educate young people about their rights, speaking frequently to student groups across the country. An advocate for the rights of youth, particularly in the areas of health and education, she is a pediatric nurse who is active in her union and holds masters degrees in both public health and nursing. In 2000, the Marshall-Brennan Project at Washington College of Law at American University named its annual Youth Advocacy Award after Ms. Tinker. In 2006, as a tribute to Tinker's devotion to the rights of young people, the ACLU National Board of Directors' Youth Affairs Committee renamed its annual youth affairs award the "Mary Beth Tinker Youth Involvement Award."

Meet Mike Hiestand

Mike Hiestand (pronounced HEE-STUND) grew up an Air Force “military brat,” and has lived all over the country, literally from one tip – Homestead, FL, to the other – Anchorage, AK. Among the stops in between were Boulder, CO, three cities in TX and many other cities.

Mr. Hiestand is a graduate of Marquette University’s College of Journalism and Cornell Law School. He was the staff attorney for the nonprofit [Student Press Law Center](#), located just outside Washington, D.C., and from 1991-2003 worked full-time as the Center’s sole consulting attorney until 2012. He continues to assist student media and work with the SPLC on special projects affecting the student press community. Over the years, he has provided legal assistance to nearly 15,000 high school and college student journalists and their advisers.

A former student journalist himself, he has written and lectured extensively on legal issues affecting the student media and is the primary author of the third edition of the Student Press Law Center’s book, [Law of the Student Press](#) (2008), the [SPLC Media Law Presentation series](#) and the [SPLC Test Your Knowledge quiz series](#), as well as various other Center projects and publications. He was also the author of [It’s the Law](#), a long-running column on student media law issues published by the National Scholastic Press Association and the Associated Collegiate Press. A recognized expert in the field, he has spoken to student, journalism and education groups across the country and abroad. He has appeared on various radio and television shows, including C-SPAN, Voice of America and [National Public Radio](#) and his comments have appeared in such national publications as *The New York Times*, *USA Today*, *US News and World Report* and *The Wall Street Journal*.



In 2012, the Society for Professional Journalists named him the recipient of the prestigious [SPJ First Amendment Award](#) “for extraordinary efforts to preserve and strengthen the First Amendment.” In 2011, College Media Advisers named him the recipient of the organization’s [Louis E. Ingelhart First Amendment Award](#) for “extraordinary, long-term contributions in support of the First Amendment.” In 2009, the National Scholastic Press Association named Mr. Hiestand a recipient of its [Pioneer Award](#), the organization’s highest honor for journalism educators.

Mr. Hiestand has filed friend of the court briefs on various First Amendment and media law issues with appellate courts across the country and before the U. S. Supreme Court in nearly every significant free speech case affecting youth speech over the past two decades. He is a member of the bars of Washington State and the U. S. Supreme Court.

Mr. Hiestand is also the founder and president of [Houstory](#), which is the creator of both the [Home History Book](#) archival journal and the [Heirloom Registry](#). He currently lives with his wife, two daughters, two dogs and a horse in northwest Washington State.