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President's Message

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President's Message

To serve as your MRA president especially during this year is not only a privilege, but an awesome responsibility as well. It is a task which would be futile without the dedicated assistance of the officers and members-at-large whom you elected and of all those who have so willingly and ably undertaken the manifold tasks which accompany conference and standing committee chairmanships. These people in turn are backed up by many MRA members and local councils. It is the wish of your Executive Board, and mine personally and sincerely, that each might be thanked individually.

For the Michigan Reading Association as for education nationally and in Michigan, the year ahead, just as the year past, is one to challenge even more than before our ability to adjust to change. It is one to challenge us, too, to maintain a perspective which has as its focus the best interests of all for whose development we have individual and collective responsibility. It is a year to take measures to be informed individually and to initiate action to inform those who must make decisions related to the issues. It is no longer a time to talk only among ourselves. The problems of education, and of the relation of reading to this total process, are too complex to be solved by simplistic solutions or in isolation.

The theme of this year's Fifteenth annual MRA Conference, *Reading Realities in the 70's: Problems and Promises*, is designed to point direction to assess and implement significant change for improvement. The Conference is one more way to help us all do a better job on the front line and to inform ourselves of the issues and problems we face so that we may be ready to aid those who must take appropriate action.

Preparation for the 1972 Conference program is by itself a monumental task — one which your president-elect, as program chairman, has so effectively carried out with the generous response of the program participants. To make so large a conference (which is the size of many national conferences) run as smoothly as possible takes the tireless efforts of all conference chairmen and their workers as well.

Behind the scenes throughout the year, your MRA is endeavoring to work cooperatively with such groups as the State Department of Education, legislators, PTA groups, teacher training institutions, allied organizations, administrators and teachers — all who have impact upon the solution of significant issues. The Language Task Force, a sub-committee of the Professional Studies and Standards Committee, has met to make common cause of mutual concerns about such issues as: State Goals in Education, the Michigan Assessment Program, Guaranteed Performance Contracting, Prescribed Budgeting for Textbooks, and Pre-service Training of Teachers. This Allied Task Force is composed of representatives from the Michigan Council of Teachers of English, the Michigan Library Association, the Michigan Speech Association and MRA. This group will continue to meet to make joint recommendations about these issues and to come up with suggestions to initiate appropriate action.

At the very roots of MRA are the local councils. There are twenty-six of them in Michigan and new ones are in various stages of formation. From these councils, MRA draws its strength and its leadership. The State Organization Chairman works with the International Reading Association and The

Michigan Reading Association to assist the local councils and to coordinate them with IRA and MRA, the state, or intermediate council.

MRA's new constitution, approved at last year's membership business meeting during the conference in Grand Rapids, is a further effort to build a bridge between the local councils and MRA. If you are a MRA member, whether or not you are a local council president, this is your meeting. It is held this year on Monday, March 15, from 5:00 - 5:30 p.m. in the

Black and Silver Room of the Civic Auditorium. If you know conferees who might be interested in MRA membership invite them to attend with you as observers.

More than ever before, reading teachers must *read*, be informed and mount a person-to-person campaign to give reasons for the professional stand they take to all who must have a part in vital decisions to support education.

Mary C. Crowley
MRA President, 1970-71

MICHIGAN READING ASSOCIATION

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