

**2011 Cornerstone Award Inductee**  
**Louise Siegel**

The third Cornerstone Award is given to Louise Siegel. Following four years of teaching in Allentown, Pennsylvania, Siegel spent the next 35+ years teaching seventh-grade language arts and history at Gahanna Middle School West (GMSW). Her involvement in professional organizations and school committees included serving as a building representative for the Gahanna-Jefferson Education Association (GJEA), being a member of the Ohio Education Association, the National Education Association and GJEA, as well as being on the district's language arts committee, coaching Power of the Pen and serving as a language arts chairperson at GMSW.

Many other roles Siegel performed each day at GMSW were serving as a mentor, listener and confidant, a risktaker when it came to trying new strategies and techniques, and as a "mother" to staff and students alike. In the role of "mom," Louise exhibited the tough love that holds everyone accountable for their actions, and just as quickly forgets whatever transgressions may have taken place. Her only direction was to look ahead, as she refused to allow any student to fail.

In reflection, a proud memory for Louise is when she returned to her classroom after spending time away to take care of her daughter following surgery. Her students were elated to see her because the substitute hadn't allowed them to voice their opinions during their book talks. The substitute tried telling them what the book meant, when they were used to expressing their ideas, defending them, while still accepting the opinions of others; skills and knowledge she had worked hard to instill in them.

"One of the things that contributed to her success in the classroom had to do with her insatiable desire to learn and grow professionally," remarked James Bailey, retired principal of GMSW. "Louise would never accept the credit she deserved concerning the contributions she made, but if you knew her you would understand why—it was not about her—it was about the students and fulfilling their needs in every aspect of their lives. She is the one person that you could build a successful school around, and I am privileged and proud to have known her and worked with her."