

## Humanities Advocacy Day March 2009

SBL has sponsored — with other organizations primarily associated with the National Humanities Alliance (<http://www.nhalliance.org/>) — the Humanities Advocacy Day (HAD) since its founding in 2000. The purpose of HAD is to provide an opportunity for the entire humanities community to convene, meet with their elected officials, and convey the importance of federal support for the humanities. This year all events for the 2009 HAD took place at George Washington University, Washington, DC. from 9 March through 11 March. Representatives of a wide variety of associations, universities, state humanities councils and many interested parties discussed how best to gain support for the humanities. Bruce Birch, Chair of the SBL Council, and Kent Richards, Executive Director, participated in the event. The final day was spent in conversations promoting funding for the humanities with congressional staff and elected senators and representatives.

The American Academy of Arts & Sciences hosted an outstanding panel on “The State of the Humanities.” The panelists included *Edward L. Ayers*, President, University of Richmond; *Francis Oakley*, President Emeritus and Edward Dorr Griffin Professor of the History of Ideas, Williams College; *Don Michael Randel*, President, The Mellon Foundation; *David Souter*, Associate Justice, United States Supreme Court; and *Patricia Q. Stonesifer*, Chairwoman, Smithsonian Institution.

Panels on 10 March focused on two topics to prepare those attending the meetings on the Hill. The first one, “Making the Case for the Humanities” included

- o *Anthony Carnevale* - Director, Georgetown University Center on Education & the Workforce
- o *Robert Weisbuch* - President, Drew University
- o *Carol Schneider* - President, Association of American Colleges & Universities

The second panel, “Measuring the Humanities” included

- o *Roger Geiger* - Professor, Penn State University & Senior Scientist, Center for the Study of Higher Education
- o *Arnita Jones* - Executive Director, American Historical Association
- o *Leslie Berlowitz* - Chief Executive Officer, American Academy of Arts & Sciences

The luncheon keynote address was delivered by Dr. Steven Knapp, President of George Washington University, where he urged more vigorous participation and development of a more realistic statement of the values of humanities on the part of humanities scholars. The afternoon included training sessions for learning better ways to advocate. The evening was concluded with a Capitol Hill Humanities Reception sponsored by The History Channel.

All day Wednesday, 11 March was spent with congressional visits followed by a debriefing.

If you are interested in participating in this important advocacy check out the National Humanities Alliance website (<http://www.nhalliance.org/events/advocacy-day/index.shtml>). If you want to participate in 2010 as an SBL member you may contact Sandra Stewart Kruger( [sandra.stewart-kruger@sbl-site.org](mailto:sandra.stewart-kruger@sbl-site.org)).