

First Amendment Institute's Class of 2008 Applications Now Available

Should the government provide aid to church-related schools? What is the big fuss about record votes and why does it matter? A faculty of First Amendment experts will explore answers to questions like these at The First Amendment Institute, a program of The Freedom of Information Foundation of Texas.

The five-day course examines the history, philosophy, application and future of the five freedoms granted by the First Amendment: speech, press, religion, assembly and petition. Potential 2008 graduates also will discuss uneven enforcement of national obscenity laws, the status of reporters' privilege and modern censorship in print, radio and television among other current topics.

The Institute works annually with participants who want to study at a graduate level the First Amendment's importance, application and its implications for democracy. Applications are being accepted for The First Amendment Institute class of 2008 scheduled for June 8 to 13 in Fort Worth, Texas.

The program is eligible for three to six graduate-level credit hours through Texas Christian University. An application for accreditation of this activity has been submitted to the MCLE Committee of the State Bar of Texas and is pending. Upon completion, graduates may become members of The First Amendment Institute's leadership alumni organization, which provides continuing education, networking and support. Past participants include Supreme Court of Texas Justice Don R. Willett, Texas Senator Jeff Wentworth and Pulitzer Prize-winning team member Pam Maples.

Instructors for 2008 are: Katherine M. Cary, assistant attorney general division chief, General Council Division, Office of the Attorney General of Texas; Dr. Charles Davis, executive director, National Freedom of Information Coalition and assistant professor of news-editorial, School of Journalism, University of Missouri; Dr. Derek H. Davis, dean of the College of Humanities and dean of the Graduate School, University of Mary Hardin-Baylor; Dr. Ronald B. Flowers, John F. Weatherly emeritus professor of religion and Cecil H. and Ina Green designated tutor, religion, Texas Christian University; Joel White, attorney, Joel White and Associates and Dr. Rob Wiley, attorney, Stewart & Wiley, LLP; Paul Watter, attorney, Jackson Walker L.L.P.

Tuition requires an investment of \$1,500 per person, which includes all events, materials and some meals. Participants desiring this unique opportunity may apply as an individual or solicit a sponsor to underwrite the cost. A limited amount of scholarship money may be available. The sponsor or participant will be responsible for travel and hotel costs.

The opportunity to take part in this weeklong study is open to everyone. If you are interested in participating in this leadership program or in sponsoring a member of your organization, please call the FOIFT office at 214.977.6658 or visit www.foift.org. Applications must be submitted by April 21, 2008.

The Freedom of Information Foundation of Texas is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization supported through grants from private citizens, corporations, foundations and tax-deductible donations. For further information about the Foundation or to get involved in The First Amendment Institute, call 214.977.6658, e-mail info@foift.org, visit www.foift.org or write 400 S. Record St., 13th Floor, Dallas, Texas 75202.

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