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Citizens' group, attorney to be honored at First Amendment Event

MANCHESTER – A volunteer citizens' group dedicated to open government in New Hampshire and a long-time First Amendment attorney will be honored at the 2017 Nackey S. Loeb School of Communications' First Amendment event.

Right to Know NH is the recipient of this year's First Amendment Award. Attorney Gregory V. Sullivan will receive the school's Quill & Ink Award. They will be recognized at the 15th annual awards event on Oct. 5 at the Palace Theatre.

The event's featured speaker will be story-teller and columnist Garrison Keillor, best known for creating and starring in the long-running radio program "A Prairie Home Companion."

Established in 2013, Right to Know NH is a nonprofit, nonpartisan citizen coalition that works to make state, county and local government in New Hampshire more open and transparent. Group President David Saad and other members testify on public access and right to know proposals in the Legislature and work to educate citizens and public officials about their rights and responsibilities under the Right to Know Law.

Sullivan, of Malloy & Sullivan LPC, is being honored for his tenacious defense of First Amendment rights and his efforts to educate the public, including aspiring journalists, about their rights and responsibilities under the law. In addition to teaching Media Law at Suffolk University Law School in Boston, Sullivan presents many First Amendment education sessions, including a free, six-week class at the Loeb School, where he serves on the board of founders.

Recipients of both awards are nominated by the public.

Tickets are available through www.palacetheatre.org or the Box Office at 603-668-5588.

The event is the main fundraiser for the nonprofit school, which was founded in 1999 by Nackey S. Loeb, the late president and publisher of the Union Leader and Sunday News. Its free classes and low-cost workshops attract students from middle-schoolers to retirees. Instructors from media outlets and businesses around the state teach topics such as the First Amendment, journalism, photography, broadcasting, audio and video production, social media and public speaking.

Past recipients of the First Amendment Award are: former state Attorney General Philip McLaughlin, former Keene Sentinel Executive Editor Thomas F. Kearney, The Laconia Citizen, former legislator Daniel Hughes, former Dover City Councilor David Scott, Londonderry High School Journalism Adviser Mary Lukas, First Amendment attorney William Chapman, ConVal School Board member Gail Pierson Cromwell, The Portsmouth Herald, David Lang and the Professional Fire Fighters of New Hampshire, The Telegraph of Nashua, slain journalist James Foley, former Portsmouth Police Officer John Connors and citizen activists Donna Green and the late David Pearl.

Previous Quill & Ink Award recipients have been Circuit Court Judge James Carroll; Debi Clark Valentine of the YMCA's Youth & Government Program; the late Robert Foster, publisher of Foster's Daily Democrat; Mike Pride, retired editor of The Concord Monitor; and Claire Ebel, retired director of the ACLU in New Hampshire.

Led by Presenting Sponsor People's United Bank, the growing list of 2017 First Amendment Event sponsors and supporters includes: EverSource Energy, Amoskeag Beverages, Eastern Bank, AutoFair, AT&T, Brady Sullivan Properties, McLane Middleton, The Common Man Family of Restaurants, Catholic Medical Center, Joseph and Signe McQuaid, Silvertch, BAE Systems, Café Services, Lincoln Financial Group.

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Media partners are the New Hampshire Union Leader, WMUR-TV and WGIR.

For information about the event, visit www.loebsschool.org or call 627-0005.

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