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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**McCORMICK FREEDOM MUSEUM BRINGS FIRST AMENDMENT PIONEER TO  
CHICAGOLAND SCHOOLS**

*Assemblies inspire students to learn more about First Amendment*

CHICAGO, April 9, 2009—The McCormick Freedom Museum will sponsor an exciting program on the exercise of First Amendment rights by high school students. On Thursday, April 9, Mary Beth Tinker—who in 1965 ignited controversy at her high school in Des Moines, Iowa, leading to a ground-breaking Supreme Court decision on free speech in schools—will share her remarkable story with three Chicagoland schools: Wheaton North High School in Wheaton, Community High School in West Chicago and Carmel Catholic High School in Mundelein.

“The Museum is elated that a group of Chicagoland students will have an opportunity to hear Mary Beth’s inspiring story first-hand,” said Shawn Healy, managing director, McCormick Freedom Museum. “Our goal in sponsoring these assemblies is to motivate teens to learn more about the First Amendment and the protection it offers citizens to stand up for what is right.”

Freedom of speech is one of the most treasured and significant rights in the First Amendment. The U.S. Supreme Court in 1969 ruled that Mary Beth Tinker’s First Amendment rights to free speech had been violated when she was suspended, along with four other students, for wearing a black armband to school in support of a Christmas truce in Vietnam. School officials found the armband to be a “disturbing influence.” The students challenged this verdict in court, and their case was ultimately appealed to the Supreme Court. Ruling in favor of Mary Beth Tinker and the other plaintiffs, the Court created history and underscored the freedom for all citizens to express their views. Writing for the majority, Justice Abe Fortas ruled that neither teachers nor students “shed their constitutional rights to freedom of expression at the schoolhouse gate.”

"We are thrilled to offer students an opportunity to learn - first-hand - from someone who played a pivotal role in shaping history by exercising First Amendment rights," said Courtney Brouwer, student and teacher programs manager at the Freedom Museum. "Through this program, we hope students will be inspired to learn more about their freedoms and the role the U.S. Constitution plays in an ongoing struggle to define those freedoms."

**School Outreach Program**

This fall, the Freedom Museum will launch a new outreach program that will expand its capacity to serve middle and high school students throughout Chicagoland. A speakers program will offer students the opportunity to learn — first-hand — from renowned content experts and individuals who have shaped history by exercising First Amendment freedoms. Classroom programs, facilitated by Museum staff, will inspire students to learn more about their freedoms

and the role the U.S. Constitution plays in an ongoing struggle to defend those freedoms. Both outreach initiatives will address historic struggles for freedom, as well as timely First Amendment debates that impact students' lives. Visit [FreedomMuseum.US](https://freedommuseum.us) for more information.

#### **About the McCormick Freedom Museum**

The McCormick Freedom Museum inspires generations to understand, value and protect freedom. Through extensive outreach initiatives citizens gain a greater understanding of the struggle for freedom in the United States and the role the First Amendment plays in society. The McCormick Freedom Museum is part of the McCormick Foundation, which also includes the Robert R. McCormick Museum, Cantigny Park and Golf, the Cantigny First Division Foundation and five grant making programs. To learn more about the Freedom Museum's new outreach program visit [FreedomMuseum.US](https://freedommuseum.us). A focus on children, communities and country unites the Foundation and its many parts and keeps us true to our mission of advancing the ideals of a free and democratic society. To learn more, please visit [McCormickFoundation.org](https://mccormickfoundation.org).

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