

1990s that for decades were denied free speech, and how that principle flourished and transformed nations. Often, he reminisces about his times at MSU, and the days when he worked with other students to ensure their college was a bastion of free speech and open inquiry.

“I figure that every year there is a whole new group of students like I was,” he reflected. “They are young and interested in free speech. My hope is that they discover organizations and scholars like those associated with the Russell Kirk Center that can introduce them to the fundamental freedoms enshrined in the First Amendment. Freedom of speech is a bedrock of American democracy, and our future depends on new generations being committed to it. This is a task for every day and year. I just know the issue of free expression never goes away.”

“To that end, I am proud that these prizes which bear my name will be one important way to highlight for students of all ages the best thinkers, writers, creators, organizers, and communicators working to expand our knowledge and deepen our appreciation of the central importance of free speech and expression. The future of our republic depends on understanding that a free society requires open debate and civil discourse.”



*Richard McLellan with
founding Kirk Center
chairman and Michigan
state senator Joanne
Emmons*