FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
July 1, 2017

CONTACT: Miguel A. Gonzalez, NEA Communications
202-822-7823, mgonzalez@nea.org

NEA honors U.S. Senator Tammy Baldwin with human and civil rights award
Annual gala also marks 50th anniversary of the NEA Human and Civil Rights Awards Dinner

BOSTON—Because she is a highly respected legislator who gets work done for women of all ages, NEA today honored U.S. Senator Tammy Baldwin of Wisconsin with its 2017 Mary Hatwood Futrell Human and Civil Rights Award.

Since 1967, NEA has recognized and honored those who have fought — and continue to fight — for human and civil rights. This year, NEA honored the outstanding work of 12 American social justice heroes at its annual Human and Civil Rights Awards Dinner on Saturday, July 1, in Boston. The theme of the awards dinner is, “Living the Legacy: After 50 Years, Still We Rise.”

“Sen. Tammy Baldwin embodies the spirit of Dr. Maya Angelou’s beloved poem ‘Still I rise,’” said NEA President Lily Eskelsen García. “Through her deeds and actions, this human and civil rights hero is still rising and carrying the torch forward. Tonight, we renew our commitment to stand for racial and social justice and pledge to continue to shed a light on her work as she guides and inspires us all.”

Sen. Baldwin (D-WI) has long been a champion for women and girls. In 1998, she shattered Wisconsin’s political glass ceiling and became the first woman elected from Wisconsin to the U.S. House of Representatives. Then, 14 years later, she became the first Wisconsin woman elected to the Senate.

“I have a deep respect for Wisconsin’s proud tradition of strong support for public schools, teachers and investments that help our students reach their dreams,” said Senator Baldwin. “I have been proud to carry on this tradition because I believe that every child deserves a high-quality, free public education - a right that is enshrined in Wisconsin’s constitution. I am honored to receive this recognition from the NEA and look forward to continuing my work to make sure every child has the opportunity to succeed.”

Sen. Baldwin also is the first openly gay woman to serve the U.S. House of Representatives and U.S. Senate. Sen. Baldwin fights for fairness, equality, and opportunity because she believes a student’s dreams should not be limited by their gender, sexual orientation, where they live, how they learn, or how much money their parents earn.

“Wisconsin educators honor Sen. Baldwin for uniting to create a better state, nation and world,” said Ron Martin, teacher and president of the Wisconsin Education Association Council. “Together, we share the knowledge that education and opportunity for every child is the key to overcoming violence and oppression. Sen. Baldwin is a product of Wisconsin Public Schools, and never forgets that public education is the cornerstone of democracy.”

Throughout her career in public service, Baldwin has worked to make higher education more affordable for students and families. In the Senate, she has led a number of reforms to address the student debt crisis and college affordability. She introduced the Working Student Act, the America’s College Promise Act, and the In The Red Act, which would allow student loan borrowers to refinance outstanding debt at lower rates, increase Pell Grants to keep pace with rising costs, and make a new investment in community college.
Sen. Baldwin has made student- and educator-centered reforms a centerpiece of her efforts. She played a pivotal role in shaping the federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), which has reduced the burden of standardized testing on students and educators, and has provided opportunities to educators to make their voices heard. ESSA also has improved technology in the classroom and strengthened career and technical education. At the same time, Sen. Baldwin tirelessly worked to advance policies like the Supporting Making Assessments Reliable and Timely (SMART) Act of 2015 and the Enhancing Education Through Technology Act and the Career Ready Act, also of 2015.

To read Sen. Baldwin’s full bio, please click [here](#). Watch this [video](#) of Sen. Baldwin working on behalf girls, women and her constituents.

NEA also recognized the [anniversary of its merger with the American Teachers Association](#), which represented Black teachers in segregated schools. ATA originally created the Human and Civil Rights Awards Dinner, and, as part of the merger, NEA continues this tradition 50 years later.

Follow the conversation on Twitter #NEARA17 @NEAMedia

###

*The National Education Association is the nation’s largest professional employee organization, representing more than 3 million elementary and secondary teachers, higher education faculty, education support professionals, school administrators, retired educators, and students preparing to become teachers.*