2026 PRESIDENT'S AWARD

The President's Award recognizes pioneering and visionary achievements in research, public impact, and/or creative endeavors that advance University goals. Throughout his career, Ernest Morrell led intellectually ambitious, socially consequential work centered on a humanistic vision of education. He was a titan in the fields of literacy education, critical media literacy, and youth participatory action research. His work offered a liberatory vision of literacy, one rooted in the dignity of the human person and committed to reimagining the relationship between students and texts. Professor Morrell consistently situated literacy as a vehicle for expanded agency and quality of life. In his scholarship, literacy was a matter of social justice, essential to individuals' ability to access information, exercise informed citizenship, and participate fully in civic and cultural life; and as a means through which young people's voices are made powerful. He was recognized at the highest levels of scholarly distinction, including as a member of the National Academy of Education, American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and as past president of the National Council of Teachers of English. His impact was also powerfully witnessed by the "family tree" of scholars he cultivated. Embracing the fundamental responsibility that lies at the heart of all scholarship–advancing knowledge in the search for truth–his work transformed the classroom into a site of profound formation, preparing the next generation to lead with both intellectual rigor and a steadfast commitment to the common good.

The University of Notre Dame is proud to present the 2026 President's Award to

Ernest Davis Morrell

Coyle Professor of Literacy Education; Professor of English; Professor of Africana Studies; Director of Notre Dame Center for Literacy Education; Associate Dean for the Humanities and Faculty Development, College of Arts & Letters