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UCLA PROFESSOR WELLFORD W. WILMS AWARDED SECOND PLACE AT ANNUAL LOS ANGELES PRESS CLUB AWARDS

UCLA Education Professor Wellford W. Wilms was awarded second place for “Best News Story, Feature Series or Package” in the online category at the 51st Los Angeles Press Club SoCal Journalism Awards. Wilms was among four other finalists in the category; Chris Hedges, Scott Ritter, David Weigel and Julian Sanches. Scott Ritter won first-place honors for his Truthdig.com article, “Dinner With Ahmed.” Winners were announced during the June 14 ceremony at the Sheraton Universal hotel. “I am honored to be have won such a prestigious award,” said Wilms.

Wilms was nominated and won second place for his online article *Liberating the Schoolhouse: Breaking the Grip of Centralized Power* which appeared on the website Truthdig.com in May 2008. The article examines the underlying problems of sustaining successful school reform and provides a detailed account of the successful bottom-up educational reform of Baldwin Park High School and its subsequent demise after school district administrators seized power and control from the principal and teachers.

The article follows the three-year turnaround and aftermath, from 2003 to 2006, when Principal Julie Infante, Baldwin Park High School teachers and coaches from the UCLA Graduate School of Education & Information Studies’ School Management Program (SMP) teamed together to dramatically raise test scores, increase teacher and student moral and improve attendance rates. In less than two years, their efforts raised the students’ academic performance (measured by the California Academic Performance Index (API)) by 95 points, placing it among the schools with the greatest increase in scores. In 2006, the school board removed Infante from her principal position, seized control of the school and took credit for the success of the entire district. In 2007, the new principal discontinued the SMP contract and aligned with the board and superintendent’s beliefs regarding centralizing power. That year, Baldwin Park High School registered a modest 15-point increase in its API scores.

British publishing house Triarchy Press also published a book version of *Liberating the Schoolhouse* in May 2008.

Wellford W. Wilms is an education professor at UCLA's Graduate School of Education and Information Studies, where he has also served as assistant dean and an elected chair of the faculty. Wilms has written a number of books, including *Restoring Prosperity: How Workers and Managers Are Forging a New Culture of Cooperation* and *Awakening the Academy*. His research has been supported by The National Institute of Justice, the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation, the John and Dora Haynes Foundation, and the Pew Charitable Trusts. Wilms has a Ph.D. in Education Policy from the University of California, Berkeley.

The UCLA Graduate School of Education & Information Studies (GSE&IS) includes two departments - the Department of Education and the Department of Information Studies. Together, the two departments embody the school's commitment to understand and improve educational practice and policy and information systems and policy in a diverse society. GSE&IS's academic programs bring together faculties and students committed to expanding the range of knowledge in education, information science and associated disciplines. Its professional programs seek to develop librarians, teachers, administrators and information professionals within the enriched context of a research university.

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