

**Horace D. Taft Alumni Medal
and Citation of Merit
2009 Recipient**



John G.G. Merrow II '59

Your commitment to education in the United States has guided you in your life's work. You have deepened the conscience of the country to examine the status quo of public school education and the problems facing parents struggling to raise children by drawing the attention of the government and the nation at large to their needs. Your own school experience provided you with the skills and confidence to succeed in your quest to serve others. Following a family tradition, you enrolled at the Taft School, where you honed your writing skills as a member of the Press Club and writing for the Papyrus. Upon graduation from Taft, you attended Dartmouth College, taking time off to become a newspaper reporter in the Midwest. Returning to Dartmouth, you received a bachelor of arts degree in English and became a public school teacher in Port Washington, New York. In the classroom, you carried on the legacy of Mr. Sullivan, one of our devoted English teachers, as you planned lessons to inspire your students. Moving south to teach at Virginia State College by day and in a federal correctional facility by night, you taught English to students and inmates. Those experiences made you ponder schools' expectations for students and realize the disparity in standards. Later, while pursuing a doctorate at Harvard University, you learned ways to change public school education in the United States. As a reporter for the Institute for Educational Leadership, you produced documentaries on the plight of public schools. Your success on *The Merrow Report*, *Frontline*, and *The Newshour* is renowned. You received many awards over the years, among them, the George Foster Peabody Award, that recognizes distinguished and meritorious public service. Seeking ways to document challenges facing educators, you visited schools and communities across the nation, and talked to teachers, students, and families. You published their stories in books, weekly columns, and journal articles. You challenged higher education's mission, forcing colleges and universities to examine their instructional practices. Through your own experiences, you understood that education is more than learning in a classroom, and that the gift of life carries with it the obligation to try to make the world a better place. Your ability to impart knowledge has motivated others to change how we educate children to improve the quality of their lives. It is most fitting that Taft School honors you with our most prestigious award, the Citation of Merit, for your continuing efforts to raise learning standards for all students, thereby providing equality in education in this country. As a journalist, teacher, and advocate, you personify Taft School's guiding principle: *Non Ut Sibi Ministretur Sed Ut Ministret.*