

ELIZABETH “BETH” RICKEY AWARD

The Bard Center for the Study of Hate’s Beth Rickey Award is presented to a member of the Bard community who has taken sustained and effective action against hate.

By hate we refer to the “working definition” of hate studies: “the human capacity to define, and then dehumanize or demonize, an ‘other,’ and the processes that inform and give expression to, or can curtail, control, or combat, that capacity.” Hatreds can be visceral (such as white supremacy, antisemitism, Islamophobia, or other ideologies and theologies that target groups for violence or discrimination), or normative (such as hatreds that are viewed as just how things are.)

The recipient’s achievements can either be in scholarship, adding to our understanding of how hatred works, or actions, such as political organizing or media work, for example.

The recipient’s acts do not necessarily have to show personal courage, but standing up to hate in the face of risk or uncertainty is an additional factor, as is opposing hate inside one’s own community.

[Elizabeth “Beth” Rickey](#) was a Republican State Committeewoman in Louisiana – politically conservative, but proud that she was related to Branch Rickey, the owner of the Brooklyn Dodgers, who integrated baseball by signing Jackie Robinson.

She was appalled when neo-Nazi and former Klansman David Duke won elected office, and devastated that many of her fellow Republicans in state government welcomed Duke into their midst. She made it her mission to expose Duke, following him to meetings with other white supremacists, showing that he continued to sell Mein Kampf and Holocaust-denying material from his legislative office. When she realized the media didn’t know how to question a polished neo-Nazi like Duke (he deflected and charmed), she reached out to experts, journalists, and others. She was a hub of a team that developed an effective strategy, creating media packets that helped journalists use Duke’s own words to expose him. Rickey spent her own money, and lost many friends, as she and her colleagues successfully derailed David Duke’s electoral efforts for Senator and Governor.

The award includes a small monetary prize. In any year when it is given, it will be announced at the President’s dinner. Nominations should be in the form of an email to Kenneth Stern, BCSH director – ksstern@bard.edu, with a copy to Danielle Riou – Riou@bard.edu. Nominations are due by April 1, 2020.