

**Walter J. Oleszek:
The 2013 Walter Beach Pi Sigma Alpha Award Winner**

The National Capital Area Political Science Association is proud to present the Walter Beach Pi Sigma Alpha 2013 Award to Walter J. Oleszek, senior specialist on legislative process at the Congressional Research Service.

The award is named after NCAPSA founder and benefactor, Walter Beach, to recognize a political scientist who has made a “substantial contribution to strengthen the relationship between political science and public service.” It has been given annually over the last thirty-six years to remarkable men and women who enhance an understanding of political life and bridge the gap between the worlds of learning and governing. Past recipients have included Ernest Griffith, Donna Shalala, Charles Clapp, Jean Kirkpatrick, David Price, Elaine Kamarck, Paul Wellstone, James Thurber and last year’s award winner, I.M. ‘Mac’ Destler.

Walter Oleszek’s career encompasses the range of activities the award is all about. For forty-four years he has been an active, contributing presence at the crossroads of scholarship, teaching, counseling and governing in our nation’s Capital. A highly regarded expert on almost everything there is to know about Congress, he has operated from his perch at the Congressional Research Service to train thousands of members and staff about the institution of Congress, its history and operation. His expertise is regularly tapped to keynote new member orientations every two years, to organize and conduct ongoing training seminars and model congresses for staff members, and to advise committee and party leaders on both sides of the aisle and Capitol on procedural challenges and options.

He has been called upon on numerous occasions to be part of major congressional reform efforts, including work of the joint House-Senate reorganization efforts in 1969-70 and 1993-94, the House select committee reform activities in 1973-74 (Bolling-Martin) and 1979-80 (Patterson), and Senate counterpart efforts in 1976-77 (Stevenson-Packwood), and 1984 (Quayle). He coauthored books on the 1974 and 1994 House reform experiences: *Congress Against Itself* (1977), with Roger Davidson, and *Congress Under Fire* (1997), with C. Lawrence Evans.

In addition to his duties at CRS, Oleszek has been an adjunct faculty member at The American University for the past 27 years. He is author and coauthor of two widely used books in political science courses: *Congressional Procedures and the Policy Process* (9th ed.), and *Congress and Its Members* (14th ed.) with Roger Davidson, Frances Lee and Eric Schickler,

Oleszek’s advice and education about legislative organization and procedures have not been confined to America’s shores. He has participated in a variety of House and Senate programs to assist parliamentary development in other nations, including the Senate’s “Gift of Democracy to Poland,” and two House programs: the Frost-Solomon Task Force to strengthen legislative assemblies in Central and Eastern Europe, and the Dreier-Price Task Force to aid parliamentary institution-building in a number of emerging democracies.

Walter Oleszek epitomizes the characteristics and achievements the Walter Beach Award was created to honor—someone whom Woodrow Wilson would recognize as combining the “statesmanship of thinking” with the “statesmanship of action.”