**Highlight Quotes from Key Speakers at the Fa ‘2021 NCTE Convention**

"Our job is to put down a marker for change. You do what you can in the time that you're given. You bring courage and purpose to the work that you do. And yes, it is thankless, and you may not change anything in your lifetime, but you may change something for the next generation."

Michelle Obama, Author and Former First Lady

"Equity is the word that is going to save our children. It is the word that is going to save our youth. Equity ensures that all youth have an even playing field. It is not simply just equality. It is not simply just that every student has a right to books. Equity ensures that every student has a right to books and to stories that look like them, that sound like them, that are in a language they understand, that have their very same lived experiences, and give them the tools and the resources they need for the specific intersections of identities that they have."

George M. Johnson, Journalist, Author, and Activist

One of the greatest learning lessons . . . is that sometimes diving into the deep darkness inside of us is the only way we rise above it. And for me that means—whether as a educator, writer, student—if I was going to see hope in the future, I would need to open up my eyes to the hurt and open up my eyes to the pain. Only by recognizing the scar can we begin to mend."

Amanda Gorman, Poet and Activist