

# ATHEIST ALLIANCE INTERNATIONAL

*The Democratic Alliance of Autonomous Atheistic Societies*  
www.atheistalliance.org

## Press Release ~ For Immediate Publication

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### *Atheist Alliance International Elects New President*

Atheist Alliance International (AAI), which has forty-four member societies in the United States and ten in other countries, announced on August 27, 2006 that its board has unanimously elected a new president, **Margaret Downey**, from Pocopson, Pennsylvania. She replaces **Bobbie Kirkhart**, who had served as president since 2002.

Downey has been a First Amendment activist for over twenty years. She is founder and president of the Free-thought Society of Greater Philadelphia and the Atheist Anti-Discrimination Support Network, a national watchdog committee that works to protect freedom of conscience.

In assuming the presidency of AAI, Downey said her goal is to help build a strong coalition of Freethought organizations into an effective national voice for an inclusive society. "This nation was founded with the hope and expectation of creating one nation, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all," Downey said. "That goal can be realized only if all citizens are treated equally before the law, with no governmental preference shown for skin color, national origin, age, gender or religious opinion," Downey stated.

Downey has a long record of advocacy as well as litigation to establish the civil rights and civil liberties of nontheist citizens. She has been most persistent in opposing government support for the Boy Scouts of America, due to its discriminatory exclusion of Atheists and gays from membership, and has been a continuing voice in defending the First Amendment against government promotion of religious phrases, mottos and icons.

She has served as an Atheist community expert for two conferences of the United Nations Freedom of Religion or Belief Committee

AAI, founded in 1991, is an umbrella organization for local, autonomous, religion-free groups, as well as individual members. Its purposes are to help establish and strengthen the religion-free community at the grassroots level and to achieve visibility and acceptance for Atheists as respected contributors to discussions of public policy.

For questions and interviews, please contact:

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