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Laurier professor emeritus wins award for career achievement in scholarship

WATERLOO – Paul Heyer, professor emeritus in Wilfrid Laurier University’s Department of Communication Studies, was selected as the 2017 recipient of the Media Ecology Association’s (MEA) Walter J. Ong Award for Career Achievement in Scholarship.

Heyer was presented with the award at the eighteenth annual convention of the MEA, held this year in San Francisco, June 22-25. The occasion included his keynote address, “Media Ecology and the Performing Arts — Virtually,” which will be published shortly in the association’s journal.

“This came as a complete surprise — I would never regard myself as having the kind of unified body of scholarship that would merit such an award,” said Heyer. “In generously acknowledging the breadth of my work, I thank the MEA for thinking otherwise.”

Heyer’s research explores media history — film, radio and television — and nonverbal communication. He spent 15 years teaching at Laurier, after having taught communication studies at Simon Fraser University, Concordia University and McGill University. He is the author of *Titanic Century: Media, Myth, and the Making of a Cultural Icon*, and co-editor (with Peter Urquhart) of the forthcoming new edition of *Communication in History: Stone Age Symbols to Social Media*.

“We are delighted that our dear colleague Paul Heyer has been recognized with this enormously prestigious award,” said Peter Urquhart, associate professor and chair of Laurier’s Department of Communication Studies. “Paul has been an internationally-regarded media historian for a long time and this award, placing him at the very top of our field, reminds us how fortunate we are to have him amongst us.”

Heyer’s current research involves examining the Canadian contribution to the history of communications; looking at live performing arts events broadcast globally into movie theatres; and assessing media representations of survivor narratives from *Robinson Crusoe* to the *Life of Pi* and *The Martian*. Heyer remains involved in Laurier’s Department of Communication Studies through teaching and supervising graduate students.

Established in 1998, the MEA is a not-for-profit that is dedicated to “promoting the study, research, criticism, and application of media ecology in educational, industry, political, civic, social, cultural, and artistic contexts, and the open exchange of ideas, information, and research among the Association’s members.” The MEA created the Ong Award in 2004 in memory of Walter J. Ong, a scholar whose work represents a major foundational contribution to the field of media ecology. The award recognizes excellence in research, scholarship and publications over the course of a career, and the significance of a scholar’s contribution to the field of media ecology.