
PAST AWARDEES

- 1997 Julie Hedgepeth Williams, "The Significance of the Printed Word in Early America"; Director: David Sloan, University of Alabama
- 1998 David R. Davies, "An Industry in Transition: Major Trends in American Daily Newspapers, 1945-1965"; Director: David Sloan, Univ of Alabama
- 1999 Nora Hall, "On Being an African-American Woman: Gender and Race in the Writings of Six Black Women Journalists, 1849-1936"; Director: Hazel Dicken-Garcia, University of Minnesota
- 2000 Dale Zacher, "Editorial Policy of the Scripps Newspapers During World War I"; Director: Patrick Washburn, Ohio University
- 2001 Aleen J. Ratzlaff, "Black Press Pioneers in Kansas: Connecting and Extending Communities in Three Geographic Sections, 1878-1900"; Director: Bernell E. Tripp, University of Florida
- 2002 Marc Edge, "Pacific Press: Vancouver's Newspaper Monopoly, 1957-1991"; Director: Patrick Washburn, Ohio University
- 2003 Mark Feldstein, "Watergate's Forgotten Investigative Reporter: The Battle Between Columnist Jack Anderson and President Richard Nixon"; Director: Margaret A. Blanchard, University of North Carolina
- 2004 Guy Reel, "The Wicked World: The National Police Gazette, Richard K. Fox, and the Making of the Modern American Man, 1879-1906"; Director: Patrick S. Washburn, Ohio University

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2005 MARGARET A. BLANCHARD DOCTORAL DISSERTATION PRIZE



The AJHA Margaret A. Blanchard Doctoral Dissertation Prize, established in 1997 and named in 2003, is awarded annually for the best doctoral dissertation on mass communication history. Named in honor of the late Professor Margaret A. Blanchard of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill -- superb scholar and the source of guidance and inspiration for generations of doctoral students of journalism history -- the prize is accompanied by a cash award of three hundred dollars.

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2005 MARGARET A. BLANCHARD

DOCTORAL DISSERTATION PRIZE

AWARDEE

Glenn Smith Jr., “‘It’s Your America’: Gertrude Berg and American Broadcasting, 1929-1956”

Director: Arthur J. Kaul, University of Southern Mississippi

HONORABLE MENTION AWARDEES

Mike Conway, “The Visualizers: A Reassessment of Television’s News Pioneers”
Director: Don Heider, University of Texas, Austin

Robin Gallagher, “Talking About Sex and Worrying About Children: Toward a Theory of the First Amendment – 1957 to 1989”
Director: Margaret A. Blanchard, University of North Carolina

Dawn M. Schmitz, “The Humble Handmaid of Commerce: Chromolithographic Advertising and the Development of Consumer Culture, 1876-1900”
Director: Carol A. Stabile, University of Pittsburgh

ABSTRACTS

Glenn Smith Jr., “‘It’s Your America’: Gertrude Berg and American Broadcasting, 1929-1956”

In November 1929, *The Rise of the Goldbergs*, a radio series about a Jewish family and its matriarch, Molly Goldberg, debuted on the National Broadcasting System (NBC). The brainchild of performer Gertrude Berg, the program was a precursor to the radio soap opera. In January 1949, *The Goldbergs*, a prototype of the television situation comedy, first aired on the Columbia Broadcasting System (CBS). However, the next year Berg found herself fighting to save the career of her co-star Philip Loeb, who was accused of Communist activities. For over a year, she resisted pressure from CBS and General Foods, her sponsor, to fire him. As a result, both dropped *The Goldbergs* in June 1951. Loeb eventually committed suicide, and Berg, in her last decade was relegated to occasional theatre and television roles. This dissertation records Berg’s broadcasting career between 1929, when *The Goldbergs* first aired on radio, and 1956, its final year on television. Specifically, the political, religious, and ethnic content of *The Goldbergs* and Berg’s other productions; her ambitious rise to power in a male-dominated industry; and her contributions to broadcasting—including her vigorous fight against McCarthyism—is explored.

Mike Conway, “The Visualizers: A Reassessment of Television’s News Pioneers”

The roots of today’s television newscast can be traced back to a small group of people at CBS-TV in New York in the 1940s. But because of the power of radio and the dismissive attitude of the radio journalists at the time, the birth and early development of television news has been mostly ignored. Since radio journalists weren’t interested, the task of creating a television newscast fell to a disparate group of people, including a photo caption editor, a network messenger boy, a foreign-language translator, a Broadway sound engineer, a still photographer, and a newsreel cameraman. This project focuses on the beginning and development of news at CBS-TV in New York from 1941-1948. Through oral history interviews, combined with research into personal archives, government records, company documents, newspapers and trade publications, a more complete picture of this important era of journalism emerges. Instead of mimicking other media, the CBS-TV crew developed a new template for news. In the 1940, these people were developing processes negotiating technology, making content decisions, and structuring a newscast format which would be in place when millions of Americans turned down their radios and switched on their new video receivers. For those efforts, 1940s CBS-TV news people are television news’ first “visualizers.”

Robin Gallagher, “Talking about Sex and Worrying About Children: Toward a Theory of the First Amendment - 1957 to 1989”

Civil libertarians argue that the First Amendment right to talk about sex must be interpreted broadly; moralists insist to the contrary. This dissertation studies the individuals and groups whose fight over sexual expression reached the Warren and Burger courts, discovering that two interlocking systems of expression affected America’s dialogue about sex more than did an activist or restrained interpretation of the First Amendment. Following the landmark obscenity opinion *Roth v. United States*, *Citizens for Decent Literature and Morality in Media* voiced concern about sexual speech they believed provoked harmful conduct. Scientists, in turn, studied the complaint, searching for the “truth” about the fear. Poets, according to their time-honored role, illustrated the moralists’ worries and the scientists’ discoveries. Whenever this moral/scientific/poetic cycle generated a particularly explicit and widespread dialogue, a second system of expression, one characterized by an alarm about children’s moral welfare, emerged. The worry consistently resulted in regulations that multiplied the expressive rights of adults, generally, and scientists and poets, in particular. Too, the effect of expressive restrictions aimed at insulating the innocence of youth was one of narrowing the range of moral opinion to worries about children, not adults. This study concludes that the cycles act as checks on moral opinion, making the “censor” of sexual expression more myth than reality.

Dawn M. Schmitz, “The Humble Handmaid of Commerce: Chromolithographic Advertising and the Development of Consumer Culture, 1876-1900”

The Humble Handmaid of Commerce illustrates how the development of visual advertising in the US must be understood in the context of the rise and fall of the commercial lithography industry. Between 1876 and 1900, large numbers of manufacturers began to advertise more widely in an effort to create national markets for their products, and the advertising they commissioned from lithographers became ubiquitous: chromolithographed cards, booklets, calendars, and posters were distributed to stores, stuffed into packages, and slapped on bill-posting boards in every city and town across the country. Not only were individual brands developed largely through chromolithography, but also the very idea of the brand was made intelligible during the chromo era. Moreover, chromolithographic advertisements drew upon existing cultural forms and visual vernaculars to communicate an ideology of consumption by visually articulating consumption to whiteness—and elevating it to a position as the most significant realm of activity. With a large number of firms vying for advertising work, lithographers desperate to compete turned to independent artists with “original ideas” to help them land contracts. As a result, artists from a range of social positions were brought into the process of visual-advertising design. At the same time, lithographic artists—printmakers who designed and produced advertising lithography—deplored how their trade had become little more than the lowly servant of advertisers.