

PAST PRIZE WINNERS

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, University 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

2005: Pete Smith, "'It's Your America': Gertrude Berg and American Broadcasting, 1929-1956"; Director: Arthur J. Kaul, University of Southern Mississippi

2006: Stacy Spaulding, "Lisa Sergio: How Mussolini's 'Golden Voice' of Propaganda Created an American Mass Communication Career"; Director: Maurine Beasley, University of Maryland

2007: Michael Stamm, "Mixed Media: Newspaper Ownership of Radio in American Politics and Culture, 1920-1952"; Director: Neil Harris, University of Chicago

AJHA BLANCHARD PRIZE COMMITTEE

Chair: David Abrahamson, Northwestern University

2008 Jury Chairs: Tamara Baldwin, Southeast Missouri State University
Mike Sweeney, Utah State University

Members: David Copeland, Elon University
John Ferre, University of Louisville
Karla Gower, University of Alabama
Pat Washburn, Ohio University

AJHA

2008 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 media 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 an honorarium of five hundred dollars. A two-hundred-dollar honorarium is awarded to each honorable mention.

**2008 AJHA ANNUAL CONVENTION
OCTOBER 2-4, 2008 • SEATTLE, WA**

AMERICAN JOURNALISM HISTORIANS ASSOCIATION

2008 MARGARET A. BLANCHARD

DOCTORAL DISSERTATION PRIZE

PRIZE WINNER

Noah Arceneaux, "Department Stores and the Origins of
American Broadcasting, 1910-1931";
Director: Jay Hamilton, University of Georgia

HONORABLE MENTION AWARDEES

Brenda Edgerton-Webster, "The Tale of Two Voices: An Oral History of
Women Communicators from Mississippi Freedom Summer 1964 and a
New Black Feminist Concept";
Director: Earnest L. Perry, University of Missouri-Columbia

Tracy Lucht, "Sylvia Porter: Gender, Ambition, and
Personal Finance Journalism: 1935-1975";
Director: Maurine Beasley, University of Maryland

Roger Mellen, "A Culture of Dissidence: The Emergence of Liberty of the
Press in Pre-Revolutionary Virginia";
Director: Rosemarie Zagari, George Mason University

ABSTRACTS

Noah Arceneaux, "Department Stores and the Origins of American Broadcasting, 1910-1931"

When the technological and social practice of broadcasting became widespread in the early 1920s, radio stations were started for a variety of reasons. A few dozen department stores established their own stations, using the nascent medium to stimulate a demand for receivers and to promote their overall business. Drawing from the prior literature on the early broadcast industry and the history of department stores, original archival research, and informed by the theories of the social construction of technology and the diffusion of innovations, this dissertation explores department store radio stations of the 1920s and early 1930s. This group of stations has never been documented or studied in any systematic fashion, though many department stores facilitated the growth of broadcasting through the stations they operated, shows they sponsored on others, and promotional activities that actively encouraged this new form of communication. The educational efforts of the department stores, including set-building contests, window displays,

and classes, also reveal that the commercialization of a new media technology is not necessarily a later stage occurrence in the overall pattern of technological diffusion but may affect the initial stages of innovation itself.

Brenda Edgerton-Webster, "The Tale of Two Voices: An Oral History of Women Communicators from Mississippi Freedom Summer 1964 and a New Black Feminist Concept"

This study developed a new concept of Black Feminist thought and employs it to examine the intersection of press and communication practices among women involved in Mississippi Freedom Summer 1964. The study draws on oral histories of women participants in this project as a way to contribute these omitted "voices" to the canon of journalism, civil rights, and women's history. In analyzing these stories, this study discovered generational differences among the women in terms of Freedom Summer's influence on their worldviews and subsequent vocations. Although all the study's participants performed journalistic tasks, the older women of this group continued their lives as social activists, and the younger women became professional communicators. The rationale for this phenomena helps explain, in part, the omission of women from the historical "image" of African-American civil rights leaders.

Tracy Lucht, "Sylvia Porter: Gender, Ambition, and Personal Finance Journalism: 1935-1975"

This dissertation examines the career of Sylvia Porter (1913-1991), a syndicated newspaper columnist who developed the genre of personal finance journalism. The author uses primary sources to trace Porter's evolution from a media curiosity to a nationally recognized expert amid changes in women's social and economic status. The author argues that Porter carved a niche for herself within the male-dominated field of financial journalism by using seven professional strategies: (1) She accepted a job in a non-prestigious field of journalism, (2) she allied herself with her readers rather than her peers, (3) she formed alliances with men who could help her career, (4) she used preconceptions about gender to her advantage, (5) she mythologized herself in interviews with other journalists, (6) she used multiple media platforms to reach different audiences, and (7) she appropriated the labor of other writers. The author also argues that although gender was an important facet of Porter's public persona, her development of personal finance journalism was driven more by market forces and her eventual use of ghostwriters than by prevailing gender norms. Nevertheless, the author argues, Porter opened a door for women in financial journalism and left a complicated legacy.

Roger Mellen, "A Culture of Dissidence: The Emergence of Liberty of the Press in Pre-Revolutionary Virginia"

This historical research broadens our understanding of the origins of the First Amendment right of freedom of the press. Focusing on the popular prints of eighteenth-century Virginia and Maryland before 1776, this study reveals that press liberty was valued as a bulwark against political abuses, consistent with English "radical whig" ideology. Examination of newspapers, almanacs, political pamphlets, and related primary sources reveals an evolution from radical English politics, the local struggles between printer and governor, and the larger political rift between British policies and the American colonists' assertion of rights. This emerged from important changes that evolved from spreading print culture, education, and literacy. Utilizing media ecology theories, this work demonstrates how changes in the dominant medium of communication were an enabler of the cultural development that allowed for the growth of political dissidence. Virginia's traditional culture of deference was gradually replaced by a "culture of dissidence," and from that emerged the first constitutional right for press freedom in the Virginia Declaration of Rights. From a waning of deference emerged a resistance to the legal concept of seditious libel, a finding in contrast to generally accepted theories as to what free press meant to the founders.