

Ira Chinoy winner of 2010 AJHA Blanchard Dissertation Award

Congratulations to Ira Chinoy, winner of the 2011 AJHA Margaret A. Blanchard Doctoral Dissertation Prize.

The AJHA Margaret A. Blanchard Doctoral Dissertation Prize, given for the first time in 1997, is awarded annually for the best doctoral dissertation dealing with mass communication history. An honorarium of \$500 accompanies the prize, and a \$200 honorarium is awarded to each honorable mention. Eligible works include both quantitative and qualitative historical dissertations, written in English, which have been completed between January 1, 2010, and December 31, 2010.

Honorable Mentions were awarded to Patrick Farabaugh, Philip Glende and Kristen Gustafson. Honorees were notified of their award earlier this year, and all four winners will present their dissertations at the AJHA Kansas City Convention. Abstracts are below:

WINNER OF 2011 AJHA MARGARET A. BLANCHARD DOCTORAL DISSERTATION PRIZE:

Dr. Ira Chinoy, Bethesda, Md.

“Battle of the Brains: Election Night Forecasting at the Dawn of the Computer Age”

Director:

**Maurine H. Beasley
Phillip Merrill College of
Journalism
University of Maryland**



Chinoy

This dissertation analyzes the circumstances under which a new technology was employed by the news media, examining journalists' early encounters with computers as reporting tools and focusing on election-night forecasting in 1952. It uses documents from dozens of collections, interviews, and, for the first time, the complete CBS and NBC broadcasts.

This dissertation asks how and why election night and the nascent field of television news became entry points for computers in news reporting. It argues that although the computers were employed as path-breaking “electronic brains,” they were used in ways

consistent with election-night traditions back to the 19th century that showcased news reporting and new technology.

The networks considered the live use of computers as attention-getting devices, but the ability to forecast from early returns did not represent a sharp break with pre-computer approaches. While computers were promoted as key features of election-night plans, the “electronic brains” did not replace “human brains” as primary sources of analysis. Therefore, the computer's technical utility was less a force for initial adoption than its utility for showmanship and prestige.

This suggests that a new technology capacity to provide both technical and symbolic value may aid in its adoption by the news media.

THREE HONORABLE MENTION AWARD WINNERS

(in alpha order by author):

Dr. Patrick Farabaugh, Indiana University of Pennsylvania
“Carl McIntire and His Crusade Against the Fairness Doctrine”

**Director:
Russell Frank
College of Communica-
tions
Pennsylvania State Uni-
versity**



Farabaugh

This dissertation examines the fundamentalist radio commentator Carl McIntire and his station, WXUR, played in the demise of the Fairness Doctrine. The doctrine required radio and television stations to devote a reasonable percentage of broadcast time to issues of public importance within the licensee's community, and to provide programs that discussed different and opposing views on important community issues.

The FCC denied WXUR's license renewal application in 1970, arguing that the station did not comply with the Fairness Doctrine. Following the FCC's deci-

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sion, McIntire launched a national crusade against the doctrine, one that influenced the opinions of lawmakers, the courts, and the American public.

Despite their historical significance—WXUR is the only radio or TV station in American history to be denied license renewal by the FCC as a direct result of Fairness Doctrine violation—McIntire and WXUR have been largely ignored by media studies scholars. This dissertation seeks to address this oversight.

McIntire's legacy in American broadcasting does not end when the FCC suspended its fairness requirement in 1987. The doctrine's demise contributed to a resurgence of politically conservative commentary on America's radio airwaves. Today, the nation's talk radio stations are dominated by politically conservative commentators, thanks, at least in part, to the path cleared by McIntire.

This dissertation increases our understanding of McIntire and WXUR and their underappreciated contribution in shaped not only U.S. communication policy, but also America's contemporary talk radio landscape.

Dr. Philip M. Glende, Monona, Wisc.

“Labor Makes the News: Newspapers, Journalism, and Organized Labor, 1933-1955”

**Director: James L. Baughman
University of Wisconsin-Madison**

This dissertation examines how daily newspapers covered organized labor between 1933 and 1955. Although many publishers opposed organized labor, press coverage was more supportive than critics asserted. However, ongoing conflict within the labor movement and in the community created legitimate story frames that worked to discredit unions.

Prominent publishers used their papers to promote anti-unionism, but some newspaper executives were liberal voices for unions. Others tried for economic or professional reasons to offer neutral news coverage even as they presented strong opposition on the editorial pages. Syndicated political columnists presented a range of opinion on organized labor, though, like publisher, many were conservative.

The American Newspaper Guild was a divisive force as political action and workplace organizing polarized editors and reporters and gave journalists a



Glende

firsthand experience with unions.

Labor leaders understood they needed the commercial press for legitimacy, but they also saw value in denouncing the press as an enemy. Indeed, union leaders often had friendly relations with some journalists while insisting the industry as a whole was used in a propaganda campaign against organized labor. This work is based primarily on archival records, oral histories and memoirs, published essays, sociological studies and a sampling of newspapers.

Dr. Kristin Gustafson, University of Washington-Bothell
“Grassroots, Activist Newspapers From Civil Right to the Twenty-First Century: Balancing Loyalties and Managing Change”

**Director: Gerald J. Baldasty
University of Washington**

This research looks at social movements and media in new light as it examined how grassroots, activist media in the late twentieth century and early twenty-first century changed over time and how news workers balanced loyalties to journalism, causes, and communities.

Journalism historians have addressed the important role ethic and gay/lesbian media play in communities and as a part of a broader media landscape.

Alternative media and social movement scholars have discussed how activists engage with communication. These two conversations come together in this examination of two newspapers that emerged in Seattle, Washington, amid the Civil Rights movement and published to at least 2010.

The International Examiner served pan-Asian and Asian American communities, and the Seattle Gay News served gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, and queer communities. A grounded analysis built upon interviews with newspaper workers, qualitative content analysis of newspapers, and examination of archival records.

The longitudinal approach showed how the newspapers experienced stages that were similar—including beginning under sponsorship of a community organization—and were shaped by organizational, movement, community, economic, and other pressures.

And the in-depth examination of news practitioners showed how they upheld traditional journalism norms while also maintaining friendly relationships with activism and communities.



Gustafson