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Writer's Week

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Distinguished Service Awards go to Brent Larkin, Jae-won Lee

SPJ Cleveland will present its 2011 Distinguished Service Awards to Cleveland State University Professor Emeritus of Journalism **Jae-won Lee** and former *Plain Dealer* Editorial Page Editor **Brent Larkin** at a luncheon May 12. Please see the articles below and at right about these two deserving honorees, who have made such a difference to journalism in Cleveland over the years.

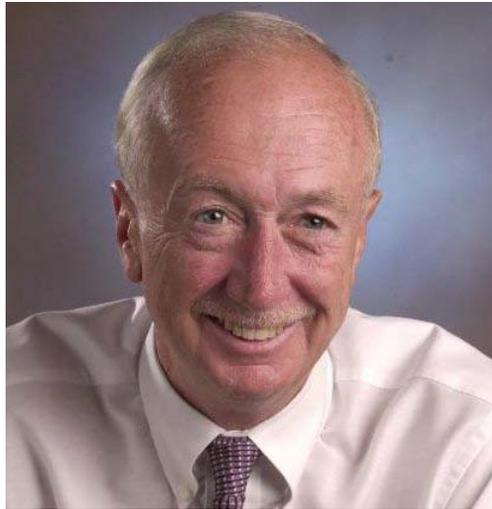
At the same luncheon, the winner of the Philip W. Porter Scholarship will be announced.

Tickets for the event, to be held at the [Doubletree Hotel Cleveland Downtown](#), are \$35 for individuals and \$260 for a table of eight. Please make your reservations at this [website](#).

Brent Larkin: 'natural-born reporter'
who always knows what's going on

Jae-won Lee:
A true internationalist
as journalist and scholar





Brent Larkin

**By Rich Exner
SPJ Cleveland**

Fresh out of Ohio University and not far removed from the halls of Brush High School, Brent Larkin walked into the newsroom at *The Cleveland Press* in 1970 when Carl Stokes was mayor and Cleveland was still the nation's 10th largest city.

Ralph Perk, Dennis Kucinich, George Voinovich, Michael White, Jane Campbell and Frank Jackson followed Stokes into the mayor's office, all confronting the same things: answering to the residents of Cleveland, dealing with City Council and having to face the scrutiny of Larkin.

Larkin "retired" in May 2009 as *The Plain Dealer's* editorial director but he never really has gone away. His weekly column - challenging the region's political leaders to do better - remains a staple of the newspaper's Sunday edition.

"As anyone who reads his column knows, Brent is just a natural-born reporter with great instincts, great sources, tremendous energy and a love of being first with a story. That's why political columnists for other newspapers admit they still turn first on Sundays to what Brent has to say," said Elizabeth Sullivan, who succeeded Larkin as the

Jae-won Lee, PhD, has been a member of the faculty of the School of Communication at Cleveland State University for 35 years, 1973-2008. Though he retired from full-time responsibility in 2008, he continues teaching as a Professor Emeritus of Journalism, one semester a year.

Prior to his arrival in Cleveland in 1973, he taught for one year at Illinois State University. At Cleveland State University, he has directed the school's Division of Journalism and Promotional Communication. Concurrently, he also served as Assistant to the Provost and later as the university's Director of Curricular Affairs in the Office of Academic Affairs, starting in 1993.

A graduate of Seoul National University (with a B.A. and M.A. in English), he worked for five years as a reporter for *The Korea Times* in the early 1960s. He began his interest in journalism by working as a student reporter for his college newspaper in 1961. Under a Fulbright Scholarship, he completed his master's in journalism at Marquette University in 1969 and his Ph.D. in mass communication at the University of Iowa in 1972.

Lee did teaching and research in the areas of professional journalism, international communication and

newspaper's editorial page editor.

"And it's remained true whether he was that young reporter metaphorically brawling for a scoop in a town full of reporters, when he worked for *The Cleveland Press* during the 1970s, or directing the editorial pages of *The Plain Dealer*, which he did for 18 years. He's still the go-to guy for those who want to know who's up, who's down and what's really going on in local and state politics."

Larkin covered City Hall for *The Cleveland Press* from 1971 through 1976, when he was named the newspaper's politics editor. He joined *The Plain Dealer* in 1981, first as a politics writer and later, a columnist. He became head of the editorial section in 1991. Along the way, he earned a law degree from the Cleveland Marshall College of Law in 1986.

Upon his departure from full-time work at *The Plain Dealer*, *Cleveland Magazine* wrote: "Larkin will go down in history as Cleveland's last big power-broker journalist, the last guy who single-handedly pens the town's conventional wisdom."

Generations of journalists, present and future, may dispute that Larkin will go down in history as the "last" of his kind, but the mark he has left on journalism in the city is unquestionable.

For this, Larkin is being honored with the Society of Professional Journalists' Distinguished Service Award.

The Regional: Encouraging a better feeling about the evolving state of journalism

political communication. He has been fellow several times at the Poynter Institute for Media Studies, American Press Institute and the East-West Center in Hawaii. In 1980, he served a semester as a visiting professor at the Institute of Foreign Affairs and National Security of the South Korean government. He has been a Fulbright Professor twice, for a semester each in Botswana (Africa) in 2002 and South Korea in 1988. In 2008, he again received a Fulbright Senior Specialist award for guest lecturing and curricular advising at Kathmandu University in Nepal. Recently, for two summers, he taught at Kyungpook National University in Daegu, Korea, as a visiting scholar.

Lee wears a four-cornered Fulbright hat, a maximum record under the U.S. Fulbright Programs. He is one of the 12 recipients of the 1987 National Teaching Awards for Excellence in Journalism Teaching from the Poynter Institute for Media Studies. A lifetime member of Kappa Tau Alpha (the national journalism honor society), he has served as a national judge of SPJ's annual journalism competition, SDX Awards, since 1995. For the past five years he has run the Philip W. Porter Scholarship competition for SPJ Cleveland, and was a board member for this chapter from 1993 to 2001 and again in 2008-2009.

**By Rodney Bengston
SPJ Cleveland**

The recent SPJ Region 4 and 5 conference with the theme of "Journalism 2011: Adapting to Change" gave journalists the chance to see how our work environment is evolving - often at warp speed.

If you sum it up in one word, that word is technology. The basic principles of journalism may have stayed fairly constant, but the way we deliver the news has changed greatly in a short period of time.

Two sessions I attended focused on new technology: "Media Law 2011: New issues on access and digital media" and "Social Media: How to Use Facebook and Other Social Media Tools, Legally and Ethically, for Newsgathering and Career Advancement."

The media law session showed that the law often still is playing catch-up with the new technology. Social media may make newsgathering easier and lightning fast in some instances, but the thing that was stressed was that the rules of verifying facts and sources' information still applies.

To me, the most heartening session was the one on ethics. It was encouraging because more chairs had to be set up to accommodate the crowd. Some may accuse journalists of not have any ethics, but it was easy to dispel that myth when you had a standing-room-only crowd in a large room



Rodney Bengston

During the 1988 Seoul Olympic Games, he worked at the games' Main Press Center as a senior writer. Out of this experience, he eventually founded the first-ever global Olympic journalism competition, Olympic Media Awards, in 1995. He ran the awards program for the Atlanta Games of 1996 and the Nagano Winter Games of 1998, serving as its executive director. Ever since, Olympic journalism has been one of his major research interest areas.

Lee specializes in news-journalism studies, focusing on news-reporting behaviors, the media's role in political campaigns and media coverage of critical events. Besides publishing more than 55 research articles in journals and as book chapters, he also has edited or written four books, including one e-book on Olympic journalism. His latest research centers around the issue of subjectivity in news journalism, in the contexts of the occupational norm of objectivity and the changing media environment.

Dr. Lee's professional and community services have been wide-ranging. At CSU, he has hosted about 25 foreign visiting journalism fellows. He is the founding president of the Korean American Communication Association, and has served as president of the Northeast Ohio Chapter of the Fulbright Association and of the International

passionately debating ethical issues.

The drive to Erlanger, Ky., for the conference was well worth it. After I have attended any SPJ conference, I always feel a little better about the state of journalism.

Communication Division of his primary association, the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication. He does election campaign consulting occasionally for candidates of his liking. He has traveled extensively all around the world and, at home, he loves gardening and doing handyman's chores. He is listed in *Who's Who in America*.