

## Personal Information

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## Educational Background

- 1980-1984 The University of Wisconsin—Madison, Ph. D., in the Dept. of Communication Arts. Concentration in rhetoric, minor in criticism and aesthetics. Doctoral Diss.: Emblems of American Community: A Study in Rhetorical Iconology.
- 1977-1979 The Pennsylvania State University, M. A. in the Dept. of Speech Communication. Concentration in rhetoric. Master's Thesis: Kenneth Burke's Usage of Identification in His Major Works and the Implications for Rhetorical Critics. Member of Phi Kappa Phi, a national honor fraternity (1978).
- 1973 - 1977 Moorhead State University, B. A. in mathematics, rhetoric, and public address, Magna Cum Laude. 1978, Member of Phi Eta Sigma, a national honor fraternity; elected President of the local chapter (1974).

## Employment Record

- 1984-present University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA 15260. Assistant Professor in the Dept. of Communication, 1984-90, Associate Professor, 1990-2005, Professor, 2005-present. Director of Graduate Studies, 1991-92 and 1994-96. Dept. Chair, elected to two four-year terms, Jan. 1, 2014 to Aug. 31, 2018; reelected Sept. 1, 2018 to Aug. 31, 2022. <https://www.comm.pitt.edu/people/lester-c-olson>.
- 1988 (fall) The University of California, Davis, CA 95616. Visiting Assistant Professor in the Dept. of Rhetoric and Communication.
- 1980 - 1984 The University of Wisconsin—Madison, Madison, WI 53706. Teaching Assistant and Fellowship recipient in the Dept. of Communication Arts.
- 1977 - 1980 The Pennsylvania State University, University Park, PA 16802. Teaching Assistant in the Dept. of Speech Communication.

## Publications

### *Books*

1. Emblems of American Community in the Revolutionary Era: A Study in Rhetorical Iconology (Washington D. C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991), 306 pages of printed text plus 56 photographic illustrations. This project received three national awards, including the Winans-Wichelns Award from the National Communication Association.

2. Benjamin Franklin's Vision of American Community: A Study in Rhetorical Iconology. (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2004), 323 pages. Today's Books, June 2004, placed it in the top ten percent of books published and distributed in America. Choice for Oct. 2004 listed it as "highly recommended." This book received two national awards: the Rhetoric Society of America's 2005 Book Award and the 2005 Marie Hochmuth Nichols Award from the Public Address Division of the National Communication Association (NCA).
3. Visual Rhetoric: A Reader in Communication and American Culture (editor with co-editors Cara A. Finnegan and Diane S. Hope). (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2008). 437 pages. Reviewed in the Journal of Communication 58 (2008): 588-592; Quarterly Journal of Speech 95.2 (May 2009): 210-223; Southern Communication Journal 75.5 (2010) 547-551.
4. Human Rights Rhetoric: Traditions of Testifying and Witnessing (editor with co-editor Arabella Lyon). (New York and London: Routledge, 2012). 95 pages. This book is virtually identical to a special issue of the Rhetoric Society Quarterly that we co-edited in 2011 (vol. 41, issue 3, pp. 203-293).

*Selected International and National Refereed Journals*

1. "Portraits in Praise of a People: A Rhetorical Analysis of Norman Rockwell's Icons in Franklin D. Roosevelt's 'Four Freedoms' Campaign," Quarterly Journal of Speech 69.1 (February 1983): 15-24. Reprinted in Dann L. Pierce, Rhetorical Criticism and Theory in Practice (New York: McGraw Hill, 2003), 256-269.
2. "Benjamin Franklin's Pictorial Representations of the British Colonies in America: A Study in Rhetorical Iconology," Quarterly Journal of Speech 73.1 (February 1987): 18-42. Reprinted in Lester C. Olson, Cara A. Finnegan, and Diane S. Hope, editors, Visual Rhetoric: A Reader in Communication and American Culture (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2008), 333-356.
3. "Benjamin Franklin's Commemorative Medal, Libertas Americana: A Study in Rhetorical Iconology," Quarterly Journal of Speech 76.1 (February 1990): 23-45.
4. "An Ideological Rupture: Metaphorical Divergence in Loyalist Rhetoric During the American Revolution," Rhetorica: An International Journal of the History of Rhetoric 10.4 (Autumn 1992): 405-422.
5. "On the Margins of Rhetoric: Audre Lorde Transforming Silence into Language and Action," Quarterly Journal of Speech 83.1 (February 1997): 49-70. Reprinted in Readings in Political Communication, edited by Theodore F. Sheckels, Janette Kenner Muir, Terry Robertson, and Lisa Gring-Pemble (State College, PA: Strata, 2007), 470-488.
6. "Liabilities of Language: Audre Lorde Reclaiming Difference," Quarterly Journal of Speech 84.3 (November 1998): 448-470.
7. "The Personal, the Political, and Others: Audre Lorde Denouncing 'The Second Sex Conference,'" Philosophy and Rhetoric 33.3 (Fall 2000): 259-285.
8. "A Cartography of Silence: Bias Crimes and Public Speechlessness," The Journal of Intergroup Relations 31.4 (Winter 2004/2005): 76-102.

9. “Visual Rhetoric Representing Rosie the Riveter: Myth and Misconception in J. Howard Miller’s ‘We Can Do It!’ Poster” (with James J. Kimble as co-author), Rhetoric & Public Affairs 9.4 (Winter 2006): 533-570.
10. “Intellectual and Conceptual Resources for Visual Rhetoric: A Re-examination of Scholarship Since 1950,” Review of Communication 7.1 (January 2007): 1-19 [lead essay, invited]. Reprinted with minor revisions in Sizing Up Rhetoric, eds. David Zarefsky and Elizabeth Benacka (Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press, 2008), 118-137.
11. “Pictorial Representations of British America Resisting Rape: Rhetorical Re-circulation of a Print Series Portraying the Boston Port Bill of 1774,” Rhetoric & Public Affairs 12.1 (2009): 1-36 [lead article]. This essay was selected for the National Communication Association’s Golden Monograph Award as the best essay by a member during the year.
12. “Anger Among Allies: Audre Lorde’s 1981 Keynote Admonishing the National Women’s Studies Association,” Quarterly Journal of Speech 97.3 (August 2011): 283-308.
13. “Concerning Judgment in Criticism of Rhetoric,” Review of Communication 12.3 (July 2012): 251-256.
14. “Health Care for Modern Families: Practical Suggestions Concerning Care for Families of Gay Men and Lesbians,” Health, Culture and Society 8.1 (2015): 81-103. This essay underwent blind review and revision in keeping with refereed journals’s conventions, although the journal describes it as “invited.”

*Selected Essays and a Published Public Speech*

1. “Lucretia Coffin Mott (1793-1880), Religious Reformer and Advocate of the Oppressed: A Case Study in the Rhetoric of the Women’s Movement” (with Trudy Bayer as co-author) in a two-volume project, Women Public Speakers in the United States: A Bio-Critical Sourcebook, edited by Karlyn Kohrs Campbell (Westport, Conn: Greenwood Press, 1993), 1: 125-142.
2. “Audre Geraldine Lorde (1934-1992), Professor of English, Poet, Black Lesbian, and Socialist,” in American Voices: An Encyclopedia of Contemporary Orators, edited by Bernard K. Duffy and Richard W. Leeman (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 2005), 285-292.
3. “Traumatic Styles in Public Address: Audre Lorde’s Discourse as Exemplar,” in Queering Public Address: Sexualities in American Historical Discourse, ed. Charles E. Morris, III (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2007), 249-282.
4. “National Character and the Great Seal of the United States,” in The Cambridge Companion to Benjamin Franklin, edited by Carla Mulford (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 117-131.
5. “Fool’s Gold in California: Same Sex Marriage,” Vital Speeches of the Day 65.1 (January 2009), 41-43. This periodical reaches a national readership interested in public speeches concerning contemporary topics and controversies. A long version without the original introduction was reprinted in Gay Marriage: Introducing Issues with Opposing Viewpoints, edited by Lauri S. Friedman (Detroit: Greenhaven/Gale Publishers, 2010), 12-18 [first chapter].

6. "Audre Lorde's Embodied Invention," in The Responsibilities of Rhetoric, edited by Michelle Smith and Barbara Warnick (Long Grove, IL: Waveland, 2010), 80-95.
7. "Audre Lorde (1934-1992)," The Literary Encyclopedia (an international, online reference source). <http://www.litency.com/php/speople.php?rec=true&UID=2792> published 14 March 2011; accessed 15 March 2011; updated with revisions, October 2018. Accessible to subscribers only.
8. "Intersecting Audiences: Public Commentary Concerning Audre Lorde's Speech, 'Uses of the Erotic: The Erotic as Power,'" in Standing in the Intersection: Feminist Voices, Feminist Practices in Communication Studies, edited by Karma R. Chávez and Cindy L. Griffin (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2012), 125-146.
9. "Public Memory of Christopher Isherwood's Novel, *A Single Man*: Communication Ethics, Social Differences, and Alterity in Media Portrayals of Homosexuality," in Philosophy of Communication Ethics: Alterity and the Other, edited by Ronald Arnett and Pat Arneson, (Madison: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press/Rowman and Littlefield Publishing Group, 2014), 183-212.
10. "Why Commemorate the Life and Legacy of Audre Lorde Today," Feminist Wire, <Http://thefeministwire.com/2014/02/audre-lorde-commemorate/>, posted February 25, 2014. This essay was invited by Aishah Shahidah Simmons, editor for an online article series during February 2014, which featured video interviews of Elizabeth Lorde-Rollins and Gloria Joseph. These articles are authored by a who's who of Lorde scholars.
11. "Sisterhood as Performance in Audre Lorde's Public Advocacy," in Audre Lorde's Transnational Legacies, edited by Stella Bolaki and Sabine Broeck (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 2015), 109-121.
12. "Public Interactions with Norman Rockwell's 'Four Freedoms,' Then and Now," in Enduring Ideals: Rockwell, Roosevelt, and the Four Freedoms, edited by Stephanie Haboush Plunkett and James Kimble (New York: Abbeville Press, 2018), 180-197 and 212-216.

### **Research Grants Sponsored by National and Federal Sources**

Carrie Chapman Catt Prize for Research on Women and Politics from Iowa State University (2006), for an Audre Lorde project. Summer Stipend, National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) (2005), for an Audre Lorde project. Packard Humanities Institute, at the suggestion of Barbara Oberg, editor of The Papers of Benjamin Franklin, provided me with an experimental CD ROM containing everything written by and to Benjamin Franklin (1994). Travel Grant, from the NEH (1990), to conduct research at the British Library, London, for Benjamin Franklin's Vision of American Community. Summer Stipend, from the NEH (1988), to conduct research at Yale University for Benjamin Franklin's Vision of American Community. Travel Grant, from the American Council of Learned Societies (1987), to present a paper at Tours, France, to the International Society for the History of Rhetoric. Travel Grant, from the NEH (1987), to conduct research at the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, for Emblems of American Community in the Revolutionary Era. Karl Wallace Award, from NCA (1986), to conduct research in France for

Emblems of American Community. I have held more than a dozen research grants from the University of Pittsburgh plus numerous, internal teaching development grants.

### **Selected Academic Honors**

Fellow of the Rhetoric Society of America (2016), for a record of “sustained and distinguished scholarship, teaching, and service to the field of rhetorical studies.” This award is the RSA’s highest academic honor. Golden Monograph Award, National Communication Association (2010), for “Pictorial Representations of British America Resisting Rape: Rhetorical Re-circulation of a Print Series Portraying the Boston Port Bill of 1774,” Rhetoric & Public Affairs 12.1 (2009): 1-36. Distinguished Research Fellow, Eastern Communication Association (2009). This award is the regional organizations highest research honor. Centennial Scholar, Eastern Communication Association (2009). National book awards from the Rhetoric Society of America (2005) and from the NCA’s Public Address Division (2005) for Benjamin Franklin’s Vision of American Community. Chancellor’s Distinguished Teacher Award, University of Pittsburgh (1996). James A. Winans–Herbert A. Wichelns Memorial Award for Distinguished Scholarship in Rhetoric and Public Address (1992), a national award from NCA for Emblems of American Community. Karl Wallace Award, a national award from NCA for Emblems (1986). Dissertation Award, a national award from NCA for Emblems (1985).

### **Conferences**

I have presented papers to such organizations as the American Society for Eighteenth- Century Studies, American Studies Association, Eastern Communication Association (ECA), International Communication Conference, International Society for the History of Rhetoric, International Visual Communication Conference, Modern Language Association, National Communication Association (NCA), Organization of American Historians, Presidential Rhetoric Conference, Public Address Conference, Rhetoric Society of America (RSA), Society for Historians of the Early American Republic, and Society for the Study of Social Problems. I have presented 89 conference papers at national and international organizations. Most of my academic presentations have been to NCA; a substantial portion have been to RSA.

### **Notable occasions**

I was invited by the Republic of Italy and the Library of Congress to attend conference addresses by the former President of the Italian Senate Marcello Pera and Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia concerning *Gaetano Filangieri and Benjamin Franklin: The Italian Enlightenment and the U.S. Constitution*, which I attended at the Library of Congress, Washington, D.C., October 21, 2010. I witnessed the elevation of Laurent Perrot into the French Academy’s l’Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-lettres,” by invitation at the Sorbonne, Paris, December 12, 2013.

## Selected service

I served on the Advisory Board for a museum exhibit by the Norman Rockwell Museum featuring *Norman Rockwell, FDR, and the Four Freedoms* (2015-2018). Other members of the Advisory Board included Ambassador Vanden Heuvel, who planned the Four Freedoms Park in NYC, as described in Four Freedoms Park: A Memorial to Franklin D. Roosevelt. Elected officer for the governing boards for the Rhetoric Society of America (2010-2014) and for the NCA's Public Address Division, 2005-2010 (the sequence of roles that culminated in the Chair of the division and subsequent service on the Legislative Council for NCA). Conference Director for the 12<sup>th</sup> Biennial Public Address Conference, hosted at the University of Pittsburgh, Sept. 30-Oct. 2, 2010. The conference theme was "Human Rights Rhetoric: Controversies, Conundrums, and Community Actions." Selection committee member for the Karl Wallace Award, NCA, elected by the Legislative Council (1995-97). Elected representative to the Executive Council, Public Address Division, Eastern Communication Association (ECA), (1992-1994). Invited grant evaluator for the National Endowment for the Humanities (1989); subsequently, arranged for an NEH program officer, Joseph Neville, to speak at the Speech Communication Association on "NEH Funding Opportunities" (1990). To my knowledge, this was the first time that an NEH officer spoke at an SCA conference.

For the University of Pittsburgh, I served as the Department Chair of Communication, elected for two four-year terms from Jan. 2014-Aug. 2022 (including at the outset eight months of my predecessor's term). Humanities Council Representative for the Department of Communication (2014-2022), for which I chaired the committee that drafted its initial bylaws (2014-2015). Appointed by former Provost Patricia Beeson to serve on the Year of Diversity committee, a University-wide initiative (2017-2018). Worked with Facilities Management to complete a 4 million dollar investment in Communication's new offices on the 14th floor. Communication's relocation from the eleventh to the fourteenth floor of the Cathedral of Learning entailed numerous meetings to plan and design the space as well as coordinate the move (2016-2018). Appointed by former Provost Beeson to serve on the Task Force on Programing for Diversity in the Curriculum (2014-2015). Served on the Humanities Center Advisory Committee (2012-2014), the Arts & Sciences Grants Committee (2012-2014; 1998-2000), the Tenure Council for nineteen years (2005-2014; previously, from 1991-2001), the Provost's Faculty Diversity Seminar Advisory Committee for eight years (2005-2013), whose seminar I co-directed for half a decade (2005-2009), the University Press Committee for seven years (two consecutive, elected three-year terms, 2003-2009, plus one year as an elected replacement, 2010-11). Served on selection committees for prestigious fellowships at Pitt (Provost Humanities, 1994-1996, and Mellon Fellowships, 2002), as well as faculty grant competitions; selection committees for the Chancellor's Distinguished Teaching Award (1999-2001) and the College of Arts and Sciences Bellet Teaching Award (1999-2001). Currently serve as an Affiliate of the Cultural Studies Program (2012 to present) and a member of the Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies Steering Committee (1999 to present; initially invited to affiliate with Women's Studies beginning in 1988 with continuous service to the present).

## **Editing for University Presses and Referred Journals**

I have assessed book manuscripts for the University of Delaware Press, the University of South Carolina Press, Routledge, Sage, the Smithsonian Institution Press, Strata, and Houghton Mifflin. I have served on editorial boards for the Quarterly Journal of Speech (seven three-year terms as an Associate Editor since 1996), Rhetoric & Public Affairs (2006 to present), Voices of Democracy (2009 to present), and Communication Quarterly. I have assessed essays for Critical Studies in Media Communication, Philosophy & Rhetoric, Presidential Studies Quarterly, Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture, Rhetoric Society Quarterly, Women's Studies in Communication, and Western Journal of Communication.

## **Teaching Experience**

I have taught Rhetoric & Human Rights, Visual Rhetoric, and Rhetorical Criticism at both the undergraduate and graduate levels for decades. For many years, I taught the Teaching Practicum, a graduate seminar designed to train new teachers in Communication. In addition, I have taught a graduate seminar on Communication and Social Differences and undergraduate courses on such topics as a Rhetoric of Difference: Sex, Race, Sexuality, and Class (a writing course); Criticism Practicum (a writing course); Message Analysis and Evaluation (a writing course); Theories of Persuasion; Argumentation and Debate; Political Communication; Fundamentals of Public Speaking; Great Speakers and Speeches (assistant). I have directed seventeen completed doctoral dissertations, two of which won national recognitions and one of which was recognized by the Gender, Sexuality and Women's Studies Program for excellence. I served as a dissertation committee member on thirty-six additional, completed doctoral dissertations. Undergraduate students in my classes have regularly won prizes for writing excellence from the Pennsylvania Communication Association and from the Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies Program.