Professor Des Freedman granted with C. Edwin Baker Award

C. Edwin Baker Award 2023 goes to Professor Des Freedman from Goldsmiths College, University of London. The Baker award recognizes work that has made significant advancement to the development, reach and influence of scholarship on media, markets and democracy.

Professor Des Freedman’s research on media policy, media concentration and public service media has made a world-leading contribution to the scholarship of media, markets and democracy. His work in analysing and responding to the democratic deficits that are shaking the media in the UK and around the world relate to crises of funding, trust, representation, accountability and legitimacy. Freedman’s research also addresses how digitalisation has fuelled a decentralisation of media practices, but has simultaneously intensified the concentration and consolidation of media power across different market sectors. Freedman has addressed these challenges through a broad series of critical interventions: from single-authored monographs to edited collections, journal articles to columns in the press, from freely available research reports to specialised submissions to official consultations. Crucially, his analysis also articulates a clear vision for media reform. He argues for media environment that is not just economically robust but innovative, diverse, democratic, independent of vested interests and sensitive to changing political geography in the UK and globally.

Throughout his career, Freedman has engaged activism in ways that has advanced both scholarship and social relevance of media and communication research. His activism is not limited to guard and scrutinize media democracy. It extends to defend democracy in academic institutions that are increasingly shaped by corporate values. In acknowledging Des Freedman’s impressive scholarly contributions and activism, the 2023 Baker award is also an expression of solidarity to the fight for democracy within the academia itself.

C. Edwin Baker Award was granted by Philosophy, Theory and Critique Division of International Communication Association. The Baker Award was established in 2010 through an endowed fund created from the estate of Professor C Edwin Baker (1947-2009), who was the Nicholas F. Gallichio Professor of Law and Communication at the University of Pennsylvania Law School, and is intended to honor the enormous contribution made by Professor Baker to communications scholarship. The Divisions gratefully acknowledge the assistance of Professor Baker's sister Dr Nancy Baker.