

UC SANTA BARBARA

THE Current

January 18, 2002

Eileen Conrad

Donnerstein Honored With Prestigious Endowed Chair

Edward Donnerstein, a distinguished professor of communication at UC Santa Barbara and an internationally recognized authority on mass communication and its effects on society, has been appointed the Arthur N. Rupe Professor of Mass Communication at the university.

For more than 30 years, the distinguished social scientist has worked in the forefront of national efforts to determine how mass media influences our attitudes and behavior.

A prolific scholar and expert on the psychological effects of mass media, media and social policy, and human aggression, Donnerstein was head of the National Television Violence Study, which received worldwide recognition for its analysis of violence on television.

"Simply put, Ed is one of the most active and influential media effects scholars worldwide, and his record and profile in this regard underscore his outstanding fit with the mission of the Rupe endowed chair," said David Seibold, chair of the Communication Department at UCSB.

Donnerstein, he added, "is one of the leading scientific authorities in the realm of media effects, and highly regarded for his ability to communicate his knowledge in an accessible fashion to interested parties outside of academe, including

government officials, public health leaders, and media industry executives."

The Arthur N. Rupe Foundation established the professorship in the social effects of mass communication in 1998 to "bring increased understanding to significant and innovative issues related to the effects of the media on human behavior and society."

Prior to joining UCSB's faculty in 1986, Donnerstein was professor of communication and women studies at the University of Wisconsin.

A prolific author, he has published more than 200 scientific articles and serves on seven editorial boards of academic journals in both psychology and communication. He is currently president of the International Society for Research on Aggression.

During Donnerstein's career he has testified at numerous governmental hearings both in the United States and abroad regarding the effects and policy implications surrounding mass media violence and pornography, including testimony before the U.S. Senate on television violence.

In addition, he has served as a member of the U.S. Surgeon General's Panels on Pornography and Youth Violence.

He was also on the National Academy of Sciences Subpanel on Child Pornography and Child Abuse

"It is an honor and privilege to be appointed to the Arthur Rupe Chair," said Donnerstein, who also serves as Dean of Social Sciences in the College of Letters and Science and director of the Center for Communication and Social Policy. "Mr. Rupe's generosity allows me, and my colleagues, to pursue those intellectual questions that have been at the forefront of the discipline of mass media inquiry for decades. With the help of great colleagues and students here at UCSB, we intend to meet Mr. Rupe's vision through conferences, cutting edge research and innovative teaching."

A native of New York City, Donnerstein earned a bachelor's degree in psychology at the University of Florida, and a Ph.D. in psychology from Florida State University.

Endowed chairs are highly prized academic positions supported by private donations. Such positions are important in recruiting and retaining top scholars because they also provide money for research and instruction, graduate students,

conferences, and travel.

The Rupe chair was previously held by Professor Steven H. Chaffee, who died last year.

About UC Santa Barbara

The University of California, Santa Barbara is a leading research institution that also provides a comprehensive liberal arts learning experience. Our academic community of faculty, students, and staff is characterized by a culture of interdisciplinary collaboration that is responsive to the needs of our multicultural and global society. All of this takes place within a living and learning environment like no other, as we draw inspiration from the beauty and resources of our extraordinary location at the edge of the Pacific Ocean.