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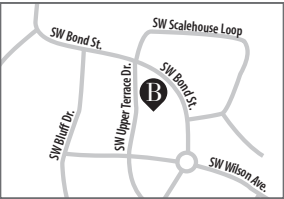
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LOCAL, STATE & REGION

BOWER AWARD AND PRIZE FOR ACHIEVEMENT IN SCIENCE

UO PROFESSOR RECEIVES AWARD

Slovic studies how people make decisions

BY ADAM DUVERNAY
The (Eugene) Register-Guard

A Eugene-based researcher who for six decades has studied how and why people make the choices they do has been named the recipient of a prestigious science award.

Paul Slovic, a University of Oregon professor of psychology and president of the local institute Decision Research, has received the Franklin Institute's 2022 Bower Award and Prize for Achievement in Science. Slovic's research is important to government, medical and other fields reliant on understanding how people process the decisions they make.

The theme for the 2022 award was "decision-making." "I don't work alone. I've worked with hundreds of colleagues over the years. I see the award as a recognition of the work we've all done together," Slovic said. "It's a tribute to them and a tribute to our whole field of judgment and decision-making in which I work."

The Franklin Institute honored Slovic "for foundational theoretical and empirical contributions to the study of decision making, including understanding perceptions of individual and societal risk, and cognitive and emotional factors affecting preference."

Slovic has lived in Eugene since 1964 when he joined the



Dana Sparks/The Register-Guard
Paul Slovic, seen here in his office in Eugene, has won the Bower Award and Prize for Achievement in Science.

Oregon Research Institute. He worked there until 1976 when he and two colleagues founded the nonprofit Decision Research, focused on decision-making habits and the valuation of potential outcomes.

He joined the UO staff in 1986 and works there today primarily as a research adviser.

UO professor Ellen Peters, Philip H. Knight Chair and director of the Center for Science Communication Research, nominated her longtime col-

league for the Bower Award.

"Eugene is a hotbed of research in decision-making and science communication, and that's largely because of Paul Slovic," Peters said. "He revolutionized the science of decision-making, especially with respect to risk perception and risk communication."

Slovic entered the field while working for a University of Michigan professor studying gambles with the chance to win money. Illustrative of the kind of work he still does, they stud-

ied how people gamble based on factors such as probability of winning or rewards.

"We found the same gamble was evaluated very differently when we asked 'How much would you like to play this gamble' or 'How much would you pay to play the gamble?' We would get opposite responses depending on the way we asked the question," he said.

Slovic's research has been applied to issues such as the COVID-19 pandemic, an event he believes is marked by

a "profound failure of communication."

Slovic dug into research from decades ago to reveal apparently unlearned lessons about how poorly people intuit ideas like "exponential growth" and how using it to explain the spread of the virus failed.

"That lesson was not heeded. In fact, it was disregarded by our government," he said. "Not enough was done to stop it, so then it grew exponentially and we see the results."

Decision-making research can be used to determine the most effective ways to present options, such as whether to undertake a risky surgery, Slovic said, or to understand if people will be willing to factor in the global community when weighing their choices.

"We now have to contemplate things that are huge in scale and affect millions of people. Our intuitive brain does not understand millions," Slovic said. "Our risk perception is mostly a feeling of how risky it is, and our feelings don't do arithmetic particularly well."

The Bower Award and Prize for Achievement in Science will be presented to Slovic in 2022. The prize is \$250,000, but Slovic said he hasn't yet decided how he'll spend it.

The 2021 winner was Kunihiko Fukushima, who in 1979 invented the convolutional neural network "Neocognitron," contributing to the development of artificial intelligence.

PORTLAND

False information about commissioner leaked by former cop-union leader

Associated Press

PORTLAND — A Portland Police Bureau internal investigation has confirmed that the former president of the police union leaked allegations against City Commissioner Jo Ann Hardesty in retaliation for her criticism of officers.

A months-long internal affairs investigation into a Portland Police Bureau leak found officers Brian Hunzeker, Kerri Ottoman and Ken Le disclosed the false information, according to an October disposition letter sent to Hardesty and obtained Thursday by Oregon Public Broadcasting in a public records request, the news outlet reported.

The letter, which both Hardesty and the city did not want released, gives public confirmation of the facts behind the leak after much speculation.

The internal affairs letter confirms for the first time that Hunzeker leaked the infor-

mation as an act of retaliation against Hardesty.

"There were many reasons Officer Hunzeker cited as the driving factors for why he shared the information and one of those factors, he admits, was in response to Commissioner Hardesty's false allegation about officers setting fires during the civil unrest," North Precinct Commander Kristina Jones wrote.

Hardesty had said she didn't think protesters in Portland were setting fires in the city and that it was "a po-

lice action." Hardesty apologized for her statements after strong pushback.

The investigation did not find that race was a motivating factor for the leaks, according to the letter.

Sgt. Kevin Allen, a police bureau spokesperson, said that despite the release of the letter, the internal affairs investigation remains ongoing.

Earlier this month, Hardesty filed a \$5 million lawsuit against Hunzeker, Ottoman, the police union and the city.

LOCAL BRIEFING

Vacant house catches fire Friday morning in Madras

A home, shop and vehicles were burned in a fire early Friday morning in Madras.

Shortly after 1 a.m., the Jefferson County Fire District No. 1 was dispatched to a structure fire on NE Daisy Street, according to a news release from the fire department.

When the crew of four staff and six volunteers arrived at the scene, multiple structures — including a shop, shed, another home and several vehi-

cles — were involved in the fire.

Fire in the house, which firefighters were told was vacant, was put out while salvage and overhaul was performed by the fire crew. To establish a water source, the crews had to close U.S. Highway 26. A nearby home was also evacuated until the fire was under control.

No injuries were reported, and the cause of the fire is still under investigation by Oregon State Police arson investigators.

— Bulletin staff report



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