

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

Honorary Degree Citations The degree of Doctor of Laws, *honoris causa*, conferred on Dr. John Willinsky Friday, October 9, 2009

Mr. Chancellor, it is my privilege to present Dr. John Willinsky, former Pacific Press Professor of Literacy and Technology at the University of British Columbia, and now Khosla Family Professor of Education at Stanford University and Distinguished University Scholar at the University of British Columbia. Possessed of a quick and supple mind, John Willinsky is a consummate educator, one whose classroom extends to the public arena. There he challenges our assumptions about the nature of knowledge, its production, control, and accessibility in this the digital age.

For John Willinsky, education is not about pursuing utopian ideals. It is about working with students on projects that matter. And for more than three decades, beginning with his years as a secondary school teacher until today, he has done just that. His research interests range across disciplines such as language, literacy, information science, communication, cultural studies, and sociology. A prolific and iconoclastic scholar, he has authored numerous articles and several award-winning and highly influential books, including *Empire of Words: The Reign of the OED*; *Learning to Divide the World: Education at Empire's End*; and *The Access Principle: The Case for Open Access in Research and Scholarship*.

Perhaps the pinnacle of his academic achievement to date is the Public Knowledge Project, which offers electronic publishing tools and expert systems that are now used by people around the world to share academic and non-academic publications. A partnership among the Faculty of Education at the University of British Columbia, the School of Education at Stanford University, the Simon Fraser University Library and our Canadian Centre for Studies in Publishing, is a truly groundbreaking initiative, one that champions innovative knowledge mobilization worldwide. We are proud to be part of John Willinsky's vision, for it has enhanced our reputation as an institution dedicated to sharing knowledge freely.

He has received many honours and awards, including Outstanding Book Awards from both the History of Education Society and the American Educational Research Association. He is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada, and in 2008, York University recognized his contributions with an honorary degree. Today we pay tribute to him for his seminal work as a critical theorist and for his passionate engagement in educational and social issues.