

CAUT
Academic Freedom
& Tenure
Committee

Comité de la
liberté académique et de
la permanence de l'emploi
de l'ACPPU

Memorandum

Re: Milner Memorial Award

Date: September 7, 2017
To: CAUT Council
From: Peter McInnis, Chair

The Academic Freedom and Tenure Committee is pleased to recommend that CAUT Council honour James L. Turk with the Milner Memorial Award, and that the award be presented at April 2018 Council.

The Milner Memorial Award was established by CAUT in 1969 in honour of James Milner, a former chairperson of the Academic Freedom and Tenure Committee, to recognize distinguished contributions to the cause of academic freedom. It is given for actions undertaken on behalf of academic freedom, or writings which contribute significantly to an understanding and strengthening of academic freedom in the Canadian community.

The Academic Freedom and Tenure Committee is unanimously of the view that James Turk meets these criteria and is a fitting recipient of the award. Excerpts from the material supporting the nomination follow below.

"His writing on academic freedom has been clear and persuasive, so much so that it has influenced argument and practice far afield. His appointment to Committee A of the American Association of University Professors showed the extent to which his views and his work were and are highly valued by American colleagues. Jim's strategy has been, we think, to make it hard for authoritarian administrators, bureaucrats and politicians – whoever and wherever they may be – to limit the freedom of inquiry, teaching, and expression in higher education."

Bill Bruneau, University of British Columbia
Penni Stewart, York University



Peter McInnis / CHAIR / PRÉSIDENT // St. Francis Xavier

Carrie Dawson // Dalhousie

Brendan Gillon // McGill

Alison Hearn // Western Ontario

Mark Mac Lean // UBC

Gillian Dearle // Kwantlen (FPSE)

Robert Hackett // Simon Fraser

Roberta Lexier // Mount Royal

Susan Srigley // Nipissing

"As the Executive Director of CAUT from 1998-2014, Jim was a passionate advocate of academic freedom in Canadian Universities. He relentlessly promoted the defence of academic freedom and worked to expand its coverage in Canada. Most notable in this regard were his efforts to defend academic freedom in medical schools. His relentless efforts on behalf of medical faculty at the University of Toronto, Dalhousie University and the University of Manitoba are just a sample of his commitment and work."

Vic Catano, Saint Mary's University

"Awarding Jim the Milner prize is absolutely the right thing to do to recognize his terrific contribution. Indeed, if anything it is overdue. Recognizing Jim's career-long efforts on behalf of academic freedom will itself contribute to increasing awareness of the importance of the defense of academic freedom. It will also be greatly appreciated and celebrated by the many colleagues who know how much he has done to assure that the Canadian academy today values academic freedom as the light and air of university life."

Mark Gabbert, University of Manitoba

"Over the course of the decade I have come to know Jim, I have been consistently impressed by the strengths of his consistent commitment to academic freedom as well as by the strategic smarts that he has demonstrated in successfully addressing and redressing challenges to that fundamental value. As a former General Secretary of the American Association of University Professors (AAUP), who served and worked closely with Jim on the association's Committee A (Committee on Academic Freedom and Tenure), I can imagine no one more deserving of CAUT's Milner Memorial Award than Dr. Turk. I recommend him to you most highly and without any reservation."

Gary Rhoades, University of Arizona

"Jim works tirelessly, fearlessly and with painstaking attention to sophisticated nuances in the ethos of academic freedom in Canada and elsewhere. He has name recognition in the global academic enterprise. Equally important, he has name recognition amongst the people who have prompted "the cases". Those of us who served with Jim intimately on the business of AF&T know his superior level of compassion for people under fire. He often spends hours and hours listening to the individuals who face personal and professional risk and need someone to talk to with utter trust. Jim is that confidante. He has been a lifeline for many people who found they could not rely in their institutions or even close friends to go out of a limb with them."

Toni Samek, University of Alberta

"I know several recipients of the Milner Award (and knew three who are deceased) and worked on a number of cases or other academic freedom matters with some of them. I have read important writings on academic freedom by each of these recipients. I know of courageous actions in defence of academic freedom by these and other recipients."

As a recipient, I personally would consider it an honour to have Jim join the Milner Award group because his outstanding contributions to academic freedom satisfy the criteria surpassingly."

Jon Thompson University of New Brunswick, Emeritus

"Jim Turk has made invaluable, arguably unrivalled contributions to public and collegial understanding of why academic freedom matters. These include assembling and mentoring a remarkable team at CAUT, and drawing on his unrivalled national and international networks to

staff investigative bodies, help shape the programs of Harry Crowe conferences, and develop policy statements and public interventions. Since leaving CAUT, Jim has continued to build coalitions of concern about free expression within and beyond the academy.”

Len Findlay, University of Saskatchewan