American Society for Cybernetics

The Wiener Gold Medal of the American Society for Cybernetics
is awarded to

Mary Catherine Bateson

for outstanding and profound lifelong contributions to the nurturing of cybernetics.

Catherine Bateson has been an active contributor to the development of cybernetics since, at least, her book Our own Metaphor, which changed the way that conferences are recorded from focusing on objects (such as papers) to focusing on process (discussion and the development of ideas). Indeed, one of her original contributions was to ask cyberneticians to consider how they write: the story they tell and the quality of the language in which they tell it.

Her acknowledged fields are writer and cultural anthropologist. Under those headings she has done much to change the way we look at various groups, by allowing those groups to explore themselves, as Margaret Mead did, never denying her own involvement. She has been an important ambassador for the work of her parents Margaret Mead and Gregory Bateson, while showing us (as importantly) how to develop and sustain our own work. She has written directly and explicitly on cybernetics, but mostly works with cybernetic ideas in the area of cultural anthropology. She has held senior positions in universities, fighting for a more enlightened approach to education, strongly influenced by Gregory Bateson's views. She has also worked to build the capabilities of the underprivileged. Her enduring contribution has been not just to study, but to see her studies as part of the process of change, and, using that cybernetic insight, to act to remove inequalities and injustices.

She has been a trustee of the ASC, is an honorary fellow, and our distinguished supporter. We award Catherine Bateson our Norbert Wiener Gold Medal for her persistent championing of the need for cybernetics, for the upholding of her parents' legacies, for her own contribution in relating cybernetic ideas to social progress—for instance in the women's movement—and for providing an inspiration for the new type of conference we began to pioneer in 2010.

Ranulph Glanville.

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President of the American Society for Cybernetics
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