

MARK LOUDEN RECEIVES OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

LAUDATIO BY JOSH BROWN

As we bring another successful symposium to an end, I'd like to ask you all to join me with applause thanking our local organizers: Cora Lee Kluge, Antje Petty, Mark Louden, and their team of volunteers from the Max Kade Institute. We have been thoroughly spoiled.

It is with great pleasure that I announce the recipient of the 2019 Society for German-American Studies Outstanding Achievement Award, Professor Mark L. Louden.

At the start, I have to thank Dr. Louden for making the writing of this laudatio a very easy task. I first met Mark, when I was an undergraduate at the Philipps-Universität at age nineteen – which was, well, a long time ago. In those nearly two decades since, I have come to know Mark as a respected and eminent scholar, tireless advocate and mediator, patient mentor, and cherished friend. All of those things combined made this an enjoyable and easy speech to write. I don't have to stretch the significance of his work, nor do I have to inject this speech with meaningless, flowery praise. Now, limiting the vast scope of his contributions to German-American Studies to the few minutes that I have tonight is a considerably more difficult task, but I will try my best.

Mark Louden received his undergraduate and graduate degrees in Germanic Linguistics from Cornell University. He then went on to join the Department of Germanic Studies at the University of Texas–Austin as an assistant professor. After some years in Texas, he came to the German Department at the University of Wisconsin–Madison. Here at UW–Madison, Mark wears many hats. He is the Alfred L. Shoemaker, J. William Frey, and Don Yoder Professor of Germanic Linguistics, affiliate faculty in Religious Studies, and an executive member of both the Mosse–Weinstein Center for Jewish Studies and the Language Sciences Program. Since 2016, he has directed the Max Kade Institute for German-American Studies. Mark's tenure is highlighted with numerous awards as testaments to his career excellence, of note especially are the Chancellor's Distinguished Teaching Award and the prestigious Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm Prize from the German Academic Exchange Service, the DAAD, for his contributions "to international academic collaboration and cultural understanding."

Mark is one of the foremost experts on the Germanic diaspora. He is perhaps most well-known for his groundbreaking work on Pennsylvania Dutch. His 2016 book *Pennsylvania Dutch: The Story of an American Language* published by Johns Hopkins University Press is now the standard reference work on that language and represents a career of conscientious and meticulous research that blends solid scholarship with accessible prose. His book has been praised widely as comprehensive, fascinating, and exceptional. It is the first attempt to trace the language's history and contemporary use in such a comprehensive fashion that one reviewer noted that the book has such a "bold and broad goal" for which "Louden has set the highest standard for any subsequent attempts." Most recently, his book was honored with the Dale W. Brown Book Award for Outstanding Scholarship in Anabaptist and Pietist Studies. It is, in short, *the* resource on Pennsylvania Dutch.

Mark has published a strong collection of articles on a staggering variety of topics – and it is the variety of topics with which he is so intimately knowledgeable that I make special note of. He has published on language maintenance in German–American Speech islands, the logic of nonstandard syntax, the Swiss German of the Indiana Amish, the sociolinguistics of Nobel prize winner Isaac Bashevis Singer, incomplete language acquisition, structural contact between High and Low German in Wisconsin, and phonological change in Yiddish, just to name a few.

As a quick anecdote on the broad scope of his scholarly activity: at a recent board meeting of the Friends of the Max Kade Institute, the organization's president related a story about African-Americans who learned Texas Czech and then inquired whether we knew of anyone who had written on such a topic: Mark – who had written an article on African-Americans and minority language maintenance.

Mark is a constant presence at national and international conferences and symposia. He has given a multitude of presentations – regularly several each year, both invited and refereed. As a respected scholar, Mark sits on no less than seven editorial boards of influential journals

in linguistics and diaspora studies, including our own *Yearbook of German-American Studies*. Due to his fluency in the primary language of his scholarly pursuits, he even translated two children's books into Pennsylvania Dutch.

A Mennonite himself, Mark devotes considerable time and effort as advocate for Amish and Mennonite communities. Most strongly, he serves as a consultant between health care providers and the Plain Anabaptist groups. His collaborative work with the UW-Madison School of Medicine and Public Health speaks volumes to the interdisciplinary nature of his career and his ability to create bridges across campus. Mark's contributions to burn and wound care among the Plain communities and his grant work with the School of Medicine and Public Health on investigating farm-related microbial exposure in infancy and how those exposures are related to protection from allergic diseases obviously show that Mark is not *only* at home in Germanic linguistics. He readily seeks out and advances intercultural and inter-institutional activities that perfectly show the flexibility and vibrancy of scholars in the humanities.

But bridging and creating relationships does not end here on campus. A well-known face around the state, Mark regularly gives between 20 and 25 public presentations yearly as part of his outreach duties as director of the Max Kade Institute, including topics on the Amish, Germans in Wisconsin, dialect humor, health care advocacy, Old German Script, and Yiddish. He has appeared in a variety of media outlets including Wisconsin Public Radio, the Wisconsin State Journal, Babel Magazine, and the Anabaptist Historians blog as an outreach scholar. Mark provides guidance for the German curriculum of Old Colony Mennonite schools in Mexico and serves as a court interpreter and expert cultural mediator for cases related to child protective services, health services, and law enforcement. He embodies the very nature of the Wisconsin Idea – that the boundaries of the University of Wisconsin System are the boundaries of the state. Mark Louden takes Pennsylvania Dutch, Yiddish, German-American cultural studies, diaspora studies and more to the ends of the Badger State and far beyond.

All of this is done with humility and compassion. I am perhaps most struck by Mark's pervasive collegiality and enduring support. As a fellow researcher in Pennsylvania Dutch studies, Mark has gone out of his way to include me in collaborative efforts. Over the years, I have said some rather stupid things during conference presentations and written some questionable analyses. Mark could have taken me rather publicly on a trip behind the

woodshed, but instead, in his own humble and gentle nature, he took me quietly aside and built me up, rather than take me down. And although my research agenda overlaps with his own, I have never felt like I am in Mark's shadow. Mark has always made me, and others in our field, feel that we are in his light. And we are. His fascination and curiosity in understanding questions about the human experience as they relate to language and culture, and then sharing that fascination with others, is contagious. Mark enlivened in me the purpose of what we do as educators and scholars and how sharing our work with others is not only necessary but can be exhilarating. Although I was not his student in a traditional sense, my continued presence in this field is due in no small measure to his advocacy and kind guidance at my first conference presentation and many more thereafter. Mark exudes the very best of humanity – he possesses both a dignity and a civility that is enviable of so many. He is the very model of a gentleman scholar and true *mensch*.

Thank you, Mark, for all of that and so much, much more.



Dr. Mark Louden