



Lifetime Achievement Award 2023

Dr Colin Irwin

Dr Colin Irwin is a Research Fellow in the Department of Politics at the University of Liverpool. He is the founder of Peace Polls, an initiative which is unique, first of its kind policy intervention tool with global values to seek and support peace in conflict areas using Public Opinion Research. He was the principal investigator on the project 'Peace Building and Public Policy in Northern Ireland'. As part of the Northern Ireland peace process, he conducted eight public opinion polls in collaboration with the political parties elected to take part in the Stormont talks. Since then, he has extended his work around the world to include the Balkans, Middle East and Asia completing 'peace polls' in Macedonia in 2002, Bosnia and Herzegovina 2004, Serbia and Kosovo 2005, UK Muslims in 2006, Kashmir 2007, Israel and Palestine 2008, Sri Lanka 2009/10, Syria 2014 and Cyprus 2016/17. This work is reviewed in his book 'The People's Peace - Pax Populi, Pax Dei' published in 2012.

Dr Irwin, or simply Colin to all the WAPOR friends, has been an ever-active colleague at every conference and meeting, with his impeccable research and understanding of transitional societies. His track record of professional integrity and academic excellence is unparalleled. As the most experienced academic using public opinion research in conflict areas, his list of achievements is endless. But what makes Dr Colin even more special among is his desire to learn from warring factions while developing his research instrument. His effortless ability to talk and understand different point of views and transparent-to-the-core work ethics that even the worst of the conflict creators can actually trust on in the peace making process.

Dr Irwin has a multi-talented personality. He was born in England where he grew up on the south coast attending school and art collage in Bournemouth. As Scientific Officer of the British Sub-Aqua Club he salvaged a Bronze Age craft from Poole Harbour in 1964 and lived in the first underwater house with an artificial atmosphere in 1965. In 1968 he turned his attention to the Canadian Arctic and in the 1970s where he sailed the Northwest Passage, crossed Arctic North America by dog team and voyaged from Scotland to Iceland, Greenland and Hudson's Bay, living all along with the Inuit community. This journey had a major impact on his personal life and future professional choices. He received his joint Master's Degree in Anthropology, Religious Studies and Philosophy from the University of Manitoba in 1981 with a thesis on Inuit ethics and a Doctorate in Social Science from Syracuse University in 1984 with a dissertation on the nature of human conflict and how the Inuit developed a culture and society without war. Today, as an expert on public opinion, public diplomacy, and peace processes he has advised the UN Department of Peace Keeping Operations (DPKO) on their procedures and best practice; lectured in the US, UK, Europe, Middle East and Asia and authored over 100 articles, papers, and books on these topics. As a

Research Fellow in the Department of Politics at the University of Liverpool he is presently developing a perception based ‘People’s Peace Index’ to globalise and mainstream his ‘peace polls’ methods in all peace processes.

It is our privilege and honour to bestow the WAPOR Asia Pacific Lifetime Achievement Award 2023 to Dr Colin Irwin, not just for his unparalleled achievements in the field of public opinion research, but also for being a truly remarkable torchbearer of peace making and uninterrupted, uncompromised flow of people’s perceptions even in the worst possible conflict areas. For being a brand ambassador not just for the public opinion research in transitional societies, but also for the WAPOR values and ethos, that we all share and cherish.

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