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NPS Provost, Chair Professor to Be Honored With Ellis Island Medals of Honor

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Article By: *Javier Chagoya*

Naval Postgraduate School Executive Vice President and Provost Dr. Leonard Ferrari and Chair of Systemic Strategy and Complexity Navy Capt. Wayne Porter will soon join a prestigious group of American citizens when they are each honored with an Ellis Island Medal of Honor during an upcoming ceremony, May 12.

The National Ethnic Coalition of Organizations (NECO) created the awards program more than 25 years ago to honor American citizens who “exemplify outstanding qualities in both their personal and professional lives, while continuing to preserve the richness of their particular heritage.”

Throughout his academic career, Ferrari has distinguished himself in the field of signal and image processing where he has produced extremely efficient computational procedures. He has also served as faculty, department head and executive director at leading institutions of higher learning. Prior to his current position as Executive Vice President and Provost, he served as the university’s Dean of Research for three years.

“I feel very humble about receiving the Ellis Island Medal of Honor,” said Ferrari. “Many great Americans have received this award and to be in their company is a great honor.”

“Many years ago, I chose the path of public service as an educator. The reward for knowing one is doing the right thing in your life is a great reward,” he added. “But when you are recognized and honored for your career of service to your country, the reward is even greater.”

Porter, a chair professor in NPS’ Global Public Policy Academic Group and an alumnus, will be part of a special court honoring those who serve in our nation’s military. Prior to joining NPS, Porter served as the special strategic assistant to former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Adm. Mike Mullen, where he co-authored “A National Strategic Narrative.” The document, and the strategic contexts outlined within it, has gained traction within and beyond DOD circles, and it is this work for which he is being honored.

“I’m deeply honored and humbled by receiving this award,” Porter said. “But I recognize it is really the messages of hope and opportunity that we offered in our ‘National Strategic Narrative’ that is being recognized.”

“It’s a positive vision for the country that is framed within a strategic context,” Porter added. “America represents hope and opportunity for all the peoples of the world, and that is represented by our citizens, many of whom are immigrants or descendants of immigrants who came here to contribute to our great nation.”

The 2012 list of Medal of Honor winners puts Ferrari and Porter in the company of some of our nation’s most senior leaders, such as current Chief of Staff of the Army Gen. Raymond Odierno. But as Porter notes, within and outside of the defense community, the Medal of Honor represents an prestigious collective of leaders across several disciplines hoping to make a difference for the future.

“I am deeply honored to be sharing this award with all the recipients of the award who are more deserving than I,” he added.

NECO has honored our nation’s diverse past by sponsoring the Ellis Island Medals of Honor since 1986. The Medals are presented on Ellis Island, in a dramatic ceremony, to American citizens for their outstanding contributions to their communities, their nation and the world.

“NECO is about investing in the power of caring, whereas people from all cultures and walks of life stand together arm in arm to make a real difference in our world through shared compassion and philanthropy – not just for now, but to also inspire future generations who will continue to preserve and build upon the legacy that each of our cultures has contributed,” noted Nasser J. Kazeminy, Chairman of NECO. “With our Medalists, we will see America at its best. We will see every color, every race from so many walks of life – together – celebrating the magic that is America. Our Medalists’ influence and achievements truly inspire and touch the lives of people everywhere.”

Past Ellis Island Medal of Honor recipients include six Presidents of the United States, Nobel Prize winners, athletes, and leaders of industry, artists and others whose work has made a lasting impact on humanity. To date, more than 1,800 American citizens have received Ellis Island Medals of Honor.

Posted on May 1, 2012



Executive Vice President and Provost Dr. Leonard Ferrari, left, and Global Public Policy Academic Group Chair of Systemic Strategy and Complexity Navy Capt. Wayne Porter, right, are both 2012 recipients of the prestigious Ellis Island Medal of Honor.