

## Special Award



SALTISE IS PROUD TO ANNOUNCE THIS YEAR'S RECIPIENT OF OUR SPECIAL AWARD FOR EXCEPTIONAL CONTRIBUTIONS TOWARD OUR COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE.

The **2016 Pedagogical Innovation and Lifetime of Contribution Award** is presented to **PROFESSOR KENNETH J. RAGAN**.

Kenneth J. Ragan is a Professor at McGill University's Physics Department where he holds the William C. Macdonald Chair in Physics. His physics research centers on gamma-ray astrophysics and includes collaborations with the Fred Lawrence Whipple Observatory of the SAO (Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory) and the VERITAS (Very Energetic Radiation Imaging Telescope Array System) project. Professor Ragan's interest also extends to the development of pedagogical approaches for his undergraduate physics courses, notably: PHYS 101 (An Introduction to Mechanics for the Life Sciences) and; PHYS 131 (Mechanics and Waves). Enrollment for the Mechanics course often reaches over 600 students. Professor Ragan has been engaged in making large enrolment courses more successful by adopting active learning strategies such as peer-instruction. He has been the recipient of several prestigious teaching awards: In 2007 he was awarded the J.D.

Jackson Award of Excellence in Teaching (McGill's Department of Physics); in 2011 the Faculty of Science's Leo Yaffe Award for Excellence in Teaching; and in 2013 the Principal's Prize for Excellence in Teaching. In addition, Professor Ragan gave the keynote address at the 2009 McGill Workshop on "Learning to Teach", hosted by the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (GPS) and Teaching and Learning Services (TLS).

Professor Ragan's contribution to the SALTISE community predates the creation of a formal community. His participation on the Chantier 3\* grant that launched SALTISE in 2011 was an essential element to its successful start, and he has been an active member on the SALTISE Executive Committee since. His openness to work collaboratively with the Education faculty and Learning Sciences researchers from the college-level has been critical in helping our Community gain credibility among university faculty. Professor Ragan has been a role model exemplifying how university and college faculty can work towards the common goal of improved pedagogical implementations.

Ken's keen intellect, open-mindedness and strategic planning are important talents which he has brought to SALTISE community. It has been a true pleasure to work with him over the last five years and we greatly value his continued enthusiasm and participation. Ken's colleagues, former students and members of McGill's Teaching and Learning Services have sent messages in support of our selection. We are pleased to showcase some quotes:

Peter Grutter, Chair of the Physics Department, McGill

*Ken Ragan brings a scholarly, evidence-based scientific approach to teaching by systematically implementing and critically analyzing classroom innovations. As an excellent teacher of many different courses he is able to validate and transform these scholarly insights into practice, thereby exiting and deeply influencing thousands of students, from undergraduates to graduate students.*

Laura Winer, Director Teaching & Learning Services (TLS), McGill

*Ken brings to all he does the skepticism of a scientist and the energy of a hockey player. He is always actively looking for new approaches to teach his 600+ first year courses, and is committed to finding ways to engage and interact with all his students... As this award recognizes, Ken contributes to the broader teaching community; he is unfailingly generous in sharing his experiences with colleagues across disciplines and across institutions.*

Jonathan Guillimette, former student and TA, currently instructor in Physics at John Abbott College

*As his TA, Ken always gave me plenty of room to experiment with new activities or teaching methods during the tutorials or labs of his very large classes. His open attitude towards grad students testing out what they thought might work better for the students made being his TA a truly instructive experience... I also got to know Ken much better through T-PULSE (Tomlison Project in University Level Science Education) and it is with this collaboration that I felt his desire to help change things and answer questions about students transpired the most.*

\* Program: Projet Interordre – Programme de collaboration universités – collèges (Chantier 3)

Project Title: L'appel à la technologie et à l'innovation pour parfaire l'enseignement des sciences