

# PAUL RICHARDSON RECOGNIZED AS REEI DISTINGUISHED ALUMNUS



*Paul Richardson, third from the right with award in hand, with members of the REEI Executive Committee (left to right) Russell Valentino (College of Arts and Sciences/Slavic), Jeff Isaac (Political Science), Sarah Phillips (REEI/Anthropology), Kathleen Evans (Language Workshop), Elliott Nowacky (REEI), Mark Trotter (REEI) at the IU Alumni Reception, ASEES Annual Convention in Boston, Dec. 2018.*

During the IU Alumni Reception, held on December 7, 2018 at the ASEES Annual Convention in Boston, Paul Richardson was presented with the REEI Distinguished Alumnus Award, an honor that celebrates alumni of the Institute who have made exceptional contributions to academia, public service, education, outreach, and other fields by drawing on their expertise in the Russian and East European region. Former recipients include Alexander Rabinowitch, Charles Gati, Gale Stokes, Helena Gosילו, Howard I Aronson, William Hopkins, Donald Raleigh, Stephen F Cohen, and Victor Jackovich.

In the formal presentation, REEI Director Sarah Phillips noted that the award recognizes Richardson's achievements in providing English readers with nuanced, multifaceted, and engaging perspectives on Russian life; his example as an IU Russian and East European Institute alumnus who has drawn upon his training in

Russian area studies to pursue a stimulating and successful career in the business and publishing worlds; and his exceptional contributions to educational and cultural diplomacy.

A writer, translator, editor, and publisher, Richardson received an MA in Political Science at Indiana in 1986 and a Russian Area Studies Certificate in 1988. He was co-founder with David F. Kelley of the Russian Information Services, which in 1993 began to publish *Russian Life*, a bi-monthly non-ideological successor to the journal *Soviet Life*. Devoted to coverage of the world's largest country, *Russian Life* encompasses articles on culture, history, travel, and society for a broad audience by a host of Russian, American, and other contributors from academia, journalism, and other walks of life. In 2008 and 2009, Richardson moved RIS in new directions by launching a new quarterly journal, *Chtenia: Readings from Russia*, and expanding its portfolio of publications to include fiction in book format. The first title, *Life Stories*, contained original works of fiction by 19 of Russia's leading writers, with all proceeds going to benefit Russian hospice care. RIS has continued to publish books that provide readers with translations of high-quality contemporary and classic Russian fiction and non-fiction, as well as works on Russia by non-Russian authors. In the fall of 2015, Richardson and Russian journalist Mikhail Mordasov traveled 6,000 kilometers on a "Spine of Russia" project that resulted in two multi-media RIS publications offering vivid portraits of modern Russian life. In 2017, RIS launched another project, "Resilience," or "The Children of 1917," for which Richardson and Mordasov were joined by Nadezhda Grebennikova. The three collaborators travelled throughout Russia, Poland, Belarus, and Finland to interview centenarians born in 1917. The resulting book, *Resilience*, was published in early 2018, shortly after release of the identically-titled 25-minute documentary film, which debuted on November 7, 2017 and was screened at the ASEES Annual Convention in Boston on December 6, 2018 with introduction and commentary provided by Richardson.

"My graduate education through REEI laid the foundation for everything I have done in my professional life," remarked Richardson upon receiving the award. "It was my gateway to learning the Russian I needed to survive on the ground and in business; it enlightened me on the historical and cultural touchpoints that were vital to understanding what I was seeing; and it urged an inter-disciplinary approach that has influenced everything we have published in and around *Russian Life* magazine for the past 25 years. I can't thank IU, REEI and the summer language workshops enough for all that they gave me."