

# Ilari Hetemäki

THE PRO SCIENTIA PRIZE is awarded to a person or instance exercising notable influence through spoken or written words or some other activity on behalf of the status of science within society at large. Accordingly, it was decided that the 2019 prize should be presented to a person who for a long time has been responsible for the publicizing of scientific activities and results and for creating the necessary channels for doing this, but whose work has not necessarily been widely recognized.

"I have had two careers. I have moved over from the world of publishing to the popularization of science – from a gatekeeper to a carrier of information."

Ilari Hetemäki, M.Phil., has been the head of communications for the Federation of Finnish Learned Societies since 2007. He is also working as secretary-general for the science festival Tieteen päivät ("Science Forum") and editor-in-chief of the journal *Tieteessä tapahtuu* ("Science now"). Science Forum is large-scale event covering all branches of science and aimed at attracting

members of the general public, the most recent of which, held in 2019, had an attendance of about 18 000 persons. Likewise, the journal "*Tieteessä tapahtuu*" aims to cover a wide variety of scientific fields in the form of up-to-date articles and discussions of scientific investigation and science policy. Hetemäki also acts every second year as the secretary of the jury for the Scientific Book of the Year award.

"I have always been working close to science, but for more than ten years now I have been right on the edge of the scientific community, or inside it – depending on how you look at it. I have been trying all the time to keep up discussion within the scientific community through the medium of '*Tieteessä tapahtuu*' and to draw the attention of the general public to these things through the Science Forum and other such events."

Having worked as an editor and a chief editor for publishing companies for more than 20 years prior to taking up his communications position with the Federation

*Ilari Hetemäki has been involved in the creation of various means of presenting science to the general public*



of Finnish Learned Societies, Hetemäki has edited dozens of nonfiction books and encyclopedias. He has also been chairman of the Finnish association of publishers' editors and vice-chairman of the professional training committee of the Union of Journalists in Finland.

He has similarly been involved in the creation of various means of presenting science to the general public. In 2007 he was one of the founders of TIETOKIRJA.FI, a two-day festival of nonfiction literature arranged every second year, which also takes to the road annually to hold various discussion sessions and evaluations of nonfiction books at book fairs and on other occasions throughout the country. This is an event that interests those working with nonfiction and scientific literature and unites them with the general public.

"For me, the communication of scientific ideas and findings is about hosting different encounters and places. I have been able to achieve innovations in this field together with many other instances, such as

the series of Science Forum books together with the Gaudeamus publisher and participation in creating the Science TV YouTube channel, which contains videos from a number of Science Forums. I have also been engaged in planning the Science in the City events, in which the platform for communicating scientific information has been a tram or a shopping centre or a local radio station. I have also witnessed the expansion of the 'Night of the Sciences' from its local beginnings in Kruununhaka area of Helsinki into a real city event."

Hetemäki also played a part in founding the stage "Science Market Place" at the Helsinki Book Fair in 2013, the idea of which is to pave the way for Book Fair visitors into the world of science and scientific publications and at the same time to provide a platform for scientists themselves. At present he is a member of the programme committee for the Helsinki Book Fair and has previously been on the main organizing committee of the Turku Book Fair.

Given that the aim of the Pro Scientia Prize is to focus the attention on the valuable work that is being done on behalf of science but away from the public eye, Ilari Hetemäki, head of communications for the Federation of Finnish Learned Societies, is an excellent example of a person who is actively promoting science for the benefit of society as a whole.

"We need new concepts to govern our interaction: we should be asking, 'How can I know this?' and should be ready to explain how it is possible to find out about black holes, for instance, or what the city of Turku was like in the Middle Ages. We should be speaking out about science. Science communication make up an important part of the scientific community."

*Pro Scientia Prize, awarded for the first time in 2017, is intended as a form of recognition for a person or instance exercising notable influence through spoken or written words or some other activity on behalf of the status of science within society at large.*

*Photo:  
Federation of Finnish Learned Societies*