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Signing Off

Annenberg dean leaves post to pursue life in academia

By EILEEN CHANG

After 25 years of serving as the head of the Annenberg School of Communications, George Gerbner has decided to end his term as dean and return to teaching and research.

Gerbner, who has announced that he will leave the position no later than

the spring semester of 1988, will continue to teach and work on a number of projects, including a joint study with the Moscow State University School of Journalism on American and Soviet television.

"I want to increase, not decrease, my involvement in academic life," Gerbner said this week. "I want to direct my energies in a direction where

Profile

I can make my best contribution."

Gerbner was born in Hungary and immigrated to the United States in 1939. He received his B.A. in journalism from the University of California at Berkeley and his Ph.D from the University of Southern California. He spent several years teaching at the University of Illinois Institute for Communications Research before accepting the post of Annenberg School Dean in 1964.

Gerbner has had many accomplishments during his 25 years as dean, and is one of the country's leading scholars in the field of communications.

Noted among his achievements is founding the *Journal of Communications*, the leading publication in the

(Continued on page 4)



GEORGE GERBNER

'Increase academic involvement'

Annenberg dean to step down by 1988

(Continued from page 1)

communications field — which he will continue to co-edit.

Gerbner also conceived of the World Communications Encyclopedia — a five-volume collaborative effort between the University and the Oxford University Press that will be published in 1988. According to Gerbner, the encyclopedias will be "a scholarly resource" for those involved in the field of communications.

The Annenberg School has developed national influence under Gerbner, notably through his founding work with the Washington Program for Communications Policy Studies in Washington D.C.

Reflecting on his career as dean, Gerbner said that he feels "there is no one most important thing" that he has done for the Annenberg School. Rather, he said his position has been "most rewarding" in many aspects.

"One of my greatest rewards as dean was the assembling of a small but very powerful and dedicated

faculty who are dedicated to leading the study of communications into a constructive direction both nationally and internationally," Gerbner said. "Also rewarding was my ability to share in that leadership and be able to define communications as an academic discipline that is important to culture and human life."

Emeritus Professor of Communications Robert Shayon said last night that Gerbner's work has made a lasting impact at the Annenberg School.

"He's worked very hard and has given the school extraordinary visibility," Shayon said. "He has made an important contribution in the field of communications."

Gerbner said that he is proud to have his family involved in the University. One of his sons is an architect who graduated from the School of Architecture and the other son is a Ph.D candidate in the psychology division of the Graduate School of Education. His wife is the director of the Theater Arts Lab.

"I'm very proud that my sons came to Penn," Gerbner said. "I think my family involvement speaks well of the University as an environment in which to work."

As for the future of the Annenberg School, Gerbner said that he believes the school is moving in a positive direction and should continue along this path.

"The direction in which the Annenberg School is going should be continued because it is very productive in careers and contributions from its graduates," he explained.

Gerbner credits many people in the success of his career as dean.

"I could not have accomplished anything without the support of my family, especially my wife," he said. "Also supportive were the trustees of the Annenberg School and several administrations of past years along with the current administration with President Hackney and Provost Ehrlich. I am lucky to have all of this support. It has helped a great deal."