

Bob Cronin honoured with Walkley Award for Journalism Leadership

5 December 2014 -- West Australian Newspapers group editor-in-chief Bob Cronin has been honoured with a Walkley award for journalism leadership.

Lauded as a champion of free speech and press freedom and a strong leader who inspired great loyalty, Cronin was presented with his award in Sydney last night by Kerry Stokes, chairman of Seven West Media, publisher of The West Australian.

Mr Stokes said the award reflected a lifetime of service in newsrooms across the country, as well as overseas.

In a special video presentation, Laurie Oakes said Cronin was steadfast in support of his reporters when they “ruffle the feathers of the powerful” and “ferocious in defence of press freedom.”

In this regard Cronin has spoken against government regulation of the media, and stood with journalist Steve Pennells, of The West Australian, against legal moves to force him to reveal his sources for articles about Gina Rinehart.

Cronin began his career as a cadet on the Brisbane Courier-Mail in 1960 and worked his way through the ranks at several newspapers before being appointed editor of the Border Mail in Albury in 1974, where he remained until 1982. He was editor of The Sun in Melbourne 1985-1986 and moved to WA in 1987 to establish Robert Holmes a Court's fledgling media empire, which put him in charge of The Western Mail and Albany Advertiser. Later that year he took charge of The West Australian as editor-in-chief of WA Newspapers, where he remained until 1996. After a stint as general manager of the Shanghai Daily Press, he returned to WA Newspapers as editor-in-chief in 2008.

Cronin has also played a significant role in the wider media community as a member of the Australian Press Council from 1987-1996, a founding director of information radio in Perth, a member of the Council of Celebrate WA and an SBS board member. In 2011 Cronin was appointed a Member in the general division of the Order of Australia for services to print media, journalism and the community.

Cronin said last night that to receive the Walkley was humbling experience and a great honour. He said his recipe for leadership was to surround himself with wonderfully talented and passionate people, to allow them to do their work and “they make you look good.”