

Gary Orren

V.O. Key, Jr. Professor of Politics and Leadership, Harvard University

Gary Orren is the V.O. Key, Jr. Professor of Politics and Leadership at Harvard University where he has taught for the past 46 years. He also has taught frequently at Oxford University in England and the University of Switzerland.

A leading expert on public opinion, politics, and persuasion, his books include: *Equality in America: The View from the Top*; *The Electronic Commonwealth: The Impact of New Media Technologies on Democratic Politics*; *Media Polls in American Politics*; and *Media and Momentum: The New Hampshire Primary and Nomination Politics*.

He serves as a consultant on strategy and communications to corporations, government agencies, and non-profit organizations throughout the world. Over the years, Professor Orren also has conducted and analyzed opinion polls for many clients, including the *Washington Post*, the *Boston Globe*, and the *New York Times*. At the *Times* he played a leading role in the creation of the first national news media poll, the *New York Times/CBS News Poll*.

A self-confessed “political junkie,” he has worked as a political adviser in local, state, and national election campaigns in the U.S. and other countries. He served on the national political party commissions that drafted the rules for the U.S. presidential nomination process, and has assisted ABC television news as an expert analyst in its coverage of election night results.

Professor Orren is a popular lecturer and public speaker. Currently, his lectures and talks (like his research and writing) are devoted to the subject of persuasion. An intensive seminar on “The Science and Art of Persuasion” which he delivers to executives and leaders from the private, public, and non-profit sectors has won high praise from audiences in the U.S. and abroad.

Born and raised in Kansas City, Missouri, Gary Orren graduated *summa cum laude* with high honors in Government from Oberlin College. With financial support from the Danforth Foundation and the Woodrow Wilson Foundation, he continued his studies at Harvard University where he received a Ph.D. in Political Science. While studying at Harvard, he was awarded the Frederick Sheldon Fellowship and the Toppan Prize for best dissertation in political science.

On leave from Harvard, he worked for three years at City Year, the premier youth service program in the U.S., first leading a team of young people in full-time community service, and then serving as Director of National Policy and Planning. For 10 years he also served on City Year's National Board of Trustees, helping to expand the program throughout the U.S. and internationally.

An avid baseball fan, he and his son are completing a 25-year odyssey visiting every Major League baseball park. In his free time, Gary enjoys string instruments—playing some (violin, guitar, banjo, and ukulele) and playing *with* others (a tennis racket).

His late wife Merle, a neuro-psychologist who specialized in the rehabilitation of brain-injured patients, died in 2011. His current wife, Effie, holds a doctorate in nursing practice and works at the Veterans Hospital in Boston. They have four grown children and two grandchildren.