



For Immediate Release

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**USC ANNENBERG ANNOUNCES WINNERS OF THE WALTER CRONKITE
AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN TELEVISION POLITICAL JOURNALISM**

*Television journalists from national, local, public and cable networks honored for
innovative, issue-based coverage of the 2004 campaign*

LOS ANGELES, March 9, 2005 – Proving that good political coverage can make great television, the USC Annenberg School for Communication today announced the winners of the **USC Annenberg Walter Cronkite Award for Excellence in Television Political Journalism**.

The winners of the 2005 USC Annenberg Walter Cronkite Award for Excellence in Television Political Journalism are:

Station Group:

- **Hearst-Argyle Television.** Hearst-Argyle Television won its third consecutive Cronkite Award for “its real commitment to political coverage when so many other station groups avoid that coverage altogether,” wrote the judges, who added, “Hearst-Argyle not only gave time to issues but made sure that reporters gave those issues substance and explained them clearly to viewers.”

Broadcast Network:

- **NBC News’ “Meet the Press.”** Winning its third consecutive Cronkite Award, “Meet the Press” was honored for Tim Russert’s “hard-hitting, well-researched interview with President Bush.” Judges described the interview as a strong piece of issue-oriented journalism.

Local Station, Large Market (three winners)

- **WCVB, Boston.** WCVB was honored for its candidate-oriented reporting and its effort to cover issues important to its hometown audience. The coverage was “thoughtful, well-written and issue-based.” WCVB was also a 2001 winner.
- **WFAA, Dallas.** WFAA won a second consecutive Cronkite Award for its “continuing commitment to expose political issues and candidates to viewers.” WFAA covered both the local and national aspects of the 2004 races, and it created a unique partnership with another station in the market to provide free air time for candidates.

- **WFLA, Tampa, Fla.** WFLA won its second Cronkite Award for “the impressive amount of resources it committed to election coverage,” wrote the judges. The station provided “substantial reporting on local issues, most notably the U.S. Senate race in Florida” and “great reporting techniques and enterprise journalism evident in stories on felon voting lists.”

Local Station, Medium Market

- **Wisconsin Public Television.** Wisconsin Public Television won its second consecutive Cronkite Award for “demonstrating its thorough knowledge of the candidates, the state and the issues.” The station’s “Reality Checks” adwatch series, its “Where in Wisconsin” issue series and its debate coverage indicate “the depth of its commitment to political coverage.”

Local Station, Small Market

- **KYTV, Springfield, Mo.** KYTV won for the “quality and depth of its reporting, rarely seen in even much larger market stations.” The station’s “commitment to informing voters is demonstrated in lengthy, carefully balanced pieces that display a willingness to travel and dig to get the story,” wrote the judges.

Local Cable News Station

- **6News, Lawrence, Kan.** With the resources of a station that reaches approximately 30,000 homes, 6News produced “compelling, candidate-oriented political coverage that informed its voters about local, hot-button issues,” judges wrote. “6News proved that resources do not need to be an obstacle to well-produced political coverage.”

Individual Achievement (three winners)

- **Robert Mak** (reporter) and **Mike Cate** (producer), **KING-TV, Seattle.** Mak and Cate won their second Cronkite Award for “thorough and balanced coverage, good writing, and excellent reporting and producing.”
- **Katie Moore, KOAA-TV, Colorado Springs, Colo.** Moore was honored for “her wide breadth of reporting, including in-depth candidate profiles, a two-part series on religion and politics, and Truth Checks.”
- **Randy Shandobil, KTVU-TV, Oakland, Calif.** Shandobil won his second Cronkite Award for “solid writing and bold coverage.” Judges were impressed by “his well-researched, issue-based stories and his ability to make complex issues easy to understand.”

Offering praise for the winners, legendary broadcast journalist **Walter Cronkite** underscored the importance of good political journalism to our society.

“At a time when the legitimacy of journalism is under attack, and when economic pressures threaten quality and reward sensationalism, it is heartening to me that there are

broadcasters around the country who remain committed to getting it right, making it compelling and serving the public interest,” said Cronkite. “There is no better way to strengthen American democracy than to help citizens understand what is at stake in political campaigns.”

Judges evaluated entries for work covering the 2004 elections. They gave special consideration to innovative, issue-focused reporting that informed viewers about their electoral choices, and that helped them understand ballot issues, the candidates involved, and how electoral choices will affect their lives.

The distinguished panel of judges included **Geoffrey Cowan**, dean, USC Annenberg School for Communication; **Patricia Dean**, associate director, USC Annenberg's School of Journalism; **Nancy Platt Jacoby**, veteran television news producer; **Judy Muller**, journalism professor, ABC News correspondent and NPR commentator; **Adam Clayton Powell III**, former radio and television news producer and executive; **Heidi Schulman**, former network news correspondent and producer; and veteran broadcast journalist **Sander Vanocur**.

Cowan underscored the School's commitment to honoring and supporting journalism at all levels.

“The judges were especially impressed by the winners' commitment to covering local campaigns,” said Cowan. “In a year when the Presidential race dominated national and local news, it's great to be able to shine a spotlight on reporters, producers and stations that put a priority on local races and local issues.”

In September 2005, USC Annenberg's Western Knight Center for Specialized Journalism will convene a special symposium on political journalism featuring the Cronkite Award winners.

The biennial Awards have been administered since 2000 by USC Annenberg's Norman Lear Center.

About the USC Annenberg School for Communication

The USC Annenberg School for Communication, annenberg.usc.edu, is one of the nation's leading institutions devoted to the study of communication and journalism; their impact on politics, culture and society; and the preparation of students for professional success in these fields.

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