

Scripps Howard Foundation recognizes excellence in journalism with 64th Scripps Howard Awards

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CINCINNATI — This year, its 64th, the Scripps Howard Awards will recognize an investigation that revealed a national problem of sexual abuse cases involving doctors; photos that captured the horrifying reality of government-directed killings in the Philippines; and breaking news coverage by a California newspaper when fire ripped through a warehouse, killing dozens.

The Scripps Howard Awards celebrate excellence in journalism during 2016 in 17 categories, with prize money totaling \$180,000. The winning journalists and news outlets demonstrated courage, resourcefulness and ingenuity. They told stories that resulted in lasting impact. Their work enacted new laws, ended waste and deceptive government practices, and saved lives.

“Recognizing the best journalism in the country is a fundamental mission of Scripps Howard Foundation,” said Liz Carter, president and CEO of the foundation. “We, along with the judges, were impressed with the quality of journalism in submissions from the smallest of hometown newspapers to newer digital media brands to the traditional powerhouses whose investigations extend to global audiences. We commend the work these journalists did in 2016 and the impact their words, videos and interactive elements will continue to have across our communities. They embody our motto of giving light and changing lives.”

2016 Scripps Howard Award Winners:

Investigative Reporting, Ursula and Gilbert Farfel Prize — \$20,000 **“Doctors & Sex Abuse” — Atlanta Journal-Constitution**

Upon discovering that in two-thirds of sexual abuse cases, Georgia doctors were allowed to keep their medical licenses, the Atlanta Journal-Constitution set forth on an investigation into tolerance of sexual abuse by physicians nationwide. Stories of abuse had remained untold in part because the nation’s 64 state medical boards do not keep databases of disciplined doctors. The only national accounting of physician discipline is, by law, anonymous to the public.

Determined to find a way around the barriers of controlled medical board documents, the newspaper wrote computer programs to collect 100,000 disciplinary documents representing every state. The series is sparking changes at state medical boards and in state legislatures.

Finalists: “Unsafe at Any Level” by M.B. Pell and Joshua Schneyer with Reuters and “Wounded Warriors” by Chip Reid, Jennifer Janisch, Len Tepper and Heather Abbott with CBS News

Topic of the Year — \$10,000

Alec MacGillis — “The Breakdown,” ProPublica

The Topic of the Year category was the 2016 presidential election. Alec MacGillis spent 2016 visiting the heartland, measuring the mounting wave of discontent, frustration and anger. With this background on the sentiment toward Donald Trump, it took just hours for MacGillis to pound out a

post-election piece of deeply reported analysis – “Revenge of the Forgotten Class.” The story capped a year of reporting on the changes underlying the political season.

Finalists: “Electorate Issue” by Bloomberg Businessweek and “The Choice 2016” by Michael Kirk, Mike Wiser, Philip Bennett, Jim Gilmore and Gabrielle Schonder with Frontline/WGBH

Public Service Reporting, Roy W. Howard Award — \$10,000
“Special Education Denied” — Houston Chronicle

To offset its financial deficit, the Texas Education Agency set an unprecedented – and secretive – benchmark that its school districts should have no more than 8.5 percent of students in special education. Until the Houston Chronicle launched “Special Education Denied,” no one outside a tight circle of state officials and school administrators even knew the decree existed. The paper assembled and analyzed millions of lines of data that showed Texas’ special education enrollments were the lowest in America by far and interviewed more than 800 people about their experiences. The series sparked action by the U.S. Department of Education to order the state to eliminate the benchmark and provide the proper education.

Finalists: “Beyond Homelessness” by San Francisco Chronicle and “Mississippi Child Care Crisis” by Jackie Mader and Sarah Butrymowicz with The Hechinger Report

Photojournalism — \$10,000
Daniel Berehulak — The New York Times

Over 35 days, Daniel Berehulak documented 41 crime scenes with 57 fatalities in the Philippines – evidence of the president’s promise to rid the country of drug addicts and dealers. Berehulak unearthed back stories, contradicted police accounts, cataloged crowded jails and witnessed wrenching funeral scenes. His photos and reports were viewed nearly 3 million times in multiple languages and is credited as a factor in the United States’ decision to defer financial aid to the Philippines.

Opinion, Walker Stone Award — \$10,000
Stephen Henderson — Detroit Free Press

Stephen Henderson brought weighty perspective to 2016’s major issues through the lens of historical narratives – American, racial, literary and his own. He fashioned powerful arguments about issues that ranged from the presidential election to police shootings of black citizens to the water crisis in Flint, Michigan. He excavated connections between personal and public histories as he began work to revitalize the Detroit neighborhood where he was born and raised.

Finalists: “California Coast” by Steve Lopez with Los Angeles Times and editorials by Marie C. Dillon with Chicago Tribune

Environmental Reporting, Edward J. Meeman Award — \$10,000
Rob Davis — “Toxic Armories” The Oregonian/OregonLive

Although a military audit 20 years ago warned that indoor firing ranges exposed soldiers and the public to lead dust, it was not until Rob Davis raised questions about lead levels in National Guard armories that the military took action. Davis devoted 18 months to investigating the dangers of unsafe lead levels inside National Guard armories still in use by the military and the public. He filed 100 public record requests and obtained 23,000 pages of inspection reports. He discovered the military had failed to properly ventilate and clean indoor gun ranges at the armories. After the publication, the Guard closed every one of its toxic U.S. armories to the public.

Finalists: “Killed for a Horn” by Nelufar Hedayat with Univision and Fusion and “Mobile Power, Human Toll” by Peter Whoriskey, Todd C. Frankel, Michael Robinson Chavez and Jorge Ribas with The Washington Post

Business/Economics Reporting, William Brewster Styles Award — \$10,000

“The Panama Papers” — The Center for Public Integrity, McClatchy and the Miami Herald

Journalists from nearly 80 countries speaking dozens of languages joined forces to delve into 11.5 million files, 214,000 offshore entities and almost 40 years of records, collectively known as “The Panama Papers.” The trove of leaked documents came from a Panama-headquartered law firm that establishes offshore accounts for its clients. It exposed offshore hideaways tied to mega-banks, corporate bribery scandals, drug kingpins, arms traffickers and a network of people close to Russian President Vladimir Putin that shuffled as much as \$2 billion around the world. Since the investigation, governments and corporations in 79 countries have opened at least 150 inquiries, audits or investigations.

Finalists: “Amazon, Customers’ Race” by David Ingold and Spencer Soper with Bloomberg Businessweek and “Infuse” by Joe Carlson, Jim Spencer and MaryJo Webster with Star Tribune (Minneapolis)

Breaking News — \$10,000

“Oakland’s Ghost Ship Fire” — East Bay Times – \$10,000

Less than four hours after inquiring into a warehouse fire, the East Bay Times began piecing together the causes behind what would become the deadliest fire in Oakland’s history. The newspaper uncovered fire code violations, no permit for residency in the structure and problems that impeded firefighters’ access during the fire. As hours unfolded, the Times dedicated a team solely to telling the stories of the 36 victims killed inside the Ghost Ship warehouse. The newspaper brought the entire tragedy into focus a week later with harrowing stories of those who made it out and those who tried to help, what was lost and what led to the tragedy.

Finalists: “Death of Jose Fernandez” by Miami Herald and “Orlando Nightclub Shooting” by Ari Shapiro, Jinae West, Renita Jablonski, Melissa Gray with NPR

Community Journalism — \$10,000

Gregory Pratt — “Lincoln-Way Investigation” Daily Southtown

When a prominent and affluent school district, Lincoln-Way, shuttered a new school, Gregory Pratt launched a probe that led to 56 stories and investigations by a federal grand jury and the Securities and Exchange Commission. Pratt used the Illinois Freedom of Information Act to file more than 100 requests for invoice documents, disciplinary records, account fund histories – anything that would shed light on the situation. His reporting unearthed \$40 million in insider deals, waste and deceptive budgeting practices. It uncovered a toxic political culture enabled by a rubber-stamping school board and lax oversight in a state known for public corruption and imprisoned governors.

Finalist: “Free to Flee” by Jacob Carpenter with Naples Daily News

Distinguished Service to First Amendment, Edward Willis Scripps Award — \$10,000

Eric Eyre — “Painkiller Profiteers” Charleston Gazette-Mail (West Virginia)

Eric Eyre and this 37,000-circulation West Virginia newspaper fought to save the local citizens from the epidemic of prescription painkillers that made it the state with the highest drug-overdose rate in the nation. The team went to court to unseal records, reviewed unenforced state pharmacy

regulations, tabulated startling statistics and compiled compelling individual stories to reveal an astonishingly large influx of prescription into the small town. Armed with Eyre's stories, seven counties, two cities and one town quickly sued wholesalers to recover damages for addiction treatment costs. The State Board of Pharmacy voted to enforce laws that had been on the books – but ignored – since 2001.

Finalists: “Dangers of Government Secrets” by J. David McSwane with The Dallas Morning News and “FOIA Battles” by Daily Press (Newport News, Virginia)

Human Interest Storytelling, Ernie Pyle Award — \$10,000
Lane DeGregory — Tampa Bay Times

Lane DeGregory tells the stories of the unheralded and unknown. Two of her noteworthy 2016 pieces focused on death. For one, she spent months in the cramped living room of a terminally ill man who had planned to take his life when he became a burden to his wife. The other delved into the death of a 5-year-old girl thrown from a bridge by her own father. DeGregory convinced dozens of people to recount, in excruciating detail, the warning signs they had observed. The intimate interviews and recounting of the child's last days left readers wondering what they would do if they saw a child spiraling into danger.

Finalists: “Trapped in a Dying Body” by Melissa Fletcher Stoeltje with San Antonio Express-News and “Long Walk Home From War” by John Luciew and Joe Hermit with PennLive/Patriot-News (Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania)

Digital Innovation — \$10,000
“Machine Bias” — ProPublica

“Machine Bias” delved into whether algorithms discriminate against some groups and favor others, pulling back the curtain on everything from digital profiling to variable pricing to machine learning. ProPublica used deep data analysis and worked with experts to effectively reverse engineer algorithms. It involved readers to crowdsource crucial data and fuel reporting. And it used dogged reporting, knocking on doors in multiple states. The crowdsourcing effort resulted in the discovery that Facebook was allowing advertisers to exclude people by race. Federal officials expressed “significant concern,” and Facebook soon rewrote its policies.

Finalists: “Red Feed, Blue Feed” by Jon Keegan of The Wall Street Journal and “Make It Stop” by the editorial staff of The Boston Globe

Radio In-Depth Coverage, Jack R. Howard — \$10,000
“Flint Water Crisis” — Michigan Radio

After other news organizations moved on, Michigan Radio continued to pursue the problem of unsafe drinking water in Flint, Michigan. The entire newsroom covered the story from all angles: political, environmental, legal and social justice. In 2016, the station produced more than 500 radio stories and web articles about the Flint water crisis. It resulted in the governor admitting there is a problem with the town's drinking water. Numerous state and local officials have since been charged with felony-level crimes.

Finalists: “The Man Inside: Four Months as a Prison Guard” by Mother Jones, The Center for Investigative Reporting, and “Strange Death of José de Jesús” by Marlon Bishop, Fernanda Echávarri and Maria Hinojosa with Futuro Media Group

TV/Cable In-Depth National, International Coverage, Jack R. Howard Award — \$10,000
“ISIS Fighters” — Fusion, Vytenis Didziulis, Catalina Gómez Ángel, Mikhail Galustov and Keith Summa

Fusion ventured into Syria, the deadliest country in the world for journalists, to follow several Western volunteers embedded with Kurdish militia as they uncovered the brutality of life under ISIS. Among its revelations: underground prisons ISIS used to jail Yazidis, a Kurdish religious community on the verge of extinction; sanctioning of the indiscriminate killing of Yazidis; and kidnapping of women and girls to sell as sex slaves. The film received a half-million views online, making it Fusion’s highest-viewed show in 2016. It alerted policy makers to the present dangers for those who travel to Syria to fight ISIS.

Finalists: “New Colombia” by Lara Logan, Alan B. Goldberg, Timothy Costa and Joe Schanzer with CBS News and “Death by Fentanyl” by Keith Summa with Univision and Fusion

TV/Cable In-Depth Local Coverage, Jack R. Howard Award — \$10,000
“Medical Waste” — WVUE-TV New Orleans, Lee Zurik, Jon Turnipseed, Tom Wright and Greg Phillips

As WVUE began looking into the rising costs of prescription drugs, a pharmacist’s insights revealed insurance companies’ secretive practices of charging patients more for prescription drugs – and then pocketing the difference. The practice, known as “clawbacks,” often caused consumers to pay more for prescription medications when using insurance than if they had purchased it outright. Contractually, insurance companies had forbidden pharmacists from telling customers they could save money by not using their insurance. The story led to 11 lawsuits and to legislation empowering pharmacists to tell customers they could save money by not using their co-pay. United Healthcare, one of the nation’s largest drug insurers and the main target of this investigation, announced it would stop the practice of overcharging customers.

Finalists: “Verify Road Trip” by Chance Horner, Alexander Krueger and David Schechter with WFAA-TV (Dallas) and “Cash for Compliance?” by Dave Biscobing, Shawn Martin and Gerard Watson with KNXV-TV (Phoenix)

Scripps Howard Foundation also recognizes excellence at the collegiate level for both journalism administration and teaching. The Foundation awards \$10,000 for each of these honorees and will recognize their contributions at an event later this year.

Administrator of the Year — \$10,000
Maryanne Reed — Dean, Professor, Reed College of Media, West Virginia University

Teacher of the Year — \$10,000
Allan Richards — Associate Professor, School of Journalism and Mass Communication, Florida International University

The Scripps Howard Awards event is April 12 in Cincinnati at The Aronoff Center for the Arts in the Jarson-Kaplan Theater from 7-8:30 p.m. Eastern. This year’s Scripps Howard Awards will be a stage show. The Foundation, in partnership with WCPO 9 On Your Side, the ABC affiliate in Cincinnati owned by The E.W. Scripps Company, will live-stream the event through [Facebook](#) and on [WCPO.com](#). At the event, winners will receive a trophy along with their prize money.

Also that evening, Scripps Howard Foundation, The Greater Cincinnati Foundation, Duke Energy Foundation and WCPO 9 On Your Side will announce the winner of the \$100,000 literacy grant for

one Greater Cincinnati nonprofit. The remaining two organizations, in competition for the grant, will each receive \$25,000 to support literacy initiatives.

About the Foundation

Dedicated to excellence in journalism, the [Scripps Howard Foundation](#) educates, empowers and honors extraordinary journalists who illuminate community issues, and partners with impactful organizations to drive change and improve lives. As the philanthropic arm of The E.W. Scripps Company, the Foundation is a leader in industry efforts in journalism education, scholarships, internships, minority recruitment and development, literacy and First Amendment causes. With a special commitment to the regions where Scripps does business, the Foundation helps build thriving communities.

About Scripps

[The E.W. Scripps Company](#) (NYSE: SSP) serves audiences and businesses through a growing portfolio of television, radio and digital media brands. Scripps is one of the nation's largest independent TV station owners, with 33 television stations in 24 markets and a reach of nearly one in five U.S. households. It also owns 34 radio stations in eight markets. Scripps also runs an expanding collection of local and national digital journalism and information businesses, including multi-platform satire and humor brand [Cracked](#), podcast industry leader [Midroll Media](#) and over-the-top video news service [Newsy](#). Scripps also produces television shows including "[The List](#)" and "[The Now](#)," runs an award-winning investigative reporting newsroom in Washington, D.C., and serves as the longtime steward of the nation's largest, most successful and longest-running educational program, the [Scripps National Spelling Bee](#). Founded in 1878, Scripps has held for decades to the motto, "Give light and the people will find their own way."

Media contact:

Valerie Miller, *The E.W. Scripps Company*, 513-977-3023, Valerie.miller@scripps.com