

WTVF Nashville's investigation into Tennessee mayoral candidate wins prestigious Peabody Award

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NASHVILLE – WTVF, a Nashville-based local television station owned by The E.W. Scripps Company (NASDAQ: SSP), has won a Peabody Award for its [2023 investigation](#) that exposed Franklin, Tennessee, mayoral candidate Gabrielle Hanson's white supremacist ties and other questions about her background during last fall's elections.

In a series of over 20 reports, WTVF Chief Investigative Reporter Phil Williams and the NewsChannel 5 Investigates team probed [Hanson's ties to white supremacists](#), [her arrest history for promoting prostitution](#) and her social media photo of a group of women she claimed to be her supporters but who later [denied that claim and denounced her](#), among other inconsistencies and unusual revelations.

"In Franklin, Tennessee, an affluent suburb of Nashville, mediagenic alderwoman Gabrielle Hanson entered the 2023 mayor's race against a popular Republican incumbent, running on a far-right platform of Christian nationalism and opposition to LGBTQ rights," the Peabody judges wrote. "But when investigative reporter Phil Williams of WTVF-NewsChannel 5 started following Hanson's campaign, he uncovered a trail of hypocrisy and deceit, full of doctored social media posts, a job running a prostitution service under a different name, lies to police and carpetbagging."

Chosen each year by a diverse board of jurors through unanimous vote, Peabody Awards are given in the categories of entertainment, documentary, news, podcast/radio, arts, children's and youth and public service programming. The annual Peabody winners are a collection of stories that "powerfully reflect the pressing social issues and the vibrant emerging voices of our day."

This is Williams' fourth Peabody Award and the third for WTVF.

"The NewsChannel 5 Investigates team, led by the determined Phil Williams, perfectly demonstrates what journalism can do for a local community," said Lyn Plantinga, Scripps vice president and regional general manager. "Our team asked hard questions of public officials on behalf of local voters, giving them critical information that likely would have remained uncovered."

"The Nashville team's persistent local reporting is an example of true watchdog journalism, and Scripps is proud of their commitment to bringing truth to light," Scripps President of News Kate O'Brian said.

Williams, who has spent more than 25 years at WTVF, was recently awarded the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Radio and Television Digital News Association (RTDNA) for his ongoing work to expose corruption in Tennessee government and politics. Williams is also the 2023 recipient of the prestigious John Chancellor Award for Excellence in Journalism and is the only TV journalist to ever receive a coveted Toner Prize for political reporting.

This year's Peabody winners will be celebrated at a ceremony at the Beverly Wilshire Hotel in Los Angeles on Sunday, June 9.

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