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USC ANNENBERG ANNOUNCES 2007 CRONKITE AWARD WINNERS

*Television journalists from national networks and local stations honored for
informative, issue-based coverage of the 2006 campaigns*

LOS ANGELES, March 12, 2007 – Proving that good political coverage can make great television, the USC Annenberg School for Communication today announced the 2007 winners of the **USC Annenberg Walter Cronkite Award for Excellence in Television Political Journalism**:

Local Broadcast Station

- **KING, Seattle**, has a full-time political unit and offered more than 100 minutes of local political coverage each week. Judges said that KING reporters “dug deep into issues, providing viewers with clear explanations that would help them understand their choices at the polls. The adwatch reporting was especially good, offering not only a critique of the ad, but substantive information about the issues.” This is the second win for KING.
- **WBAL, Baltimore**, a first-time winner, was recognized for its deep coverage of candidates and key campaign issues. Judges were particularly impressed by a report on loopholes in campaign finance regulations that “went well beyond publicly available information and utilized graphics to make a complicated story crystal clear.”

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Individual Achievement at a Local Station

- **Greg Fox, WESH, Winter Park, Florida**, won his award for excellent journalistic analysis and helping voters evaluate what candidates say. Judges praised Fox's "Truth Tests," including one that went beyond sound bites to show the profound impact religion can have on a race.
- **Bill Hormann, WTVG, Toledo, Ohio**, won for "providing very helpful information to voters and giving candidates and advocates time to speak." Judges were particularly impressed that Hormann was able to make a county commissioner race interesting for viewers.
- **Robert Mak** (reporter) and **Mike Cate** (producer), **KING, Seattle**, won their third award for their "superb" election reporting. Judges said that KING's major commitment to political coverage and the terrific talents of this reporting team make it the station to beat for quality political coverage.
- **Ben Simmoneau** (reporter) and **Dan Maddox** (photographer/editor), **WGAL, Lancaster, Pennsylvania**, won for "absolutely watchable," "probing" and "aggressive" coverage. Judges were excited to see a team taking the initiative to produce excellent political coverage in a small market.

Local Cable Station, Large Market

- **NECN, New England Cable News** produced "intelligent, well-written coverage" that demonstrated true enterprise journalism. Judges recognized the station for fleshing out issues that arose in debates through follow-up interviews and analysis.

Local Cable Station, Small Market

- **News 8 Austin**, now a two-time winner, got top marks from the judges for impressive political coverage. Judges were particularly enthusiastic about an innovative series devoted to the issues that arose within four families of voters.

Local Public Station, Large Market

- **WGBH, Boston**, served its market well by providing "well-produced, smart discussions about journalism and politics" in its nightly news and public affairs program, *Greater Boston with Emily Rooney*. Judges thought the station offered an "involving mix of information and opinion" as it evaluated press coverage of political news.

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Local Public Station, Small Market

- **Wisconsin Public Television** garnered its third award for tackling campaign issues by telling compelling stories about real people. The judges were impressed with the production value, which was enhanced by “beautiful shots and elegant pacing, giving local flavor to news coverage.”

Large Station Group

- **NBC Television Stations Division** won for its overall, group-wide commitment to political coverage. NBC made good use of veteran reporters who provided analysis of races and plenty of solid coverage of issues. Judges were particularly impressed with reportage that allowed viewers to hear what candidates and voters have to say.

Small Station Group

- **Hearst-Argyle Television** won its fourth consecutive award for its “inspiring” country-wide political coverage. Hearst’s cohesive philosophy includes a commitment to detailed research, tough questions, perceptive candidate profiles, and a strong commitment to debates. Judges were impressed by the work of several stations, including reports on young voters and school bonds.

National Network Program

- **ABC News’ This Week with George Stephanopoulos** won for its “On the Trail” series, which took Stephanopoulos out of the studio to interview candidates on their home turf. Excellent preparation and deft editing made interviews both substantial and profoundly watchable.

Special Achievement

- **ABC News’ Brian Ross and the ABC News Investigative Unit** won a special commendation for enterprise journalism that changed the course of the election. By breaking the Mark Foley story, Ross demonstrated the profound impact that political reporters can have when they expose information that vested interests would rather keep under wraps.

“These Cronkite Award winners demonstrate that television can use its unparalleled storytelling skills to cover politics and campaigns in ways that respect its audience and inform our citizens,” said **Martin Kaplan**, USC Annenberg associate dean and director of the School’s Norman Lear Center.

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The biennial awards have been administered since 2000 by the Norman Lear Center and honor the distinguished broadcast journalist and longtime CBS News anchor **Walter Cronkite**.

“At a time 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,” Cronkite said.

“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 2006 elections. They gave special consideration to in-depth, 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; **Patricia Dean**, professor and associate director, USC Annenberg's School of Journalism; **David Dow**, former network news correspondent; **Susan Friedman**, veteran television news producer; **Felix Gutiérrez**, professor, USC Annenberg's School of Journalism; **Judy Muller**, journalism professor and former network reporter; **Michael Parks**, director, USC Annenberg's School of Journalism; **Adam Clayton Powell III**, former radio and television news producer and executive; **Joe Saltzman**, professor, USC Annenberg's School of Journalism. Entries were also screened by an additional 12 Annenberg instructors with experience in broadcast journalism.

The awards will be presented on the USC campus in Los Angeles on April 19, at an event featuring a keynote speech by FCC Commissioner **Michael J. Copps**.

Located in Los Angeles at the University of Southern California, the USC Annenberg School for Communication (www.annenberg.usc.edu) is among the nation's leading institutions devoted to the study of journalism and communication, and their impact on politics, culture and society. With an enrollment of more than 1,900 graduate and undergraduate students, USC Annenberg offers degree programs in journalism, communication, public diplomacy and public relations. For more information about the Cronkite Awards, visit www.reliableresources.org/award.

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