2011 CRONKITE AWARD WINNERS
ANNOUNCED BY USC ANNENBERG SCHOOL

Local broadcasters in Arizona, California, Florida, Utah, Washington, Wisconsin honored for the first time; Hearst Television praised for political coverage

“PBS NewsHour” wins National Award

LOS ANGELES, March 3, 2011 - Proving that good political coverage can make great television, the 2011 winners of the USC Annenberg Walter Cronkite Award for Excellence in Television Political Journalism were announced today.

Local Broadcast Station

• KOMO 4 TV, Seattle, Washington, wins Local Broadcast (Large Market) for its coverage of both state and local elections. Judges commended the station for its strong writing and its comprehensive and easy-to-understand analysis. The Fisher-owned ABC affiliate was singled out for its “sophisticated production values and probing deeply into the issues.”

• KION/KCBA Central Coast News, Salinas, California, wins Local Broadcast (Small Market) for its “initiative and its ambitious coverage.” Judges commended the Cowles-owned CBS affiliate, operating with its sister station, a Seal Rock-owned FOX affiliate, for its “dogged style of reporting” in reporting on how furlough days waste taxpayer dollars. Judges were also impressed by the station’s invitation to all 200 local candidates to appear on camera in studio.

Individual Achievement at a Local Station

• Christina Boomer, KNXV-ABC 15, Phoenix, Arizona, wins for her “genuine public service reporting” on the Scripps-owned ABC affiliate. Judges commended Boomer’s creative use of “participatory journalism” connecting viewers to candidates through Twitter and other social media. Judges were impressed that in addition to her on-camera reporting, she also shoots and edits her own footage, creates her own graphics and provides raw footage of candidate interviews online.
Local Cable Station

- **Central Florida News 13**, owned by Bright House, was praised for its in-depth coverage of issues ignored by many other stations. Its reporting on a local Soil and Water election was singled out: “The station takes a subject that people don’t usually care about and makes you care about it.”

Public Station

- **KPBS, San Diego, California**, owned by San Diego State University, wins for “taking on a subject that big stations will not touch.” The PBS member station’s profile of the County Board of Supervisors was “an excellent explanation of how government works and doesn’t work.” KPBS was singled out for asking “tough questions” to officials who “aren’t used to answering tough questions.”

Special Commendation for Investigative Reporting

- **KSL-TV 5, Salt Lake City, Utah**, an NBC affiliate, and reporters John Daley and Lisa Riley Roche, received a special commendation for their investigative report connecting campaign contributions to state contracts. Judges were also impressed by the Bonneville International-owned station’s collaboration with the Deseret News, “which extends the reach of each of the news organizations.”

Special Commendation for Town Hall Challenge

- **WISN TV, Milwaukee, Wisconsin**, an ABC affiliate owned by Hearst, was given a special commendation for a series of statewide town hall debates, broadcast live and online, featuring a diverse citizen group questioning candidates in an interactive format. Judges praised a format that allowed a thoughtful exchange between voter and office-seeker. “It provided an excellent forum for candidates, issue-advocates and citizen groups to be heard in their own voice.”

Station Group

- **Hearst Television** garnered its sixth consecutive award for its strong commitment to airing political coverage in the 30 days leading up to the mid-term elections. Judges commended Hearst for its “clear, well-edited and comprehensive” reporting. They were particularly impressed by the coverage of topics including bipartisanship, campaign expenditures and the accuracy of campaign ads. Judges said issues were clearly discussed and audience-friendly, adding that “Hearst continues to be a consistent success in this arena.”
National Network Program

- **PBS NewsHour** wins for its “thorough and balanced” coverage of key races in Nevada, Wisconsin, Kentucky and Florida that were “representative of the changes in the national narrative and electorate mood.” Correspondents Gwen Ifill and Judy Woodruff were both praised by judges for “focusing on the issues, talking with real voters and letting the candidates explain themselves,” adding that “they avoided the horserace component that is so typical in political coverage.”

“These Cronkite Award winners prove that thoughtful, informative political coverage can also make for gripping television,” said USC Annenberg professor Martin Kaplan, director of the School's Norman Lear Center, which has administered the biennial awards honoring distinguished journalist and longtime CBS anchor Walter Cronkite since 2000.

The panel of eight judges was chaired by Geneva Overholser, director of the USC Annenberg School of Journalism. The awards will be presented on the USC campus in Los Angeles on April 26, 2011.

Located in Los Angeles at the University of Southern California, the USC Annenberg School for Communication & Journalism ([www.annenberg.usc.edu](http://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.

The mission of The Norman Lear Center ([www.learcenter.org](http://www.learcenter.org)) is to study and shape the impact of media and entertainment on society. For more information about the Cronkite Awards, visit [www.cronkiteaward.org](http://www.cronkiteaward.org).

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