

## News Release

### WHITE HOUSE CORRESPONDENTS' ASSOCIATION NAMES 2004 AWARD WINNERS

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Mike Allen of The Washington Post and David Sanger of The New York Times have won two of Washington's top journalism awards for their coverage of the Bush White House during a year dominated by war in Iraq. In addition, a team from The Dayton Daily News of Dayton, Ohio, has been honored for its series exposing trouble at the Peace Corps.

The awards, administered by the White House Correspondents' Association, are to be presented at the group's annual dinner Saturday, May 1, 2004.

Allen won the Merriman Smith Memorial Award for outstanding presidential coverage under deadline pressure. The award carries a \$1,000 prize. Smith, who covered the White House for United Press International for 30 years, excelled at coverage of breaking news.

Allen was cited for his reporting on President Bush's secret trip to Baghdad to celebrate Thanksgiving with U.S. troops. The panel of judges described Allen's copy as "incredibly detailed" and "wonderfully loaded with context and analysis." As the sole newspaper reporter on the trip, Allen also filed a pool report that the judges called a "fabulous" example of this kind of dispatch.

Sanger, a former Smith award winner, is this year's recipient of the Aldo Beckman Award. The honor recognizes journalistic excellence and personal qualities in the tradition of Aldo Beckman, a former White House Correspondents' Association president and Washington bureau chief of the Chicago Tribune. The Tribune Company and the association present a prize of \$1,000.

Sanger is being honored for a group of six stories examining not just the decisions President Bush makes, but how he makes them. The Smith judges found these pieces "hard-hitting and beautifully written," adding that together, they managed to "penetrate the often impenetrable Bush White House." Against a backdrop of presidential travel at home and abroad, Sanger gave Times readers an "incisive" look at a president who doesn't agonize over hard choices, and isn't given to second-guessing, the judges said.

The Dayton Daily News won this year's Edgar A. Poe award for its seven-day series "Casualties of Peace." The award, for reporting of national or regional significance, carries a \$2,500 prize.

The series--reported by Russell Corollo and Mei-ling Hopgood--brought to light an outbreak of rapes and other assaults on Peace Corps volunteers, as well as agency attempts to cover the problems up. The Poe judges said the Daily News team "used every reporting tool in the book," including 20 months of persistent digging, interviews with more than 500 people, travel to 10 countries, filing of 75 Freedom of Information requests and ultimately, a lawsuit against the Peace Corps to pry open public records.

The Poe judges also gave honorable mention to U.S. News & World Report's story "Keeping Secrets" by Christopher H. Schmitt and Edward T. Pound; Southern Exposure Magazine for its two-part series on consumer fraud, "Banking on Misery," by Michael Hudson; Knight-Ridder for its early reporting on Iraq by Warren P. Strobel and Jonathan S. Landy; and Newsweek for "The \$87 Billion Money Pit" by Rod Nordland and Michael Hirsh, "Rumors of Bin Laden's Lair" by Sami Yousafzai, Ron Moreau, and Michael Hirsh, and "Why America Scares the World" by Fareed Zakaria.

The Smith judges were Ellen Shearer (chair), assistant dean and professor, Medill School of Journalism, Northwestern University; Rich Foster, Newseum Programs Director, The Freedom Forum; and Ron Cohen, Gannett News Service (retired).

The Beckman judges were Jodi Enda (chair), Boston University, Washington Program; Lee Thornton, professor, Merrill School of Journalism, University of Maryland; Tom Rosenstiel, director, Project for Excellence in Journalism.

The Poe judges were Wes Pippert (chair), professor, University of Missouri School of Journalism, Washington Program; Deborah Mathis, assistant professor, Medill School of Journalism, Washington Program; Jan Schaffer, executive director, J-Lab, University of Maryland.

Coordinating the judging was Ellen Shearer of Medill.

FOR MORE INFORMATION: Contact awards committee chairman Mark Smith, AP Radio, at 202-736-9550, or Julie Whiston at the White House Correspondents' Association, 202-452-4836.