

For release Monday, March 13, 2017

Four winners named for 2017 McCree journalism awards

LANSING __ Journalism projects that examined, explained, exposed and detailed important issues in law and government were named winners today of the 43rd annual Wade H. McCree Advancement of Justice Awards, sponsored by the Michigan Press Association Foundation.

As determined by a panel of three judges who reviewed entries from across the state, the winners are:

- The staff of Bridge Magazine, and John Bebow, president and CEO of The Center for Michigan, which publishes the on-line Bridge, for building and maintaining a comprehensive timeline of events and government communications in the Flint water crisis, a project so thorough that it came to be used a reference for official investigations of the contamination disaster.

- Reporter Jennifer Dixon and Computer Reporting Specialist Kristi Tanner of the Detroit Free Press for a year-long investigation that produced a series of reports on the flawed oversight by the Michigan Occupational Safety and Health Administration (MIOSHA) in cases of workplace deaths and safety, including exposure to asbestos.

- Reporter George Hunter of The Detroit News for what his nominators said was “dogged and relentless pursuit of the truth” for Davontae Sanford, who was convicted of a multiple murder as a juvenile and spent nine years in prison before his release in 2016 with prosecutors acknowledging his innocence. A professed hit man took responsibility for the killings in 2015.

- The staff of Michigan Radio for a series of reports raising questions about how Michigan, with more than 360 so-called juvenile "lifera" in its prisons, is following up -- or not -- on U.S. Supreme Court decisions striking down mandatory life/no parole sentences for juvenile offenders. The series examined questions including why Michigan has so many more juvenile lifera than other states, why prosecutors are resistant to the Supreme Court order to re-examine these cases and whether juvenile lifera in Michigan really are getting a second chance.

The McCree awards are named in honor of Wade H. McCree, Jr., (1920-87) one of the most distinguished lawyers and judges in Michigan history. McCree served as a circuit, federal and U.S. Appeals court judge and as solicitor general of the United States from 1977-81. He was a champion of equal rights and accountable government and dedicated to advancing a greater understanding of the vital role of journalists in a free society. This is the 43rd year these awards have been presented to Michigan journalists.

The awards are based on the significance, impact and informative level of the work, plus an orientation toward solutions.

The awards will be presented April 9 as part of the Michigan Journalism Hall of Fame induction dinner at the Kellogg Center at Michigan State University. For more information about the dinner, including tickets, visit, <http://j-school.jrn.msu.edu/halloffame/banquet/>

The Michigan Press Association Foundation was created in 1980 to further the interests of journalism in Michigan. The Foundation's mission includes serving the public interest by encouraging, fostering and aiding improvements in the quality, vigor and fairness of Michigan journalism and a free press in the State of Michigan. The Foundation, which also sponsors the Michigan Journalist of the Year competition, has invested more than \$330,000 in Michigan journalism since 1990, including the award of nearly 300 scholarships to college-level journalism students.

Learn more about the MPA Foundation at michiganpress.org/mpafoundation.

Contact:

Jim Tarrant

Michigan Press Association Executive Director jim@michiganpress.org

517-372-2424

Rich Perlberg

MPA Foundation President rperlberg46@gmail.com