

Award Winners

2022

-Reporters Heather Catallo, Kimberly Craig, Videographer Johnny N. Sartin Jr. and Video Editor Randy Lundquist of WXYZ-TV for their investigation "Probate Problems: Reforming Michigan's Guardianship Laws." This article highlighted that guardianship abuse has become an increasing problem across the country. It covered some disturbing cases here in Michigan and that Catallo's work prompted the introduction of four bills in the Michigan Legislature. The legislative reforms will transform the probate court system in Michigan. Catallo has been relentless in her coverage of the proposed legislation to ensure Michigan's leaders pay close attention to the changes that are needed to protect the rights of seniors and families. <https://vimeo.com/user39475878/review/663368322/26f99247ed>

-Reporters Elisha Anderson, John Wisely, Podcast Co-producers Cary Junior II, Darcie Moran and Tad Davis of Detroit Free Press for their columns "Jailhouse informants and a 15-year fight for freedom." Free Press reporters Elisha Anderson and John Wisely investigated Deering's case and showed how the criminal justice system relied heavily on jailhouse informants in hard-to-crack cases. The coverage brought to light an issue that is critically important in the criminal justice system but rarely understood by the public and showed the scope of the problem. In addition, Tad Davis, Cary Junior II and Darcie Moran produced an in-depth podcast on the case that incorporated several months of reporting. The 'On the Line' episode highlighted Deering's 15-year fight for freedom. Last year, a judge ruled Deering was denied a fair trial and tossed out his convictions. <https://www.freep.com/story/news/local/michigan/oakland/2021/05/29/oakland-county-prosecutor-informant-innocence-clinic/5094787001/?gnt-cfr=>, <https://www.freep.com/story/news/local/michigan/2021/08/13/jailhouse-informant-testimony-tracking-michigan/7997294002/?gnt-cfr=1>, <https://www.freep.com/story/news/local/michigan/oakland/2021/09/30/juwan-deering-free-prison/5928691001/>, <https://www.freep.com/story/news/local/michigan/oakland/2021/10/09/juwan-deering-life-after-prison/6013633001/?gnt-cfr=1>, <https://omny.fm/shows/detroit-free-press/jailhouse-informants-and-a-15-year-fight-for-freed>

-Reporters Benjamin Simon, Greg Chandler, Photojournalist Scott Harmsen and Publisher Fred Jacobs of Hastings Banner for their columns "Family faces crisis under insurance reforms." Photojournalist Scott Harmsen first noticed them at a meeting with Michigan state Representative Julie Calley a year ago in Hastings. They appeared distraught; a middle-aged woman with her father, a disabled man in a wheelchair, his granddaughter and two caregivers. They were asking questions about changes to the state's no-fault automobile insurance law. As we learned about their plight, we discovered that these victims would not be grandfathered in under the reforms. These victims were going to be left without the care that they now needed to live. They had nowhere to turn and no one to speak out for them -- until The Banner began reporting on the issue. Since then, Staff Writers Benjamin Simon and Greg Chandler, Photojournalist Scott Harmsen and Publisher Fred Jacobs have been educating readers about this law and bringing the issues that resulted from the reforms to the attention of policymakers and legislators in a continuing series of articles, features and editorials. Those articles got attention.

2021

-Reporter Sarah Cwiek of Michigan Radio for her investigation "Tax foreclosure lawsuit asks: How much can government take from property owners?" This article shows how citizens, especially those at risk of foreclosure, don't even know how the process works. It's a complicated issue before the Michigan Supreme Court, but many homeowners don't realize how easy it can be to lose their home if they are unaware, they owe some back taxes. <https://www.michiganradio.org/post/tax-foreclosure-lawsuit-asks-how-much-can-government-take-property-owners>

-Reporter Chandra Bozelko of Holland Sentinel for her columns "Insider takes on Prisons and Courts." She uses real life experiences to show case how the prisons and the judicial system works. These are the stories and explanations of what's really happening in these places.

-Reporter Nancy Kaffer of Detroit Free Press for an in-depth investigation "She's tormented by final days' unexplained death of little sisters in Harper Woods Jail." Kaffer delved into the circumstances of Slater's death. Caught on video having a seizure around 5 a.m., Slater wasn't found dead by jail staff for seven hours. Little attempt has been made to explain the long lapse, and two Harper Woods cops were fired after the report of her death was altered. The Wayne County Prosecutor's Office is investigating and will ultimately decide whether any Harper Woods employees should be charged in Slater's death. <https://www.freep.com/in-depth/opinion/columnists/nancy-kaffer/2020/12/04/priscilla-slater-harper-woods-jail-death/6044371002/>

2020

-Reporter Karen Bouffard of the Detroit News for an in-depth investigation "Healing Justice" showed America's underinvestment in mental health services, and the enormous expense of incarceration. <https://apps.detroitnews.com/projects/healing-justice/>

-Reporter Heather Catallo of WXYZ for an in-depth investigation "Guardianship Epidemic: I just want my parents back" showed that as the baby boomers age, guardianship abuse is increasingly becoming a bigger problem across the country. <https://vimeo.com/378700466/129aeca885>

-Reporter Sarah Cwiek of Michigan Radio for her investigation "They say their son needs to be in a psychiatric hospital. He went to jail instead." <https://www.michiganradio.org/post/detroit-new-approach-stemming-cycles-violence-meeting-victims-needs>, <https://www.michiganradio.org/post/they-say-their-son-needs-be-psychiatric-hospital-he-went-jail-instead>, <https://www.michiganradio.org/post/lawsuit-seeks-end-unnecessary-unconstitutional-and-costly-cash-bail-detroit>, <https://www.michiganradio.org/post/detroit-police-request-more-money-controversial-facial-recognition-and-surveillance-program>, <https://www.michiganradio.org/post/duggan-gives-thumbs-police-using-facial-recognition-not-surveillance>, <https://www.michiganradio.org/post/detroit-police-revise-facial-recognition-policy-civil-rights-groups-call-ban>

2019

-Reporters Jim Schaefer and Gina Kaufman of the Detroit Free Press for an in-depth investigation "They look like cops, but they're not. And they're all over Michigan" – <https://www.freep.com/story/news/investigations/2018/10/24/mcoles-michigan-reserve-cops/1353397002/>, <https://www.freep.com/story/news/investigations/2018/11/20/michigan-review-reserve-officer-freep/2024804002/>

-Reporters Elisha Anderson, John Wisely, Ann Zaniewski and Executive Video Producer Brian Kaufman collaborated on a series that appeared in print and on the Detroit Free Press website called "Tale of a Tape". <https://www.freep.com/story/news/local/michigan/detroit/2018/04/13/police-video-michigan-state-police-taser/499525002/>, <https://vimeo.com/308319755>, <https://www.freep.com/story/news/local/michigan/detroit/2018/04/16/michigan-state-police-atv-taser-death-trooper/499630002/>, <https://www.freep.com/story/news/local/2018/05/17/atv-taser-crash-coverup/608123002/>, <https://www.freep.com/story/news/2018/06/07/detroit-atv-taser-case/676323002/>, <https://www.freep.com/story/news/2018/08/23/mark-bessner-michigan-state-police/1054558002/>

2019 cont.

-Reporter Matt Mencarini of the Lansing State Journal for his coverage Larry Nassar and the fallout at Michigan State University after he was exposed as a serial sexual abuser who had used his position as a campus physician to rape women and girls for 20 years. <https://www.lansingstatejournal.com/story/news/local/2018/04/05/larry-nassar-inside-prosecution-investigation/472506002/>

-Lead Defense Reporter Kevin Dietz, Tv & Digital Executive Ro Coppola, Web reporter Derick Hutchinson and Dave Bartkowiak of WDIV and Podcast Producer Zac Rosen of Graham Media for their steady drumbeat of investigative news stories exposing the injustices within the Michigan parole board which turned into national outrage and concluded with not only the parole of this prisoner but the introduction and passing into law Michigan House Bill 5377. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XLKngms6KmM&feature=youtu.be>

2018

-Investigative Reporter Heather Catallo, Videographer Johnny N. Sartin Jr. and Editor Randy Lundquist of WXYZ-TV, Detroit: Problems in Probate: Grief, Greed and Real Estate <https://www.wxyz.com/probate>

-Jim Schaefer and Gina Kaufman of the Detroit Free Press: Disorderly Conduct: How problem cops stay on the street <https://www.freep.com/topic/c1b86103-0a5a-4c9c-8ba2-476fc4bd59a1/disorderly-conduct/>

-Mike Martindale of the Detroit News

2017

-The staff of Bridge Magazine, and John Bebow, president and CEO of The Center for Michigan: <http://www.bridgemi.com/truth-squad-companion/disaster-day-day-detailed-flint-crisis-timeline>, <http://www.bridgemi.com/michigan-truth-squad/who-approved-switch-flint-river-states-answers-draw-fouls>, <http://www.bridgemi.com/truth-squad-companion/good-bad-and-ugly-rating-comments-public-officials-and-experts-flint-water>, <http://www.bridgemi.com/public-sector/what-flint-lost>, <http://www.bridgemi.com/public-sector/felony-charges-filed-against-state-city-employees-flint-water-crisis>

-Jennifer Dixon and Kristi Tanner-Detroit Free Press: <http://www.freep.com/story/news/local/michigan/2016/09/06/state-plans-surprise-inspections-demolition-sites/89773806/>, <http://www.freep.com/story/news/local/michigan/2016/05/01/asbestos-contractors-target-homeless-other-vulnerable-people/82618742/>, <http://www.freep.com/story/news/local/michigan/2016/06/25/mio-sha-penalties-michigan-workers-compensation/84592140/>, <http://www.freep.com/story/news/local/michigan/2016/06/30/dearborn-heights-janitor-says-shes-vindicated-osha/86549872/>, <http://www.freep.com/story/news/local/michigan/2016/09/06/state-plans-surprise-inspections-demolition-sites/89773806/>

-George Hunter-Detroit News: <http://www.detroitnews.com/story/news/local/detroit-city/2016/06/13/lawyer-davontae-sanford-license/85806144/>, <http://www.detroitnews.com/story/news/2016/06/20/detroit-news-at-noon/86130874/>, <http://www.detroitnews.com/story/news/local/detroit-city/2016/06/20/possible-perjury-charges-ex-detroit-cop/86126506/>

-Staff of Michigan Radio: <http://michiganradio.org/topic/michigans-juvenile-lifers-who-gets-second-chance>

2016

-Joe Linstroth and Kate Wells-Michigan Radio

-Ron French and Ted Roelofs-Bridge Magazine

-Kevin Dietz, RO Coppola, Vanessa Ogletree, Ben Bell, and John Pompeo-WDIV

-John Wisley-Detroit Free Press

2015

- Jennifer Guerra, Sarah Alvarez & Sarah Hulett—Michigan Radio: Finding Home: A Documentary about Foster Care in Michigan
- Nathan Bomey, John Gallagher & Mark Stryker—Detroit Free Press: How Detroit Was Reborn
- Joan Isabella, Sandra Svoboda & Courtney Hurtt—WDET: NextChapterDetroit.com
- Brad Devereaux—MLive Media Group: Small Town, Big Problems
- Honorable Mention: Mike Martindale—Detroit News: Judge on Leave to Quit After Re-election

2014

- Ross Jones, Randy Lundquist, Ann Mullen, Ramon Rosario, & Johnny Sartiny—WXYZ-TV
- Jim Schaefer—Detroit Free Press
- John Barnes, Fritz Klug, Scott Levin, John Agar, & Gus Burns—MLive Media Group

2013

- L.L. Brasier & Gina Damron—Detroit Free Press
- Mike Martindale—Detroit News
- Ross Jones, Ann Mullen, Johnny Sartin, Randy Lundquist, & Newton Glasby—WXYZ-TV
- Honorable mention:
 - Jeff Gerritt (Detroit Free Press);
 - John Barnes, Heather Peters, John Agar, Gary Ridley, Brad Devereaux, Rex Hall Jr., Jonathan Oosting, & Tim Martin (MLive Media Group);
 - John Barnes, Jonathan Oosting, Tim Martin, Dave Eggert, & Brandon Howell (MLive Media Group);
 - Jennifer Dixon, Jim Schaefer, Kristi Tanner, Martha Thierry, Romain Blanquart, & Mandi Wright (Detroit Free Press)

2012

- Heather Catallo, Ross Jones, & Randy Lundquist—WXYZ-TV
- Lester Graham—Michigan Radio
- Bill Proctor, Randy Lundquist, Ramon Rosario, & Johnny Sartin—WXYZ-TV
- L.L. Brasier & John Wisely—Detroit Free Press
- John Barnes & Team: Barton Deiters, Khalil AlHajal, Danielle Salisbury, Rex Hall, John Hausman, Andy Hoag, Jonathan Oosting, Michael Wayland, Angela Wittrock, Brandon Howell—MLive Media Group
- Curt Guyette—Detroit Metro Times

2011

- Jim Schaefer, Kristi Tanner-White, & Eric Seals—Detroit Free Press
- Andy Hoag—Saginaw News
- Jennifer Dixon & Jim Schaefer—Detroit Free Press
- Curt Guyette—Detroit Metro Times
- Mike Martindale & Mike Wilkinson—Detroit News
- Jessica Harthorn—WEIY NBC 25

2010

- Jennifer Dixon & Tina Lam—Detroit Free Press
- Cody Hinze, Ryan Loew, Louise Knott Ahern, & Jamie Urrea—Lansing State Journal
- M.L. Elrick, Naomi R. Patton, Jim Schaefer, Rochelle Riley, & Gina Damron—Detroit Free Press
- Angie Hendershot & Christopher Carr—WJRT TV-12
- Honorable mention: Craig McMorris (WNEM TV-5)

2009

- M.L. Elrick & Jim Schaefer—Detroit Free Press
- Charlie Cain & Gary Heinlein—Detroit News
- Sandra Svoboda—Metro Times
- Honorable mention:
 - Brian Dickerson (Detroit Free Press);
 - George Hunter (Detroit News);
 - Brian McGillivray, Bill O'Brien, & Mike Tyree (Traverse City Record-Eagle)

2008

- Kathy Jessup, Chris Killian, & Rebecca Pierce—Kalamazoo Gazette
- Jim Schaefer, Joe Swickart, L.L. Brasier, Brian Dickerson, Suzette Hackney, & John Wisely—Detroit Free Press
- Honorable mention:
 - Shantell M. Kirkendoll (Flint Journal);
 - Sandra Svoboda (Metro Times)

2007

- Jeff Gerritt—Detroit Free Press
- Curt Guyette—Metro Times
- Matt Phillips & Charlie Langton—Sterling Heights Television & the Macomb County Bar Association
- Honorable mention:
 - Todd Berg (Michigan Lawyers Weekly);
 - Ronald J. Hansen (Detroit News);
 - Judy Putnam (Booth Newspapers)

2006

- Norman Sinclair, Ronald J. Hansen, & Melvin Claxton—Detroit News
- Matt Phillips & Charlie Langton—Sterling Heights Television & the Macomb County Bar Association
- Honorable mention:
 - Jason Alley (Southgate News Herald);
 - David Ashenfelter (Detroit Free Press);
 - Ken Kolker (Grand Rapids Press);
 - Rosemary Parker, Ed Finnert, Barbara Walters, & Bill Krasean (Kalamazoo Gazette)

2005

- David Shepardson, Norman Sinclair, & Ronald J. Hansen—Detroit News
- Mark Albert—WWMT-TV Kalamazoo

2004

- Gregg Krupa, Francis X. Donnelly, & John Bebow—Detroit News
- Matt Phillips, Charlie Langton, & Rick Troy—Sterling Heights Television & the Macomb County Bar Association
- Honorable mention:
 - Nolan Finley, George Bullard, & Shikha Dalmia (Detroit News);
 - M.L. Elrick, Jim Schaefer, & Ben Schmitt (Detroit Free Press);
 - Stephen W. Huber (Oakland Press);
 - Darryl Q. Tucker (Saginaw News)

2003

- Jack Kresnak, David Zeman, & Ben Schmitt—Detroit Free Press
- William H. Dance—Detroit Legal News

2002

- David Ashenfelter, Tamara Audi, Suzette Hackney, Jim Schaefer, Joe Swickard, David Zeman, & Alison Young—Detroit Free Press
- Scott MacFarlane—WKBD/WWJ-TV Detroit

2001

- David Ashenfelter, Suzette Hackney, & Joe Swickard—Detroit Free Press
- Ken Kolker & Gary Schroder—Grand Rapids Press
- C. Jesse Green—Michigan Lawyers Weekly

2000

- David Ashenfelter—Detroit Free Press
- Wayne Woolley & George Hunter—Detroit News
- Bob Allen & Michelle Corum—Interlochen Public Radio

1999

- Scott E. Aiken—St. Joseph Herald-Palladium
- Scott Davis—Jackson Citizen Patriot
- Ken Kolker—Grand Rapids Press

