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Michigan Press Association Foundation names Brian Allnutt 2025 Richard Milliman Journalist of the Year

The Michigan Press Association Foundation has named Planet Detroit reporter Brian Allnutt the 2025 Richard Milliman Journalist of the Year, honoring his impactful reporting on environmental issues and public accountability in southeast Michigan.

Allnutt, a senior accountability reporter at Planet Detroit, has been with the nonprofit newsroom since its launch in 2019, rising from contributing reporter to a leading voice on the climate crisis, environmental justice, drinking water and public policy. His work has earned recognition beyond Detroit, including the 2025 Outstanding Media Coverage in Civil Engineering Award from the Southeast Michigan Branch of the American Society of Civil Engineers.

“Brian Allnutt has been a cornerstone of Planet Detroit,” said Nina Ignaczak, publisher of Planet Detroit. “In the past year, his reporting brought critical public attention to problems with Wyandotte’s drinking water and its source, the Detroit River.”

Allnutt’s work included breaking news on a complaint to the Michigan attorney general regarding ongoing pollution tied to BASF, as well as coverage of a state report warning that Wyandotte’s drinking water posed an “immediate health risk” and had not been fluoridated in a decade.

MPA Foundation Judge Mickey Hirten said Allnutt’s reporting revealed both environmental risks and a lack of transparency.

“His reporting identified continuing pollution issues and forced the water system to acknowledge the removal of fluoride from drinking water, something it had not disclosed to customers,” Hirten said.

Judge Sarah Mahoney praised the real-world impact of the work.

“Undeniable impact,” Mahoney said. “He documented clear harm, held officials accountable and sparked change, prompting public meetings and immediate updates to city information.”

Before joining Planet Detroit, Allnutt operated Detroit Farm and Garden in southwest Detroit for six years, supporting urban agriculture efforts. As a freelance journalist, his work appeared in The Guardian, Bloomberg CityLab, Inside Climate News, Civil Eats, The Detroit News and the Detroit Metro Times.

Allnutt is a graduate of Wesleyan University and completed Michigan State University’s Organic Farmer Training Program. Originally from Kentucky, he now lives in Detroit.

Finalists for the award were Kelly House of Bridge Michigan, runner-up for her reporting on the potential extinction of whitefish in lakes Michigan and Huron, and Paul Egan of the Detroit Free Press for his coverage of safety concerns involving out-of-code railings in Michigan prisons. Entries were judged across broadcast, print and digital journalism for work published between October 2024 and September 2025. The awards were announced at the 2026 Michigan Press Association Convention.

Founded in 1980, the Michigan Press Association Foundation supports community journalism across the state. Its mission is to encourage and promote quality, fairness and integrity in journalism while advancing the public's right to a free and open press.