6 National Reporters Received Honors in Annual Journalism Awards

Their work has been featured in The Washington Post, Military.com and Voice of America

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. — The Gerald R. Ford Presidential Foundation announces the winners of the 2023 Journalism Awards for Distinguished Reporting. The 2023 awards were presented at the Foundation’s Annual Dinner in Grand Rapids, MI on June 3. This year’s exceptional recipients are

- **Distinguished Reporting on the National Defense** ($5,000 award): **Travis Tritten, Konstantin Toropin, Drew Lawrence, Steve Beynon**, Military.com
- **Honorable Mention for Distinguished Reporting on the National Defense**: **Carla Babb**, Voice of America.

The Foundation is proud to honor these journalists for their outstanding contributions to journalism through unbiased, truth-seeking work. Their dedication to uncovering the truth and providing the public with clear, comprehensive reporting exemplifies the highest standards of journalistic integrity and excellence.

**Distinguished Reporting on the Presidency**

For his skill and breadth of vision, the selection committee honored Toluse Olorunnipa, White House Bureau Chief of The Washington Post, as the 2024 recipient of the award for Distinguished Reporting on the Presidency.

As President Joseph R. Biden Jr.’s third year in office unfolded and his team began preparing for the 2024 campaign, the reporting of Toluse Olorunnipa stood out for its balanced, insightful, historically informed coverage on the presidency.
Across a wide range of topics involving the presidency, Olorunnipa’s reporting shows consistent strength both in covering the issue of the moment and in giving that moment historical context.

Distinguished Reporting on the National Defense

The Gerald R. Ford Foundation presented the 2023 award for Distinguished Reporting on National Defense to the reporting team from Military.com, three of which are U.S. military veterans.

The Military.com team’s multi-part series on Extremism and the U.S. Military was insightful, detailed, and alarming. Each of these timely articles were presented in a factual, matter-of-fact style that was completely free of any sensational rhetoric or bias. The series also reveals that Pentagon leaders in each of the military services need to understand the gravity of the issue and develop more comprehensive mitigation strategies for the future.

The reporters conducted extensive interviews with current and former military, members of extremist organizations, and experts to produce a series with the kind of sourcing, research, and writing that is rare in today’s rapid news cycles. This is exactly the type of superior journalism the Ford Prize seeks to recognize and award each year.

The judging panel for Distinguished Reporting on National Defense also awarded an Honorable Mention to Carla Babb from Voice of America. At a time in which only a small percentage of the U.S. population serves in the military, Carla Babb gives the rest of us an “up close and personal” look at how the war in Ukraine has shaped U.S. missions, and at the preparations for war by its neighbors – in the process, educating us on military strategy, training, weaponry, and the unexpected and important role of America’s National Guard in training the warfighters.

The visuals – some of which she struggled for months to obtain -- bring her written words to life and give Americans a better understanding of the risks, the stakes, and the commitment to democracy by the countries fighting Russian aggression.

About the Awards: The Gerald R. Ford Presidential Foundation Journalism Awards recognize journalists whose work promotes a better understanding of the presidency and national defense. By honoring these individuals, the Foundation continues its commitment to supporting and encouraging high-quality journalism that reflects the values and legacy of President Gerald R. Ford.

For more information on the Foundation and the Journalism awards, visit https://geraldrfordfoundation.org/foundation-awards-prizes-grants/.

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