



K A P P A T A U A L P H A NEWSLETTER

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Feldstein book wins Mott Award

For a quarter of a century, the postwar era's most embattled politician and its most reviled newsman carried on a bitter struggle that "helped stoke the toxic sensationalism that contaminates contemporary media discourse."

So argues Mark Feldstein in *Poisoning the Press: Richard Nixon, Jack Anderson, and the Rise of Washington's Scandal Culture*, the winner of the Frank Luther Mott / Kappa Tau Alpha Research Award for the best book on journalism and mass communication based on original research published in 2010.

The battle between Nixon and Anderson included bribery, blackmail, forgery, spying and burglary. A plot to poison Anderson, Feldstein theorizes, was a metaphor for the poisoned political atmosphere that would follow.

"Feldstein reminds readers of the value of historical context at a time in journalism when so much appears new that the lessons of history are often undervalued or neglected. His well-researched and detailed expose of Anderson and Nixon and their antipathy toward each other reveals that both journalism and politics were 'bloodsport' long before our 21st century partisan, often uncivil, age," observes Peter Gade, finalist judge and associate professor at the University of Oklahoma.

"Feldstein's study is impressively researched and engagingly told," notes finalist judge W. Joseph Campbell, professor at American University and president of Kappa Tau Alpha.

Feldstein is an associate professor at George Washington University and a

former correspondent for ABC, NBC and CNN. The book is published by Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

Other finalists included Stephen J.A. Ward for *Global Journalism Ethics*, Cristina Archetti for *Explaining News: National Politics and Journalistic Cultures in Global Context* and Jack Fuller for *What is Happening to News: The Information Explosion and the Crisis in Journalism*.

The award is in honor of Mott, Pulitzer Prize winner, educator and long-time leader of Kappa Tau Alpha. The competition has been held annually since 1944. The \$1000 prize will be presented Aug. 11 in St. Louis at the KTA/AEJMC Awards Luncheon during the annual convention of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication.

Mendelson named top adviser

Andrew Mendelson (Temple University) has been named the 2011 William H. Taft Chapter Adviser of the Year.

The award, named after the late executive director who served the Society for 30 years before retiring in 1991, will be presented at the KTA/AEJMC Awards Luncheon Aug. 11 in St. Louis.

"Dr. Mendelson is without a doubt the individual most responsible for the revitalized chapter of Kappa Tau Alpha at Temple University. He is the proud and profound advocate for the academic excellence exemplified by Kappa Tau Alpha," writes colleague Thomas Eveslage.

Ed Traves, another colleague, notes that Mendelson "...has led Kappa Tau Alpha to the point where it is the most prominent scholarly society in the School of Communications and Theater and among the top such organizations at Temple University generally. (He) has done an outstanding job in terms of recognizing and promoting high levels of academic achievement within the department, school and university ... and he does this in large part through his KTA leadership and affiliation."

Mendelson is associate professor and chairman of the Department of Journalism at Temple. He has been adviser of the chapter since 2002. He was inducted into KTA in 1997 at the University of Missouri, where he received his Ph.D.

He is the 27th recipient of the award. Previous winners, most recent first, include: Peter Gade (Oklahoma), W. Joseph Campbell (American), Margaret Patterson (Duchesne), Al Stavitsky (Oregon), Mark Popovich (Ball State), Jane Singer (Iowa), William Click (Winthrop), Karen List (Massachusetts), James Whitfield (LA-Monroe), Tony Rimmer (Cal State-Fullerton), Sam Riley (Virginia Tech), Thomas Schwartz (Ohio State), Emmanuel Onyedike (Hampton), Gil Fowler (Arkansas State), Milt Hollstein (Utah), Luther Sanders (Arkansas at Little Rock), George Abney (Georgia), Marion Marzolf (Michigan) and Whitney Mundt (Louisiana State).

Looking back at KTA-Mott winners

Mark Feldstein will join a diverse and select group of authors in August when he receives the 2010 Frank Luther Mott-Kappa Tau Alpha research award for his book about muckraking journalist Jack Anderson.

The award recognizes the best scholarly book on journalism/mass communication and has been given every year since 1944. Thomas E. Dabney won the inaugural award, for his book *One Hundred Great Years: A History of The New Orleans Times-Picayune*.

It's revealing to note what a rich variety of works have won the award in the 67 years since Dabney received the prize. Some of the books remain well known years after publication; an example is Ann M. Sperber's hefty and definitive *Ed Murrow: His Life and Times*, which won for 1986.

Inevitably, perhaps, a couple of overrated works have won the award: David Halberstam's *The Powers That Be* (1979) and William S. Swanberg's *Citizen Hearst* (1961) are examples.

It's also striking that solo-

authored books by female writers have received the award just six times; most recently, Kathy Roberts Forde won the 2008 award for her prodigiously researched *Literary Journalism on Trial*.

Other female winners have included Joyce Hoffman for *Theodore H. White and Journalism as Illusion* (1995); Hazel Dicken-Garcia for *Journalistic Standards in Nineteenth-Century America* (1989); Marie Brenner for *House of Dreams: The Bingham Family of Louisville* (1988); Marion K. Saunders for *Dorothy Thompson* (1973), and Sperber.

Feldstein's book, *Poisoning the Press: Richard Nixon, Jack Anderson, and the Rise of Washington's Scandal Culture*, is the first biography to receive the award since Robert Miraldi won for his 2003 work, *The Pen is Mightier: The Muckraking Life of Charles Edward Russell*. Before then, 20 biographies had won the award.

Frank Luther Mott was a recipient of the award, too. He received the prize for his 1957 work, *A History of American Magazines: 1895-1905*. The award, though, didn't bear his name until 1960.

W. Joseph Campbell, a professor at American University's School of Communication, is KTA's national president. This is the second of the president's columns he plans to write.

Honor Societies promote excellence in scholarship

Honor societies have existed in the United States since the founding of Phi Beta Kappa in 1776. They exist primarily to recognize the attainment of scholarship and leadership of a superior quality. To the degree that they make such recognition a thing to be coveted, they encourage students to strive toward meeting high standards.

The Association of College Honor Societies (ACHS) is the coordinating agency for collegiate honor societies. Membership in the Association of College Honor Societies is a certification that an honor society has met high standards. On its web site, ACHS (www.achsnatl.org) provides a list of criteria on "How to Judge the Credibility of an Honor Society." ACHS was founded in 1925 and has 67 member societies.

Kappa Tau Alpha, founded in 1910 at the University of Missouri, is the seventh oldest national college honor society.

Membership is by invitation only by one of the Society's 94 campus chapters and is based solely on scholarship and character.

Journalism/mass communication juniors, seniors and graduate students must rank in the upper 10 percent of their class (based on overall GPA). Outstanding doctoral students also may be eligible. Chapters may set higher standards for membership.

Chapters are located at four-year degree-granting institutions accredited by the appropriate regional agency (e.g., New England Association of Colleges) that offer a major in journalism or mass communication.



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List, Allen earn research grants

Karen List (U-Mass.) and Chris Allen (Nebraska-Omaha) have been awarded Chapter Adviser research grants.

List will study the writings of Varina Howell Davis, wife of Confederate President Jefferson Davis, who late in life wrote for the *New York World* and other New York periodicals. List will explore what prompted Davis to become a journalist and what she had to say.

Allen will study the 1963 hearings in Omaha of the FCC's as a followup to Chairman Newton Minow's "vast wasteland" speech two years earlier. Allen will restore the films of the hearings and analyze them in full context.