

## PAST PRIZE WINNERS

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- 1999 Nora Hall, "On Being an African-American Woman: Gender and Race in the Writings of Six Black Women Journalists, 1849-1936"; Director: Hazel Dicken-Garcia, University of Minnesota
- 2000 Dale Zacher, "Editorial Policy of the Scripps Newspapers During World War I"; Director: Patrick Washburn, Ohio University
- 2001 Aleen J. Ratzlaff, "Black Press Pioneers in Kansas: Connecting and Extending Communities in Three Geographic Sections, 1878-1900"; Director: Bernell E. Tripp, University of Florida
- 2002 Marc Edge, "Pacific Press: Vancouver's Newspaper Monopoly, 1957-1991"; Director: Patrick Washburn, Ohio University
- 2003 Mark Feldstein, "Watergate's Forgotten Investigative Reporter: The Battle Between Columnist Jack Anderson and President Richard Nixon"; Director: Margaret A. Blanchard, University of North Carolina
- 2004 Guy Reel, "The Wicked World: The National Police Gazette, Richard K. Fox, and the Making of the Modern American Man, 1879-1906"; Director: Patrick S. Washburn, Ohio University
- 2005 Glenn Smith Jr., "'It's Your America': Gertrude Berg and American Broadcasting, 1929-1956"; Director: Arthur J. Kaul, University of Southern Mississippi

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## 2006 MARGARET A. BLANCHARD DOCTORAL DISSERTATION PRIZE



The AJHA Margaret A. Blanchard Doctoral Dissertation Prize, established in 1997 and named in 2003, is awarded annually for the best doctoral dissertation on mass communication history. Named in honor of the late Professor Margaret A. Blanchard of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill -- superb scholar and the source of guidance and inspiration for generations of doctoral students of journalism history -- the prize is accompanied by a cash award of three hundred dollars.

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**2006 AJHA ANNUAL CONVENTION  
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# AMERICAN JOURNALISM HISTORIANS ASSOCIATION

2006 MARGARET A. BLANCHARD

DOCTORAL DISSERTATION PRIZE

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## PRIZE WINNER

Stacy Spaulding: "Lisa Sergio: How Mussolini's 'Golden Voice' of Propaganda Created an American Mass Communication Career"  
Director: Maurine Beasley, University of Maryland

## HONORABLE MENTION AWARDEES

Kimberly Mangun: "Beatrice Morrow Cannady and The Advocate: Building and Defending Oregon's African American Community, 1912-1933"  
Director: Stephen Ponder, University of Oregon

Maria E. Odum-Hinmon: "The Cautious Crusader: How the Atlanta Daily World Covered the Struggle for African American Rights From 1945 to 1985"  
Director: Maurine Beasley, University of Maryland

Laura R. Walton: "Segregationist Spin: The Use of Public Relations by the Mississippi State Sovereignty Commission and the White Citizens' Council, 1954-1973"  
Director: David R. Davies, University of Southern Mississippi

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## ABSTRACTS

Stacy Spaulding: "Lisa Sergio: How Mussolini's 'Golden Voice' of Propaganda Created an American Mass Communication Career"

In 1937 Lisa Sergio, "The Golden Voice" of fascist broadcasting from Rome, fled Italy for the United States. Though her mother was American, Sergio was classified as an enemy alien once the United States entered World War II. Yet Sergio became a U.S. citizen in 1944 and built a successful career in radio, working first at NBC and then WQXR in New York City in the days when women's voices were not thought to be appropriate for news or "serious" programming. When she was blacklisted as a communist in the early 1950s, Sergio compensated for the loss of radio employment by becoming principally an author and lecturer in Washington, D.C., until her death in 1989. This dissertation, based on her personal papers, is the first study of Sergio's American mass communication career. It points out the personal, political and social obstacles she faced as a woman in her 52-year career as a commentator on varied aspects of world affairs, religion and feminism. This study includes an examination of the FBI investigations of Sergio and the anti-communist campaigns conducted against her. It concludes that Sergio's success as a public communicator was predicated on both her unusual talents and her ability to transform her public image to reflect ideal American values of womanhood in shifting political climates.

Kimberly Mangun: "Beatrice Morrow Cannady and The Advocate: Building and Defending Oregon's African American Community, 1912-1933"

This dissertation explores how journalist Beatrice Morrow Cannady (1890-1974) used The Advocate, a weekly Black newspaper published in Portland, Oregon, to build a strong African American community and defend that community against specific, often violent, forms of racism between 1912 and 1933. More than five hundred issues of The Advocate are studied using qualitative historical research methods and the intertwined concepts of boosterism and imagined communities as a theoretical framework. In addition, this dissertation draws on Cannady's scrapbook; archival records from the NAACP; other Black newspapers; oral histories from Black Oregonians; KKK records; frontier papers; and articles, editorials, and advertisements in the white press. Combined, these rich resources reveal how turbulent the early 1900s were due to entrenched racism, the rise of the Ku Klux Klan, and the effects of the Great Depression, and illustrate the scope of Cannady's work on behalf of Oregon's two thousand African Americans. This dissertation adds considerable original information to the literature on the Black press generally and the few studies of Black newspapers in the Pacific Northwest, and restores a forgotten African American journalist to journalism history. It also contributes significant new findings to several disciplines, including African American history and Oregon history.

Maria E. Odum-Hinmon: "The Cautious Crusader: How the Atlanta Daily World Covered the Struggle for African American Rights From 1945 to 1985"

This dissertation is a study of the Atlanta Daily World, a conservative black newspaper founded in 1928, that covered the civil rights struggle in ways that reflected its orientation to both democratic principles and practical business concerns. The World became the most successful black daily newspaper in the nation after becoming a daily in 1932 and maintaining that status for nearly four decades. This dissertation details how this newspaper chronicled the simultaneous push for civil rights, better conditions in the black community, and recognition of black achievement during the volatile period of social change following World War II. Using descriptive, thematic analysis and in-depth interviews, this dissertation explores the question: How did the Atlanta Daily World crusade for the rights of African Americans against a backdrop of changing times, particularly during the crucial forty-year period between 1945 and 1985? The study contends that the newspaper carried out its crusade by highlighting information and events important to the black community from the perspective of the newspaper's strong-willed publisher, C.A. Scott, and it succeeded by relying on Scott family members and employees who worked long hours for low wages. The study shows that the World fought against lynching and pushed for voting rights in the 1940s and 1950s. The newspaper eschewed sit-in demonstrations to force eateries to desegregate in the 1960s because they seemed dangerous and counterproductive when the college students wound up in jail rather than in school. The World endorsed Republican Presidents and was not swayed to the other side when the Rev. Jesse Jackson ran for President in 1984. The newspaper, however, drew a line against the conservative agenda when the World wholeheartedly endorsed the merits of affirmative action. Now a weekly under more liberal leadership, the World continues to struggle to find its new role when blacks are more assimilated than ever into the fabric of American society. This dissertation, the first in-depth scholarly study of the newspaper, shows how it has managed to maintain itself as a voice of middle-class African American beliefs in the democratic process.

Laura R. Walton: "Segregationist Spin: The Use of Public Relations by the Mississippi State Sovereignty Commission and the White Citizens' Council, 1954-1973"

Following the Brown decision, white Mississippians engaged in many activities to avoid and even nullify the Supreme Court's edict to integrate the state's public school systems. This dissertation examines the role public relations played in these organizations' efforts to thwart integration in the state while also attempting to project a more positive image of Mississippi. In coordinating their efforts, public relations became a key component in the battle to preserve the state's lily-white school systems. Established just weeks after the Brown decision, the Citizens' Council created an arsenal of mass communication tactics that helped solidify white public opinion in the state and mobilize individuals into action as a powerful force in fighting the edict. Bolstered in 1956 by the creation the Mississippi State Sovereignty Commission, white Mississippians' cries of "Never!" seemed to more accurately to reflect reality rather than simply the reactive rhetoric of defiance. While most white Mississippians were unified behind the ideals and motivations of the Citizens' Council and Sovereignty Commission during the late 1950s and early 1960s, a more moderate voice emerged and during the mid-1960s and began to drown out the once deafening cries of "Never!" The passage of the civil rights legislation in 1964 and 1965 rendered the organizations' original purpose useless. As the Citizens' Council and the State Sovereignty Commission attempted to adjust and survive the effects of the legislation, public relations remained a vital and integral part of their activities.