PAST PRIZE WINNERS

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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
2008: Noah Arceneaux, "Department Stores and the Origins of American Broadcasting, 1910-1931”; Director: Jay Hamilton, University of Georgia
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AJHA 2018 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 media history. Named in honor of the late Professor Margaret A. Blanchard of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill—a superb scholar and the source of guidance and inspiration for generations of doctoral students of journalism history—the prize includes an honorarium of five hundred dollars. A two-hundred-dollar honorarium is awarded each honorable mention.

2018 AJHA ANNUAL CONVENTION
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Jeremiah Favara, “Recruiting for Difference and Diversity in the U.S. Military.” This dissertation rethinks the role that print journalism played in creating a Cold War consensus about American foreign policy. By creating one conversation for public consumption and tolerating another behind closed doors, reporters in the capital created an appearance of consensus about foreign policy that for decades shaped American international relations—most significantly that, after World War II, the United States would have to “win the peace,” a phrase and idea soon replaced with that of waging a Cold War.

I contribute a new element to the historiography of the Cold War by emphasizing the importance of the social and professional spaces in which reporters operated. In paying particular attention to the social world that fostered consensus reporting and the role of fellowship, expressed through whiteness and masculinity, I also contribute to ongoing scholarly discussions about gender and foreign policy as well as communications scholarship on the sphere of consensus. I argue that daily life in Washington created a much larger and more permanent consensus than a “boys on the bus” model of campaign reporting has held.

Thomas Schmidt, “Rediscovering Narrative: A Cultural History of Journalistic Storytelling In American Newspapers, 1969-2001.” This dissertation analyzes the expansion of narrative journalism and the institutional change in the American newspaper industry in the last quarter of the 20th century. It offers the first institutionally situated history of narrative journalism’s evolution from the New Journalism of the 1960s to long form literary journalism in the 1990s. This analysis shows that the New Journalism, contrary to popular beliefs, did indeed have a significant impact on American newspapers. Yet, this study also demonstrates that the evolution of narrative techniques in American journalism was more nuanced, more purposeful and more institutionally based than the New Journalism myth suggests.

Situated at the intersection of journalism history and cultural history, this study shows how institutional and cultural changes affected the practice of journalism and how, simultaneously, specific narrative techniques affected representations of current events and issues in American society. Narrative news writing broke with conventions, practices and rules of traditional news writing and advanced a particular form of storytelling as a format for journalistic information delivery. With its emphasis on scenes instead of events, people instead of sources, and sequencing instead of a straightforward delivery of news, narrative journalism redefined the purpose, the practice and the possibilities of journalism in daily news production.

Willie Tubbs, “Forward Myth: Military Public Relations and the Domestic Base Newspaper 1941-1981.” This dissertation explores the evolution of domestic military base newspapers from 1941-1981, a timeframe that encapsulates the Second World War, Korean War, and Vietnam War, as well as interwar years. While called newspapers, these publications were a hybrid of traditional journalism and public relations. This dissertation focuses on three aspects of these newspapers: the evolution of the editorial approaches; evolution of messages crafted for and about the “common” soldier and American; and the messages for and about members of non-majority groups.

Despite the wide swath of people with control over content, these papers looked the same and lacked diversity of thought. Though tasked with functioning as both journalistic and public relations vessels, these publications were too inconsistent in coverage to be considered successful journalism and too inconsistent in messaging to be deemed worthy public relations. It was not until the late 70’s, coincidentally the time in which the United States military faced the worst public image crisis in its existence, that the papers began to truly recognize their potential as instruments of both hard news and public relations. The legacy of the early domestic base newspaper is that of agent in the development of the American identity and dominant concepts of majority and minority.