



PRESS RELEASE

May 14, 2017

For Immediate Release

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HRACH TO RECEIVE AJHA BOOK AWARD

The American Journalism Historians Association has selected Thomas J. Hrach as the winner of its 2017 Book of the Year Award for his 2016 work, “The Riot Report and the News: How the Kerner Commission Changed Media Coverage of Black America.”

Hrach will receive his award and discuss his research during a special session at the 36th annual AJHA Convention, to be held Oct. 12-14 in Little Rock, Arkansas.

“I am honored and grateful that my colleagues who study journalism history have chosen to recognize my work,” Hrach said. “I have enjoyed being a member of the AJHA and the support I have received from the members is appreciated.”

Hrach is associate professor and graduate coordinator in the Department of Journalism and Strategic Media at the University of Memphis. In researching this book, Hrach relied upon original documents from the 1968 Kerner Commission at the LBJ Library in Austin, Texas, documents about Otto Kerner from the Lincoln Presidential Library in Springfield, Illinois, and interviews with people willing to share their memories of the commission’s work.

Citing his concerns about “the future of journalism as a profession in our current economic and political climate,” Hrach said he hoped his book will show the importance of professional journalism.

“Journalism is as important as ever,” Hrach said, adding he hoped his book would show “the power of good, quality journalism to improve the lives of people in a democratic nation.”

Founded in 1981, the American Journalism Historians Association seeks to advance education and research in mass communication history. Members work to raise historical standards and ensure that all scholars and students recognize the vast importance of media history and apply this knowledge to the advancement of society. For more information on AJHA, visit <http://www.ajhaonline.org>.

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