



**PRESS RELEASE**

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**AJHA Announces Hale-Shelton as 2017 Local Journalist Award Winner**

A reporter from the Arkansas Democrat-Gazette whose work has exposed judicial and higher education corruption will soon be honored by the American Journalism Historians Association.

Debra Hale-Shelton, who joined the Democrat-Gazette in 2004, will receive AJHA's 2017 Local Journalist Award at the organization's annual convention, which will be held Oct. 12-14 in Little Rock.

"Every year AJHA honors a journalist in our convention city who has repeatedly ensured that the public interest is served by governmental, societal and corporate institutions," Dave Vergobbi, AJHA President and a member of University of Utah faculty. "We are indeed pleased to so honor Debra Hale-Shelton this year in Little Rock, because her career exemplifies the vital role of journalism in a democracy."

Hale-Shelton has reported stories that led to the resignations of two University of Central Arkansas presidents, and she reported extensively on a judicial corruption probe. Hale-Shelton previously worked more than 20 years for The Associated Press. She has interviewed former Presidents Carter and Clinton, the late advice columnist Ann Landers, a young Donald Trump, death-row inmates and the suspected Tylenol killer.

"Debra Hale-Shelton is, perhaps, the best reporter in Arkansas," said Donna Lampkin Stephens, Associate Professor of Journalism at the University of Central Arkansas. "The epitome of journalism's watchdog role, she is a dogged, determined journalist who has uncovered a number of cases of wrongdoing and been the catalyst for correcting them. I hope my students grow up to be just like her."

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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