

**PRESS RELEASE**

August 3, 2021

For Immediate Release

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*Written by Erika Pribanic-Smith*

## Edmondson Receives 2021 Best Article Award

*American Journalism*, the peer-reviewed quarterly journal of the American Journalism Historians Association, has awarded its 2021 Best Article prize to Aimee Edmondson, professor and director for graduate studies in the E.W. Scripps School of Journalism at Ohio University.

This annual award honors the best of the best scholarship that was published in *American Journalism* between Summer 2020 and Spring 2021. Edmondson's study, "'Pure Caucasian Blood': Libel by Racial Misidentification in American Newspapers (1900-1957)," appeared in the Winter 2021 edition of the journal.

"Before critical race theory became a punching bag for the far right, it was mostly confined to academic circles, as members of the AJHA well know," Edmondson said. "This body of legal scholarship helped me critically examine U.S. libel law as it intersects with issues of society and race. The CRT framework provides that all-important context as we work to situate our legal scholarship within the larger societal picture throughout history."

Edmondson thanked *American Journalism*'s editors and reviewers—especially Ford Risley, Barbara Friedman and Gwyn Mellinger—for their time, patience and expertise in helping her make the article better.

*American Journalism* Editor Pamela Walck said Edmondson's article hits squarely on the mark all the things the journal strives for—timeliness, relevance, rigorous research, and engaging writing.

"It sets a high bar that AJ strives for each issue, and I am thrilled she chose our journal to publish her work in," Walck said.

Among the comments from the advisory board members judging this year, one noted that through careful legal research, Edmondson illuminates how, during the first half of the 20th century, arguments in newspaper libel cases contributed to the construction of different definitions of citizenship and value for Black and White Americans.

"This article provides a compelling exploration of the role of news-reporting errors in broader debates that perpetuated institutional racism for decades," the reviewer wrote. "Edmondson's work sheds new light on an under-researched chapter of not only journalism history but also American history."

Another voter observed that Edmondson's article is strong on both evidence and ideas, contributing to our understanding of race and libel law and to our broader understanding of what it means to say that race is socially constructed and racism is systemic.

"It's a good example of what critical race theory might mean in journalism/legal history," the reviewer wrote.



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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