

**PRESS RELEASE**

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PR Museum Founder to Receive AJHA Distinguished Service Award

The American Journalism Historians Association will recognize [Shelley Spector](#) with its Distinguished Service to Journalism History Award.

This award is reserved for those generally outside the field of academe who have made major contributions to the preservation of journalism history. It has been given only [four other times](#) in AJHA's 40-year history.

AJHA Service Awards Chair Tom Mascaro said Spector's effort to create the [Museum of Public Relations](#) and preserve primary sources that inform the history of the field stands as a singular contribution to journalism history.

"What I find most compelling, though, about the committee's selection of Ms. Spector to receive the rare honor of AJHA's Distinguished Service to Journalism History Award is their recognition of the museum's vital contributions by Black, women, Latinx, Asian American, and Pacific Islander pioneers and their robust heritage within public relations," Mascaro said. "This DSJH Award will open eyes and archives for scholars to ask questions of the documents Ms. Spector has secured for posterity."

Spector is founder and director of the Museum of Public Relations, a non-profit in New York that serves researchers, educators, students, and practitioners with a large collection of rare documents, oral histories, photographs, and film highlighting the impact of PR in American culture, business, and politics.

Janice Hume, who nominated Spector for the award, noted that the museum does more than just maintain its collections; it presides over myriad activities that support scholars and practitioners, including a free lecture series, webinars, and book publishing. In her letter supporting the nomination, Karla Gower added that Spector promotes diversity and brings forgotten voices in public relations to the forefront.

"It is clear that Shelley has done more to make public relations history accessible through her extraordinary effort than any other individual," Gower wrote. "Even more important perhaps, she has brought it to life for a whole new generation of students."

Spector said that students love poring through the museum's soon-to-be-digitized historic newspapers and magazines—some from the early 19th century—as well as its collection of communications technologies like stereographs, manual typewriters, telegraphs, and candlestick phones.

A journalism major herself, Spector said she long has had a passion for media history. As a child, she started collecting old magazines and newspapers and recording TV news reports on her reel-to-reel tape recorder. These became some of the first artifacts to be preserved in the Museum of Public Relations when it launched in 1997.

"Even though we are a museum dedicated to teaching the history of public relations, we realized long ago the importance of teaching journalism history right alongside it, and we applaud AJHA's call for more 'J' classes to teach media history," Spector said.

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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