



PRESS RELEASE

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Julie Williams named 2021 Kobre Award Winner

The American Journalism Historians Association has announced Julie Hedgepeth Williams of Samford University as the recipient of the 2021 Kobre Award for Lifetime Achievement in Journalism History.

Since joining AJHA more than 25 years ago, Williams has been one of the organization's most active and dedicated members. She served on the board of directors from 1999-2001 and was the AJHA president in 2008-2009. She served as the host for the 2009 convention in Birmingham, Alabama. She also chaired the Publications Committee from 1997-2006 and served on the Dissertation Award Committee from 1998-2003.

David Sloan, who nominated Williams for the award, wrote that her work in media history and her contributions to the AJHA comprise exactly the type of record that the Kobre Award was established to recognize.

"She is a truly outstanding historian, and hardly anyone in the history of the AJHA has contributed more than she has," Sloan said.

Williams said that Sloan nominated her because she has written several popular books that began as AJHA papers.

"It's so gratifying that my work counted so much and made such a difference," Williams said. "I'm so touched that my work with AJHA was the spark that gave rise to my books, and that my books gave rise to this award."

Several AJHA stalwarts—including past presidents and Kobre Award winners—wrote letters supporting Williams's nomination, noting her excellence in research, service, and teaching. Additionally, they cited the numerous public speeches and performances Williams has given based on her historical work.

"From 1997, the year she won the AJHA's first doctoral dissertation prize, to the present, Dr. Williams has shown great enthusiasm for making the fruits of journalism history available to a wide audience," Maurine Beasley wrote.

Those supporting Williams's nomination also mentioned her dedication to the AJHA Southeast Symposium, an annual winter conference for student research. She has brought several students to the conference, many of whom have won awards and had their work published in AJHA's student research journal, the *Southeastern Review of Journalism History*.

"She is a skilled and innovative teacher who has conveyed her love of history to her students through teaching them how to undertake and successfully complete significant research projects," wrote *Southeastern Review* editor Debbie van Tuyl.

AJHA Service Awards Chair Tom Mascaro said the effusive praise for years of service by so many past Kobre winners is a testament to the esteem AJHA members hold for Williams.

"Julie is being welcomed into an exclusive club holding the most demanding admissions criteria," Mascaro said. "She has shown to be selfless in giving her time, talents, and expertise to history, cultivating others' careers, outreach to the larger community, and with a demonstrative personality that inspires others to do good for the field."

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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