American Gavel Awards
for Distinguished Reporting About the Judiciary

The American Gavel Award for Distinguished Reporting about the Judiciary was created in 2009 to recognize the highest standards of reporting about courts and the justice system. The award recognizes legal journalism at its best, and highlights the importance of journalism in educating the public about the legal system and the fundamental principles and values upon which that system is based.

Nominees will be considered in two categories: National and Regional. The National award will be given for entries about the justice system that have the widest application, regardless of the area. The Regional award will be given to entries about the justice system that have more of a local focus.

American Gavel Award Winners Will:

- Be presented with a plaque recognizing their distinguished reporting.
- Be featured in American Judges Associations publication the "Court Review".
- Be listed permanently in the American Gavel Award section of the American Judges Association Website.

Entries will be judged on how well they covered the judiciary as a whole, or helped illuminate the actions of judges or helped educate the public about the workings of the Judiciary. The articles, recordings, or video must have been published or broadcast in the period between March 1, 2016 and February 28, 2017. The competition is **not** open to publications or broadcast materials primarily intended for legal audiences or legal textbooks. Journalists working for house organs, government agencies, or for publications of organizations such as trade or bar association also will **not** be considered.

There is no restriction on who may nominate a journalist or media organization. The author may nominate himself or herself. If the entry is submitted by a separate nominator, it must be with the knowledge and permission of the journalist or the organization. The nominating letter should summarize briefly the impact of the work on either educating the public about the Judiciary.

Consideration will be given to a single news story, feature, series, documentary, special section, opinion piece or editorial if it is demonstrated in and of itself to have had extra ordinary impact on achieving the objectives of the competition.

Entries for a single story, a series, or a body of work shall consist of three copies each of examples of the journalist's or organization's ongoing coverage in print, broadcast or online media, along with three copies of a nominating letter, and three copies of the entry form. Print entries should be on 81/2" by 11" paper. Broadcast entries must include three copies of audio or video recordings. For any entries with online content**,** all content must be clearly indicated and remain publicly accessible via a single URL throughout the judging period (April 1 - July 1). We also encourage submission of selected online content in either hard copy or DVD/CD formats, as appropriate (three copies). If the required number of copies is not submitted, the entry will be disqualified.

Those submitting nominations must submit three complete packets. Each packet must contain the following:

- Entry form
- articles, or broadcast pieces focused on coverage of the judiciary, as described above
- Support letter from nominator
- A brief biography if it is an individual being nominated

The American Judges Association administers the awards, and the Award Committee of the Association will make the selections. **Entries must be postmarked by April 1 of each year.** The American Gavel Award Committee shall choose the recipient, subject to the final approval of the AJA Board of Governors. The Award Committee reserves the right to place entries in categories other than those selected. The Association reserves the right not to select an award-winner due to lack of suitable entries.

Notification will be given to the winners at least 45 days in advance of the conference. Entries will not be returned. Applicants, by their submission, agree to work with American Judges Association to secure limited republication rights for winning entries. Please make sure that CDs or DVDs enclosed are in working order. Defective materials will not be judged. By granting an award, the American Judges Association does not endorse the position taken by the entrant.

Address questions or applications to:

American Judges Association
300 Newport Avenue
Williamsburg, VA 23185-4147
(757) 259-1841 – phone/ (757) 259-1520 – fax
aja@ncsc.org

The American Judges Association is the voice of the Judiciary. It has more than 2,000 members, which includes both present and former judges of courts of all jurisdictions in the United States, Canada, Mexico, Puerto Rico, Guam, American Samoa and The Virgin Islands. Its Board of Governors is composed of representatives from fourteen districts.

The objective and purpose of the Association is: to promote and improve the effective administration of justice; to maintain the status and independence of the judiciary; to provide a forum for the continuing education of its members and the general public; and for the exchange of new ideas among all judges.

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ENTRY FORM

Please print

Name of journalist:_____

Title:_____

Media organization: _____

Mailing address: _____

_____

City: _____ _____

State: _____ _____

Zip:_____

Telephone number:_____

Fax: _____

Name of nominator if different than above:_____

CATEGORY OF ENTRY_____

Title:_____

Media organization: _____

Mailing address: _____

_____

City: _____ _____

State: _____ _____

Zip:_____

Telephone number:_____

Fax: _____

_____

<u>Mail three copies of the entry packet by April 1, 2017 to:</u>

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