



The **WALTER CRONKITE**
for excellence in political journalism
on television and digital media **AWARD**

USC Annenberg
School for Communication
and Journalism
Norman Lear Center

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CRONKITE AWARD WINNERS TO SHOW HOW A FREE PRESS DEFENDS DEMOCRACY

Video Podcasts, Social Media Also Now Eligible, As Are Comedy, Commentary

LOS ANGELES (Feb. 6, 2025)—Mindful of Walter Cronkite's warning that "a free, unintimidated and unregulated press is democracy's early warning system against ... the approach of tyranny," judges of the 2025 Walter Cronkite Awards for Excellence in Political Journalism competition have announced a call for entries that demonstrate how a free press defends democracy.

Winning submissions will investigate threats that democracy now faces and provide exemplary coverage of efforts to protect the U.S. Constitution, defend the rule of law and hold power accountable. "Covering the health of democracy isn't inherently left or right," said USC Annenberg School professor Martin Kaplan, founding director of its Norman Lear Center for the study of entertainment, media and society, which administers the biennial award. "The First Amendment gives journalists plenty of latitude for all kinds of ideological takes."

This year, the judges welcome submissions from broadcast, cable and streaming channels, and—reflecting the transformation of media usage since the inception of the awards in 2001—from video podcasts and video social media such as YouTube and Twitch, as well as digital-original video news. Comedy, satire and parody are eligible, as are commentary and analysis.

Reels no more than 30 minutes in length **must be submitted by May 30, 2025**. Their content must have first been available to the public at some point between Election Day, Nov. 5, 2024, and the 100th day of the Trump Administration, April 30, 2025.

Entries will be screened and judged by panels of USC Annenberg faculty, alumni and affiliates with extensive journalism experience. The number and categories of prizes will be determined by the judges, based on the entries submitted and shortlisted.

The 2025 Brooks Jackson Prize for Fact-Checking, reviewed by a separate jury at the University of Pennsylvania's Annenberg Public Policy Center, is presented in partnership with the Cronkite Awards. It is named in honor of the founding director of FactCheck.org, a nonpartisan, nonprofit advocate for voters that aims to reduce the level of deception and confusion in U.S. politics. Jackson Prizes will honor recurring fact-checking coverage that aired between Jan. 1, 2023 and Feb. 1, 2025. The deadline for submitting an entry is **May 30, 2025**.

For further information and the entry portal, visit www.cronkiteawards.com.