

Virginia Trial Lawyers Association's

2018 EXCELLENCE IN JOURNALISM AWARDS

PRINT AND BROADCAST

Call for Entries

The Virginia Trial Lawyers Association is proud to honor outstanding Virginia journalists who, through their reporting of criminal or civil justice issues, foster increased public awareness and understanding of the fundamental role these systems play in the lives of Virginians.

Join the ranks of Virginia's best journalists and submit your entry for consideration this year. The deadline for submissions for the 2018 Award is **Friday, January 25, 2019.**



Virginia Trial Lawyers Association's

2018 EXCELLENCE IN JOURNALISM AWARD

Entry information

THE AWARD AND ITS OBJECTIVES

VTLA's Excellence in Journalism Award is presented to a journalist who raises the public's awareness and understanding of our civil or criminal justice system and its effect on Virginians. Since the award's inception in 1988, VTLA has honored journalists for their accuracy, initiative, originality, tenacity, effectiveness, and skill in reporting on a diverse range of topics.

The recipient(s) will be recognized and awarded a plaque at the VTLA Annual Convention banquet at The Homestead, March 30, 2019. VTLA will also provide an evening's lodging at The Homestead for that night.

Award nominations are reviewed by a VTLA standing committee of attorneys with diverse practice interests and geographical representation. Only one award will be presented each year in each category – print and broadcast, although depending on the entries, honorable mention awards may also be presented, or no award may be given.

VTLA EXCELLENCE IN JOURNALISM AWARD CRITERIA

All published or broadcast works that meet these general criteria are welcomed.

Entries will be judged based on the following criteria:

- the extent to which the entry meets the objectives of the Excellence in Journalism Award;
- thoroughness, accuracy, creativity and originality in the presentation of issues;
- demonstration of technical skill; and
- effectiveness of the work and its impact on the public.

ELIGIBILITY

The VTLA Excellence in Journalism Awards are open to all journalists for stories published in newspapers or magazines of general circulation in Virginia or broadcast on television or radio in Virginia, and originating in Virginia, during the 2018 calendar year.

Entries must be on a single subject or issue. Series of articles or broadcasts are eligible, as is associated online content.

SUBMISSION OF NOMINATIONS

Nominations may be submitted by members of the news media, members of the Association, or other interested persons, as long as the general criteria and eligibility requirements are met. Entries will be screened at VTLA headquarters to verify eligibility and all decisions of VTLA are final. Entrants will be notified of the winners. If the judges deem no entry worthy of an award in either category, none will be given.

For print entries:

Nominations must include: one copy of the article or series of articles which clearly shows the author's byline, name of the publication and date of the publication; the name and address of the reporter and other persons involved, as applicable; and the name, address and signature of the person submitting the nomination. Background information is encouraged, but not required, as is any information relating to the impact of the submission on the community.

Any online portions must be accessible throughout the entire judging period – January 15-March 30, 2019, either through an active URL or an archived link. The printed copies of online materials must include the appropriate URL.

For broadcast entries:

Nominations must include: a DVD (or flash drive) of the broadcast or an active URL; the name and address of the reporter and/or producer, as applicable; the date of broadcast; and the name, address and signature of the person submitting the nomination. Background information is encouraged, but not required, as is any information relating to the impact of the submission on the community.

Nominations should be sent to:
Courtney Hammack
Virginia Trial Lawyers Association
919 East Main Street
Suite 620
Richmond, Virginia 23219

DEADLINE: Friday, January 25, 2019

Questions should be directed to Courtney Hammack
(804) 343-1143 • chammack@vtla.com

PREVIOUS WINNERS

VTLA has honored some outstanding Virginia journalists. A listing of previous winners and their work follows:

- 2017 PRINT AWARD: Tim Eberly, *The Virginian-Pilot*. The legacy of this in-depth presentation of “three-strikes” law was that the Parole Board changed their stance, allowing freedom for more than 200 inmates, many of whom were incarcerated for decades for a single act. The value of the press can be measured in lives and freedom.
- 2016 PRINT AWARD: Denise M. Watson, *The Virginian-Pilot*, who shared the lesser known story of Ham and Ruby Naim that challenged the constitutionality of Virginia’s Racial Integrity Act more than eleven years before the Lovings’ famous case.
- 2015 PRINT AWARD: Terrence McCoy, *The Washington Post*, whose shocking expose of the weaknesses in Virginia’s structured settlement protection statute, as revealed in the compelling and terribly sad story of Terrence Taylor, caused a public furor, directly leading to prompt action by the General Assembly and Governor, adding safeguards designed to prevent such abuses in the future.
- 2014 PRINT AWARDS: Gary A. Harki and Jon Davenport, *The Virginian-Pilot* and Robert O’Harrow and Steven Rich, *The Washington Post*. Virginia’s forfeiture laws rank among the worst in the country. These reporters brought light to this fundamentally flawed program in which individual’s rights are violated. #endforfeiture

PREVIOUS WINNERS

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- 2013 PRINT AWARD: Louis Hansen, *The Virginian-Pilot*. His masterful telling the story of a juvenile who was given a seemingly unconscionable sentence brought public awareness of fundamental Constitutional rights.
- 2012 PRINT AWARD: Frank Green, *Richmond Times-Dispatch*. His moving reporting on another man wrongfully convicted and incarcerated for rape, serves as a constant reminder to seek truth in our justice system.
- BROADCAST AWARD: Nancy Buirski, *The Loving Story*. The piece honored unsuspecting Constitutional heroes, Richard and Mildred Loving, whose steadfast love ultimately proved the right to live together as husband and wife.
- Honorable Mention: Louis Hansen, *The Virginian-Pilot* for the compelling story of a courageous young woman assisting the Commonwealth in its prosecution of a murder case and her remarkable lawyer.
- 2011 PRINT AWARD: Frank Green, *Richmond Times-Dispatch*. His compelling coverage of a man's journey to innocence after being wrongly convicted of rape, reminded us again that the truth will set us free.
- 2010 PRINT AWARD: Dan Casey, *The Roanoke Times*. His reporting of one person's struggles with the Virginia Workers' Compensation system helped Virginians understand a need for change to protect workers.
- Honorable Mention: Mark Heath and Kevin McCoy, *USA Today* for an exhaustive review of prosecutorial errors and breaches of trust and how those impact lives and our justice system itself.
- 2009 PRINT AWARD: Pamela Gould, *The Free-Lance Star*. Her reporting of a rape conviction and later recantation by the alleged victim raised important questions about the fairness of Virginia's juvenile justice system.
- BROADCAST AWARD: Ashley Singh, *WSET ABC 13*. Her extended coverage of a local murder trial allowed all to see and experience both the grittiness and majesty of our system of justice.
- 2008 PRINT AWARD: Laurence Hammack, *The Roanoke Times*. His vivid depiction of the dunning collection practices of a huge non-profit health care system revealed a less than charitable system for those in need, resulting in a significant community effort to effect change.
- 2007 PRINT AWARD: Bill Sizemore, *The Virginian-Pilot*, "No Hope." A story of a German citizen who was convicted of murder, raised uncomfortable questions about our criminal justice system and reminded us of the fundamental role the press plays in protecting our civil liberties.
- 2006 PRINT AWARD: Amy Biegelsen, *Style Weekly*, who reported on parents who could only obtain essential mental health services for their children by relinquishing custody to the state. This revelation has contributed to a push for change, and hope.

PREVIOUS WINNERS

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- 2005 PRINT AWARD: Margaret Edds, *The Virginian-Pilot*, who, by allowing the facts concerning the death penalty and the use of DNA testing in Virginia to speak for themselves, honored truth and promoted justice.
- 2004 PRINT AWARD: Michelle Washington and Tim Glone, *The Virginian-Pilot*, for articles which forced the state to consider how to address DNA testing of evidence stored in files; and Jeremy Lazarus of *The Richmond Free Press*, who reported on unacceptable biased statements of a Richmond general district judge in an internet chat room, forcing resignation.
- 2003 PRINT AWARD: “America’s Patriot Act: Protection, but at what price?” Reporting team from *The News & Advance* for an outstanding series addressing fundamental Constitutional issues of paramount importance to Virginia citizens.
- 2002 PRINT AWARD: “Operating Behind Closed Doors” Liz Szabo, *The Virginian-Pilot* for an outstanding series bringing to light a number of shortcomings in Virginia’s physician discipline system.
- 2001 PRINT AWARD: “Injured for Life” Bill McKelway, *Richmond Times-Dispatch* for exposing the workings of the Virginia Birth-Related Neurological Injury Compensation Program and bringing human faces to the families involved.
- Honorable Mentions: Laurence Hammack from *The Roanoke Times* for a story on the 21-day rule on evidence in criminal cases, and Janet Marshall from *The Free-Lance Star* for a series on domestic violence and how the courts and community handle such cases.
- 2000 PRINT AWARD: “The Faces of Domestic Violence” reporting team from *Roanoke Times*, and Frank Green of the *Richmond Times-Dispatch*.
- Honorable Mentions: Reporting team from *The Dickinson Star* for “OxyContin abuse epidemic,” and Brandon Walters of *Style Weekly* for “Matter of Time.”
- 1999 PRINT AWARD: “Two lives. One bullet. No justice.” Joanne Kimberlin and Kimberly Lenz, *Daily Press*.
- Honorable Mentions: Laurence Hammack, *Roanoke Times*, for the David Reedy Story; Marc Davis, *The Virginian-Pilot*, for overall excellence explaining Virginia’s justice system; Michael Hemphill, *Roanoke Times*, for “Who Killed John McCloskey?”
- BROADCAST AWARD: “Fighting for Freedom: the Oliver Hill Story” Kevin Hall, *WRVA-Richmond and Virginia News Network*.
- 1998 PRINT AWARD: No award presented.
- BROADCAST AWARD: Justice Powell Tribute. Kevin Hall, *WRVA-Richmond and Virginia News Network*. Hall produced a moving tribute to an outstanding man within hours of his death.

PREVIOUS WINNERS

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- 1997 PRINT AWARD: Changes in Virginia's employment laws. Marc Davis, *Virginian-Pilot*. Davis explained the implications of numerous cases affecting employment in Virginia.
- Honorable Mentions: Laurence Hammack, *Roanoke Times* and Michael Hemphill, *Roanoke Times*
- BROADCAST AWARD: "Born Again - Porn Again." Maria Hess, *WVPT Public Television, Harrisonburg*, on First Amendment issues.
- 1996 Judicial Review Process. Marc Davis, *Virginian-Pilot*. Amidst allegations of ethical violations for a Norfolk judge, Davis delved into Virginia's secret judicial review process.
- Honorable Mention: Jan Vertefeuille, *Roanoke Times*.
- 1995 Crack in the Foundation. Staff, *Lynchburg News & Advance*. This series represented an extensive 10-month investigation into the pervasive crack cocaine problem in Central Virginia, analyzing its impact on people, neighborhoods, agencies, government and the criminal justice system.
- Honorable Mention: Frank Green, *Richmond Times-Dispatch*; and WVTM-FM in Roanoke.
- 1994 Parole and Sentencing Issues: Proposals and Reality. Frank Green, *Richmond Times-Dispatch*. Green investigated a number of parole and sentencing issues in Virginia and corollary issues in Florida. Justice was served by presentation of facts concerning potential crime-fighting legislation which sometimes even flew in the face of public hysteria about crime.
- Honorable Mention: Joe Jackson and June Arney, *Virginian-Pilot & Ledger Star*; Lynn Waltz of the *Virginian-Pilot & Ledger Star*; and Tammy Brown of *Leesburg Today*.
- 1993 "Did Brian McCray Receive Justice," Joe Jackson, *Virginian-Pilot & Ledger Star*.
- Honorable Mention: Valerie Calhoun, WCYB-TV 5 in Bristol and David Botkins, Staunton *Daily News Leader*.
- 1992 "See No Evil," Bob Evans and Ken Armstrong, Newport News *Daily Press*.
- Honorable Mention: *Virginian-Pilot & Ledger Star* staff and Toni Whitt, *Virginian-Pilot & Ledger Star*.
- 1991 "Suffering in Silence," Cheryl Reed, Newport News *Daily Press*.
- 1990 Investigation of Melvin Moore, Jim Haner, *Virginian-Pilot & Ledger Star*.
- 1989 "Virginians At Risk," Mike Hudson and Stephanie Klein, *Roanoke Times*.
- 1988 "Poison in Our Homes," Mary Bishop, *Roanoke Times*.