

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY ANNOUNCES THE 104th ANNUAL PULITZER PRIZES IN JOURNALISM, LETTERS, DRAMA AND MUSIC

New York, NY (May 4, 2020) – The 104th annual Pulitzer Prizes in Journalism, Letters, Drama and Music were announced today.

The winners in each category, along with the names of the finalists in the competition, follow:

A. PRIZES IN JOURNALISM

1. PUBLIC SERVICE

For a distinguished example of meritorious public service by a newspaper or news site through the use of its journalistic resources, including the use of stories, editorials, cartoons, photographs, graphics, videos, databases, multimedia or interactive presentations or other visual material, a gold medal.

Awarded to The Anchorage Daily News, in collaboration with ProPublica, for a riveting series that revealed a third of Alaska's villages had no police protection, took authorities to task for decades of neglect, and spurred an influx of money and legislative changes.

Also nominated as finalists in this category were: The New York Times for exemplary reporting that exposed the breadth and impact of a political war on science, including systematic dismantling of federal regulations and policy, and revealed the implications for the health and safety of all Americans; and The Washington Post for groundbreaking, data-driven journalism that used previously hidden government records and confidential company documents to provide unprecedented insight into America's deadly opioid epidemic.

2. BREAKING NEWS REPORTING

For a distinguished example of local reporting of breaking news that, as quickly as possible, captures events accurately as they occur, and, as time passes, illuminates, provides context and expands upon the initial coverage, Fifteen thousand dollars (\$15,000).

Awarded to the Staff of The Courier-Journal, Louisville, Ky., for its rapid coverage of hundreds of last-minute pardons by Kentucky's governor, showing how the process was marked by opacity, racial disparities and violations of legal norms. (Moved by the jury from Local Reporting, where it was originally entered.)

Also nominated as finalists in this category were: Staff of the Los Angeles Times for dynamic coverage that expertly blended multimedia components, frequent updates and rich narrative to report on a devastating California boat fire that killed 34 people; and Staff of The Washington Post for incisive coverage of back-to-back mass shootings in El Paso, Texas and Dayton, Ohio that contextualized these events for a national audience.

3. INVESTIGATIVE REPORTING

For a distinguished example of investigative reporting, using any available journalistic tool, Fifteen thousand dollars (\$15,000).

Awarded to Brian M. Rosenthal of The New York Times for an exposé of New York City's taxi industry that showed how lenders profited from predatory loans that shattered the lives of vulnerable drivers, reporting that ultimately led to state and federal investigations and sweeping reforms.

Also nominated as finalists in this category were: Jay Hancock and Elizabeth Lucas of Kaiser Health News for exposing predatory bill collection by the University of Virginia Health System that relentlessly squeezed low-income patients—many into bankruptcy—forcing the non-profit, state-run hospital to change its tactics; and Staff of The Wall Street Journal for an exhaustive investigation into Amazon, the world's largest retailer, that revealed a largely unregulated and highly profitable third-party flea market and the potentially deadly results of it peddling of unsafe and banned products.

4. EXPLANATORY REPORTING

For a distinguished example of explanatory reporting that illuminates a significant and complex subject, demonstrating mastery of the subject, lucid writing and clear presentation, using any available journalistic tool, Fifteen thousand dollars (\$15,000).

Awarded to Staff of The Washington Post for a groundbreaking series that showed with scientific clarity the dire effects of extreme temperatures on the planet.

Also nominated as finalists in this category were: Rosanna Xia, Swetha Kannan and Terry Castleman of the Los Angeles Times for a deeply researched examination of the difficult choices Californians must make as climate change erodes precious coastline; and Staff of Reveal from The Center for Investigative Reporting for its industrious reporting on worker injuries and the human toll of robotics technology at Amazon warehouses across the United States.

5. LOCAL REPORTING

For a distinguished example of reporting on significant issues of local concern, demonstrating originality and community expertise, using any available journalistic tool, Fifteen thousand dollars (\$15,000).

Awarded to the Staff of The Baltimore Sun for illuminating, impactful reporting on a lucrative, undisclosed financial relationship between the city's mayor and the public hospital system she helped to oversee.

Also nominated as finalists in this category were: Staff of The Boston Globe for its engaging approach to exposing socioeconomic inequities by surveying the city's brightest public high school students a decade after graduation; and Peter Smith, Stephanie Strasburg and Shelly Bradbury of the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette for an unprecedented investigation of child sexual abuse and cover-ups in the insular Amish and Mennonite communities.

6. NATIONAL REPORTING

For a distinguished example of reporting on national affairs, using any available journalistic tool, Fifteen thousand dollars (\$15,000).

Two Prizes of \$15,000 each:

Awarded to T. Christian Miller, Megan Rose and Robert Faturechi of ProPublica for their investigation into America's 7th Fleet after a series of deadly naval accidents in the Pacific.

and

Awarded to Dominic Gates, Steve Miletich, Mike Baker and Lewis Kamb of The Seattle Times for groundbreaking stories that exposed design flaws in the Boeing 737 MAX that led to two deadly crashes and revealed failures in government oversight.

Nominated as a finalist in this category was: Staff of The Wall Street Journal for revelatory work showing how a California utility's neglect of its equipment caused countless wildfires, including one that wiped out the town of Paradise and killed 85 people.

7. INTERNATIONAL REPORTING

For a distinguished example of reporting on international affairs, using any available journalistic tool, Fifteen thousand dollars (\$15,000).

Awarded to Staff of The New York Times for a set of enthralling stories, reported at great risk, exposing the predations of Vladimir Putin's regime.

Also nominated as finalists in this category were: Staff of The New York Times for gripping accounts that disclosed China's top-secret efforts to repress millions of Muslims through a system of labor camps, brutality and surveillance; and Staff of Reuters for a series of deeply-reported, original dispatches from the Hong Kong protests, a battleground between democracy and autocracy that detailed China's grip behind the scenes and offered valuable insights into the forces that will shape the next century.

8. FEATURE WRITING

For distinguished feature writing giving prime consideration to quality of writing, originality and concision, using any available journalistic tool, Fifteen thousand dollars (\$15,000).

Awarded to Ben Taub of The New Yorker for a devastating account of a man who was kidnapped, tortured and deprived of his liberty for more than a decade at Guantanamo Bay detention facility, blending on-the-ground reporting and lyrical prose to offer a nuanced perspective on America's wider war on terror. (Moved into contention by the Board.)

Nominated as finalists in this category were: Nestor Ramos of The Boston Globe for a sweeping yet intimate story about how climate change is drastically reshaping Cape Cod, locally illustrating the urgent global crisis; Ellen Barry of The New York Times for a beautifully written tale of an Indian “prince” whose story concealed deeper truths rooted in the violence and trauma of the Partition of India; and Chloé Cooper Jones, freelance reporter for work published in The Verge, a gripping portrait of Ramsey Orta, who recorded the NYPD killing of Eric Garner, using restrained yet powerful language and courageous reporting to show the police retribution endured by a forgotten figure in a story that horrified the nation.

9. COMMENTARY

For distinguished commentary, using any available journalistic tool, Fifteen thousand dollars (\$15,000).

Awarded to Nikole Hannah-Jones of The New York Times for a sweeping, provocative and personal essay for the ground-breaking 1619 Project that placed the enslavement of Africans at the center of America’s formation, prompting reflection and conversation about the Founding Fathers.

Also nominated as finalists in this category were: Steve Lopez of the Los Angeles Times for purposeful columns about rising homelessness in Los Angeles, which amplified calls for government action to deal with a long-visible public crisis; and Sally Jenkins of The Washington Post for columns that marshal a broad knowledge of history and culture to remind the sports world of its responsibility to uphold basic values of equity, fairness and tolerance.

10. CRITICISM

For distinguished criticism, using any available journalistic tool, Fifteen thousand dollars (\$15,000).

Awarded to Christopher Knight of the Los Angeles Times for work demonstrating extraordinary community service by a critic, applying his expertise and enterprise to critique a proposed overhaul of the L.A. County Museum of Art and its effect on the institution’s mission.

Also nominated as finalists in this category were: Justin Davidson of New York Magazine for architecture reviews marked by a keen eye, deep knowledge and exquisite writing, as exemplified by his essay on Manhattan’s Hudson Yards

development; and Soraya Nadia McDonald of The Undeclared for essays on theater and film that bring a fresh, delightful intelligence to the intersections of race and art.

11. EDITORIAL WRITING

For distinguished editorial writing, the test of excellence being clearness of style, moral purpose, sound reasoning, and power to influence public opinion in what the writer conceives to be the right direction, using any available journalistic tool, Fifteen thousand dollars (\$15,000).

Awarded to Jeffery Gerritt of the Palestine (Tx.) Herald-Press for editorials that exposed how pre-trial inmates died horrific deaths in a small Texas county jail—reflecting a rising trend across the state—and courageously took on the local sheriff and judicial establishment, which tried to cover up these needless tragedies.

Also nominated as finalists in this category were: Melinda Henneberger of The Kansas City Star for her fierce and unflinching defense of the women of Missouri on issues of abortion access, sexual assault and domestic violence; and Jill Burcum of the Star Tribune, Minneapolis, for passionate, persuasive writing about a pristine wilderness area, accessible largely by canoe, to demonstrate to readers why a proposed mine would do incalculable environmental damage.

12. EDITORIAL CARTOONING

For a distinguished cartoon or portfolio of cartoons, characterized by originality, editorial effectiveness, quality of drawing and pictorial effect, published as a still drawing, animation or both, Fifteen thousand dollars (\$15,000).

Awarded to Barry Blitt, contributor, The New Yorker for work that skewers the personalities and policies emanating from the Trump White House with deceptively sweet watercolor style and seemingly gentle caricatures. (Moved into contention by the Board.)

Nominated as finalists in this category were: Lalo Alcaraz, freelancer, for irreverent and poignant cartoon commentary focused on local and national issues from a distinctly Latinx perspective; Matt Bors of The Nib for cartoons that sliced through the hypocrisy of the Trump presidency, as well as the blind spots of moderate Democrats in a distinct, contemporary style; and Kevin Kallaugher, freelancer, for

combining classically beautiful cartoon art and incisive wit to create a striking portfolio addressing the Trump administration, international affairs and local Baltimore politics.

13. BREAKING NEWS PHOTOGRAPHY

For a distinguished example of breaking news photography in black and white or color, which may consist of a photograph or photographs, Fifteen thousand dollars (\$15,000).

Awarded to the Photography Staff of Reuters for wide-ranging and illuminating photographs of Hong Kong as citizens protested infringement of their civil liberties and defended the region's autonomy by the Chinese government.

Also nominated as finalists in this category were: Dieu Nalio Chery and Rebecca Blackwell of the Associated Press for images from Haiti, conveying the horrors of lynching, murder and human rights abuses as the country wrestles with ongoing unrest; and Tom Fox of The Dallas Morning News for coverage of a would-be shooter outside Dallas' Earle Cabell Federal Building, which houses federal courts, photographed at great personal risk.

14. FEATURE PHOTOGRAPHY

For a distinguished example of feature photography in black and white or color, which may consist of a photograph or photographs, Fifteen thousand dollars (\$15,000).

Awarded to Channi Anand, Mukhtar Khan and Dar Yasin of the Associated Press for striking images of life in the contested territory of Kashmir as India revoked its independence, executed through a communications blackout.

Also nominated as finalists in this category were: Erin Clark of The Boston Globe for respectful and compassionate photography of a working Maine family as it falls into homelessness and finds new housing, albeit precarious; and Mary F. Calvert, freelance photographer, for pictures published in The New York Times and Yahoo News that look intimately at male sexual assault survivors in the armed forces, and the lasting effects of trauma on them and their families.

15. AUDIO REPORTING

For a distinguished example of audio journalism that serves the public interest, characterized by revelatory reporting and illuminating storytelling, Fifteen thousand dollars (\$15,000).

Awarded to Staff of *This American Life* with Molly O'Toole of the Los Angeles Times and Emily Green, freelancer for Vice News for "The Out Crowd," revelatory, intimate journalism that illuminates the personal impact of the Trump Administration's "Remain in Mexico" policy.

Also nominated as finalists in this category were: Nigel Poor, Earlonne Woods and Rahsaan Thomas for "Ear Hustle," a consistently surprising and beautifully crafted series on life behind bars produced by inmates of San Quentin State Prison; and Andrew Beck Grace, Chip Brantley, Graham Smith, Nicole Beemsterboer and Robert Little of NPR for "White Lies," a riveting seven-episode podcast that doggedly reinvestigated one of the most infamous murders of the Civil Rights era.

B. LETTERS AND DRAMA PRIZES

1. FICTION

For distinguished fiction by an American author, preferably dealing with American life, Fifteen thousand dollars (\$15,000).

Awarded to "The Nickel Boys," by Colson Whitehead (Doubleday), a spare and devastating exploration of abuse at a reform school in Jim Crow-era Florida that is ultimately a powerful tale of human perseverance, dignity and redemption.

Also nominated as finalists in this category were: "The Topeka School," by Ben Lerner (Farrar, Straus and Giroux), a brilliant and ambitious exploration of language, family and American identity as exemplified by the life of a Midwestern high school debate champion; and "The Dutch House," by Ann Patchett (HarperCollins), a masterful and beautifully rendered allegory of the destructive force of social ambition on several generations of a Pennsylvania family.

2. DRAMA

For a distinguished play by an American author, preferably original in its source and dealing with American life, Fifteen thousand dollars (\$15,000).

Awarded to “A Strange Loop,” book, music and lyrics by Michael R. Jackson, a metafictional musical that tracks the creative process of an artist transforming issues of identity, race, and sexuality that once pushed him to the margins of the cultural mainstream into a meditation on universal human fears and insecurities.

Also nominated as finalists in this category were: “Heroes of the Fourth Turning,” by Will Arbery, a scrupulously hewn drama centering on four alumni of a conservative Catholic college who confront themselves and each other, clashing over theology, politics and personal responsibility; and “Soft Power,” book and lyrics by David Henry Hwang, music and additional lyrics by Jeanine Tesori, a multi-layered and mischievous musical that deconstructs a beloved, original American art form to examine the promise and the limits of representation in both the theatrical and political senses of the word.

3. HISTORY

For a distinguished and appropriately documented book on the history of the United States, Fifteen thousand dollars (\$15,000).

Awarded to “Sweet Taste of Liberty: A True Story of Slavery and Restitution in America,” by W. Caleb McDaniel (Oxford University Press), a masterfully researched meditation on reparations based on the remarkable story of a 19-century woman who survived kidnapping and re-enslavement to sue her captor.

Also nominated as finalists in this category were: “The End of the Myth: From the Frontier to the Border Wall in the Mind of America,” by Greg Grandin (Metropolitan Books), a sweeping and beautifully written book that probes the American myth of boundless expansion and provides a compelling context for thinking about the current political moment (Moved by the Board to the General Nonfiction category where it was also entered.); and “Race for Profit: How Banks and the Real Estate Industry Undermined Black Homeownership,” by Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor (The University of North Carolina Press), a deeply researched and rigorously argued account of the public-private partnership that replaced redlining with even more predatory and destructive practices.

4. BIOGRAPHY or AUTOBIOGRAPHY

For a distinguished and appropriately documented biography or autobiography by an American author, Fifteen thousand dollars (\$15,000).

Awarded to “Sontag: Her Life and Work,” by Benjamin Moser (Ecco/HarperCollins), an authoritatively constructed work told with pathos and grace, that captures the writer’s genius and humanity alongside her addictions, sexual ambiguities and volatile enthusiasms.

Also nominated as finalists in this category were: “Parisian Lives: Samuel Beckett, Simone de Beauvoir, and Me,” by the late Deirdre Bair (Doubleday/Nan A. Talese), a tale of authorial ambition, self-doubt and achievement that offers intriguing insight into the world of two of the 20th century’s literary giants, and the art of biography itself; and “Our Man: Richard Holbrooke and the End of the American Century,” by George Packer (Alfred A. Knopf), an inventive, compulsively readable life of a complicated man of considerable talents and personal failings that offers extraordinary insights into the inner workings of Washington's foreign policy establishment.

5. POETRY

For a distinguished volume of original verse by an American author, Fifteen thousand dollars (\$15,000).

Awarded to “The Tradition,” by Jericho Brown (Copper Canyon Press), a collection of masterful lyrics that combine delicacy with historical urgency in their loving evocation of bodies vulnerable to hostility and violence.

Also nominated as finalists in this category were: “Only as the Day Is Long: New and Selected Poems,” by Dorianne Laux (W.W. Norton), poetic narratives of plainspoken authenticity with characters whose breadth spans the wide range of American life; and “Dunce,” by Mary Ruefle (Wave Books), poems of wildness and wit that swerve away from the predictable as they balance comedy and melancholy.

6. GENERAL NONFICTION

For a distinguished and appropriately documented book of nonfiction by an American author that is not eligible for consideration in any other category, Fifteen thousand dollars (\$15,000).

Two Winners:

Awarded to “The Undying: Pain, Vulnerability, Mortality, Medicine, Art, Time, Dreams, Data, Exhaustion, Cancer, and Care,” by Anne Boyer (Farrar, Straus and Giroux), an elegant and unforgettable narrative about the brutality of illness and the capitalism of cancer care in America.

and

Awarded to “The End of the Myth: From the Frontier to the Border Wall in the Mind of America,” by Greg Grandin (Metropolitan Books), a sweeping and beautifully written book that probes the American myth of boundless expansion and provides a compelling context for thinking about the current political moment. (Moved by the Board from the History category.)

Also nominated as finalists in this category were: “Elderhood: Redefining Aging, Transforming Medicine, Reimagining Life,” by Louise Aronson (Bloomsbury), an empathetic and nuanced critique, informed by the author’s decades of experience as a geriatrician, of the ways in which our society and healthcare system neglect, stereotype and mistreat the elderly; and “Solitary: Unbroken by Four Decades in Solitary Confinement. My Story of Transformation and Hope,” by Albert Woodfox with Leslie George (Grove Press), an unflinching indictment of Louisiana's most notorious prison and the racist criminal justice system as told through an innocent man's redemptive journey faced with a life sentence in solitary confinement.

C. PRIZE IN MUSIC

For distinguished musical composition by an American that has had its first performance or recording in the United States during the year, Fifteen thousand dollars (\$15,000).

Awarded to “Central Park Five,” by Anthony Davis, premiered on June 15, 2019, by Long Beach Opera, a courageous operatic work, marked by powerful vocal writing and sensitive orchestration, that skillfully transforms a notorious example of contemporary injustice into something empathetic and hopeful. Libretto by Richard Wesley.

Also nominated as finalists in this category were: “Sky: Concerto for Violin,” by Michael Torke, premiered on January 5, 2019, in Troy, NY, a composition that merges traditions of bluegrass and classical music through the musical instrument common to both forms, a virtuosic work of astonishing beauty, expert pacing and generous optimism; and “and all the days were purple,” by Alex Weiser, recording

released April 12, 2019 by Cantaloupe Music, a song cycle for voice, piano, percussion and string trio, based on poems in Yiddish and English, a meditative and deeply spiritual work whose unexpected musical language is arresting and directly emotional.

D. SPECIAL CITATION

A special citation to honor Ida B. Wells for her outstanding and courageous reporting on the horrific and vicious violence against African Americans during the era of lynching.

The Pulitzer Prize Board met by video conferencing on April 30, May 1, and May 2 to select the 2020 winners.

Nancy Barnes was re-elected to membership on the board.

The members of the Pulitzer Prize Board are: President Bollinger; Elizabeth Alexander, president, Andrew W. Mellon Foundation; Nancy Barnes, senior vice president of news and editorial director, National Public Radio; Robert Blau, executive editor of projects and investigations, Bloomberg News; Katherine Boo, author and journalist, Washington D.C.; Neil Brown, president, Poynter Institute for Media Studies; Nicole Carroll, editor-in-chief, USA Today; Steve Coll, dean, Graduate School of Journalism, Columbia University; Gail Collins, op-ed columnist, The New York Times; John Daniszewski, vice president and editor at large for standards, Associated Press; Stephen Engelberg, editor-in-chief, ProPublica; Steven Hahn, professor of history, New York University; Carlos Lozada, associate editor and nonfiction book critic, The Washington Post; Aminda Marqués Gonzalez, president, publisher and executive editor, Miami Herald; Emily Ramshaw, co-founder and CEO, The 19th; David Remnick, editor and staff writer, The New Yorker; Tommie Shelby, Caldwell Titcomb professor of African and African American studies and professor of philosophy, Harvard University; and Dana Canedy, administrator of the Prizes.

In any category in which board members have an interest due to the action of the various nominating juries, those members do not participate in the discussion and voting and leave the room until a decision is reached in the affected category. Similarly, members of nominating juries do not participate in the discussion of or voting on entries in which they have an interest.

5.4.20