

SPECIAL SECTION

Newspro

THE STATE OF TV NEWS

TELLING THE STORY

WFAA Is First Local Station to Win Gold Baton as duPont Winners Report on Subjects From Environment to Earthquakes

By Elizabeth Jensen
Special to TelevisionWeek

The 13 winners of this year's Alfred I. duPont-Columbia University Award for excellence in broadcast journalism are an eclectic mix of international reporting, results-oriented community journalism, sweeping inquiries into inequity in healthcare and the country's financial collapse, classic investigations into government waste and cover-up and an environmental documentary.

THE DETAILS

What: The 2009 Alfred I. duPont-Columbia University Awards for broadcast journalism
When: Thursday, Jan. 22
Where: Columbia University, New York City

It's a collection of reporting that Abi Wright, the awards program's new director, calls "very rich and diverse."

Chosen from 529 radio and television entries, the winning programs, which aired in the United States between July 1, 2007, and June 30, 2008, will be honored at an evening ceremony on Jan. 22.

For the first time, a Gold Baton, for 20 years the

highest honor granted by the awards program, will go to a local television station, longtime Texas powerhouse WFAA-TV, for its continuing commitment to outstanding investigative reporting. A Gold Baton, which is awarded only when warranted, was last handed out four years ago.

Read the Q&A with new duPont director Abi Wright at TVWeek.com.

This year alone, WFAA submitted three investigations that the jury found to be some of the biggest projects done in the eligibility period, according to juror insights provided by Ms. Wright. WFAA investigative reporters Brett Shipp and Byron Harris and producer Mark Smith juggle the major projects with other one-day stories, the judges noted, keeping numerous balls in the air.

A panel of about 75 screeners winnowed down the entries to the finalists. This year's entries, said Ms. Wright, broke down into 276 from networks, which consistently submit the most entries, and 38 from independents. Television stations were represented by stations in 49 major markets,

Continued on Page 14



VOICE OF EXPERIENCE Bob Woodruff hosts PBS' "Telling the Truth," about the duPont winners.

PROFILING BEST OF THE BEST

PBS Special Offers
Sampling of Winners
By Allison J. Waldman

Special to TelevisionWeek

On Friday, Jan. 16, PBS will broadcast "Telling the Truth: The Best in Broadcast Journalism," the annual look at the winners of the Alfred I. duPont-Columbia University Awards for excellence in the field.

ABC News correspondent Bob Woodruff will host this special "best of" compilation.

"In the past we've had CNN's Christiane Amanpour and also PBS' Michelle Martin hosting," said producer Will Cohen of Rain Media, the independent production company that makes "Telling the Truth" for PBS. "The hope is to bring some profile to the piece, so we chose people who are indicative of the level of seriousness that we want to bring to our film, out of respect to the award."

Mr. Woodruff is a particularly apt choice for 2009, as much for his personal story of survival as for his award-winning broadcast

Continued on Page 14

Congratulations
to all of the 2009
duPont-Columbia University Award Winners

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