2023 Fourth Estate Award Gala

50 YEARS OF THE GALA

THE NATIONAL PRESS CLUB

JOURNALISM INSTITUTE NATIONAL PRESS CLUB
Congratulations, Kristen Welker.

Recipient of the National Press Club’s 2023 Fourth Estate Award

NBCUniversal News Group
WELCOME!

We are glad to host you at the National Press Club for this exciting night: Our 50th year of presenting the Fourth Estate Award. This year’s Fourth Estate Award Gala brings together journalists, communicators, and supporters from around the world.


We are grateful to the members of the National Press Club Board of Governors, the Board of Directors of the National Press Club Journalism Institute, the Fourth Estate Awards planning committee, and our Fundraising Committee led by Danielle Coffey. We celebrate together this evening because of their hard work. And a special thank you to our gala sponsors, whose support helps make our work possible.

Thank you, and here’s to a memorable evening!

Eileen Drage O’Reilly
National Press Club President

Gil Klein
National Press Club Journalism Institute President

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#IStandWithEvan

It has been 7 months since our friend and colleague Evan Gershkovich was detained by Russia during a reporting trip and accused of espionage. The Wall Street Journal and the U.S. government vehemently deny the allegation and continue to call for his immediate release.

Evan’s arrest is a brazen violation of press freedom. It poses far-reaching consequences for journalism and for governments and democracies everywhere. A free press is integral to a free society. We all have a stake in this.

We continue to be moved by the outpouring of support for Evan and his family from around the world. Please continue to share Evan’s reporting and the latest updates on his situation by visiting WSJ.com/Evan. Readers can also download a collection of social media assets to share across their personal networks and beyond.

Use the hashtag #IStandWithEvan to help keep his story front and center. Journalism is not a crime, and we will not rest until Evan is released.
TONIGHT’S PROGRAM

WELCOME
National Press Club President Eileen Drage O’Reilly, Axios

National Press Club Journalism Institute President Gil Klein, University of Oklahoma

NEIL AND SUSAN SHEEHAN AWARD
FOR INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALISM
Honoree
Kat Stafford, Reuters

JOHN AUBUCHON PRESS FREEDOM AWARDS
International Honorees
Niloofar Hamedi, Shargh Daily Elaheh Mohammadi, Ham-Mihan

U.S. Honoree
Evan Gershkovich, Wall Street Journal

FOURTH ESTATE AWARD
Honoree
Kristen Welker, NBC News and “Meet the Press”

FAREWELL
National Press Club President Eileen Drage O’Reilly, Axios
Bloomberg

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In 2022, an average of one journalist per week was killed.

Journalists provide an essential service to inform people around the world and to hold powerful institutions to account.

The Post’s Press Freedom Partnership is a public service initiative to promote press freedom and call attention to the plight of journalists worldwide.

Learn more at wapo.st/pressfreedom
PAST HONOREES

The National Press Club confers the annual Fourth Estate Award on the person who, in the judgment of the NPC Board of Governors, has achieved distinction for a lifetime of contributions to American journalism. Recommendations are made by a distinguished committee representing all branches of news media.

2022: Clarissa Ward, CNN
2021: Lester Holt, NBC Nightly News and Dateline NBC
2020: Susan Zirinsky, CBS News
2019: Amanda Bennett, Voice of America
2017: Tony Kornheiser & Michael Wilbon, ESPN
2016: Wolf Blitzer, CNN
2015: Gwen Ifill, PBS Newshour
2013: Andrea Mitchell, NBC News
2011: Jim Lehrer, PBS Newshour
2010: Bob Schieffer, CBS News
2008: Christiane Amanpour, CNN
2006: Marvin Kalb, The Joan Shorenstein Center for Press and Public Policy, Harvard University
2005: Austin Kiplinger, Kiplinger Washington Editors
2003: Tom Brokaw, NBC Nightly News
2002: Brian Lamb, C-SPAN
2001: Robert D. Novak, Syndicated Columnist
2000: Jack W. Germond, The Baltimore Sun
1999: Carl T. Rowan, Syndicated Columnist
1997: James M. Perry, The Wall Street Journal
1996: Charles R. McDowell, The Richmond Times-Dispatch
1994: Charles Kuralt, CBS News
1993: Eugene Roberts, The Philadelphia Inquirer
1991: Peter Arnett, CNN
1990: Mike Royko, Chicago Tribune
1987: David Brinkley, ABC News
1986: Art Buchwald, Syndicated Columnist
1984: Helen Thomas, United Press International
1983: Eric Sevareid, CBS News
1981: Nick B. Williams, Los Angeles Times
1980: Theodore H. White, Author
1979: Clayton Kirkpatrick, Chicago Tribune
1976: John S. Knight, Knight-Ridder Newspapers
1973: Walter Cronkite, CBS News
Kristen Welker became the 13th moderator of NBC’s “Meet the Press,” the longest-running show on television on Sept. 17, 2023. She is the second woman to moderate the program and the first journalist of color to moderate a Sunday public affairs broadcast.

Welker, who on Aug. 26 appeared on her final broadcast as co-anchor of “Weekend TODAY,” is known for her political reporting, which has appeared across all NBC News and MSNBC platforms, including “NBC Nightly News with Lester Holt,” “TODAY,” “Meet the Press,” and NBCNews.com.

Welker joined “Weekend TODAY” as co-anchor in January 2020 and began covering the White House for NBC News in December 2011, traveling domestically and internationally with then-President Barack Obama, then-First Lady Michelle Obama, and then-Vice President Joe Biden. Welker also covered then-President Donald Trump’s administration, the 2020 presidential race, and led coverage of all aspects of President Biden’s administration before moving into her “Meet the Press” role.

During the 2020 general presidential election, Welker moderated the final presidential debate between Trump and Biden on Oct. 22, 2020, at Belmont University in Nashville, Tennessee. Welker received universal praise for her performance, and USA TODAY wrote that she was “praised for ‘masterclass’ debate moderation.”

Prior to the White House beat, Welker was a network correspondent based in Burbank, California, joining NBC News in 2010. During her first year at the network, Welker was nominated for a national Emmy Award for her role in NBC News’ midterm election coverage. She won a national Emmy Award for her role in NBC News’ coverage of Malaysia Airlines Flight 17.

Welker was also a researcher on “Weekend TODAY” early in her career and an intern for “TODAY” while in college.

Welker previously worked at WCAU-TV, NBC’s Philadelphia-owned and -operated station, where she anchored the NBC 10 weekend newscasts and started as a general assignment reporter in April 2005. She also previously worked at WLNE-TV in Providence, Rhode Island, and KRCR-TV in Redding, California.

Welker, a native of Philadelphia, graduated cum laude from Harvard University with a bachelor’s degree in American history. She lives in Washington, D.C., with her husband, John Hughes, and daughter, Margot Lane.
Words.

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AWARD HONOREES

THE NEIL AND SUSAN SHEEHAN AWARD FOR INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALISM

This award promotes the practice of investigative journalism exemplifying compassion, courage, and integrity.

Kat Stafford, global race and justice editor for Reuters and a former national investigative writer at The Associated Press, is a leading voice on representation and equity. Her investigative work analyzes how structural racism has fueled inequity through the lens of politics, government, health, and environmental justice. Among her journalistic work this year, she reported and published a series exploring how the legacy of racism in America has laid the foundation for health inequities Black people face throughout their lives.

INTERNATIONAL HONOREES

Iranian journalists Niloofar Hamedi and Elaheh Mohammadi were among the first journalists to report on the death in police custody of Mahsa Amini in September 2022. Amini’s death set off some of the largest demonstrations in Iran in years, and Hamedi and Mohammadi’s coverage led to their unjust arrest. After being detained for 13 months, both women were sentenced in October to more than a dozen years in prison for what we know to be false charges of national security conspiracy and collaborating with the United States.

DOMESTIC HONOREE

Evan Gershkovich is a reporter for The Wall Street Journal, where he covers Russia, Ukraine, and the former Soviet Union. In March 2023, he was arrested in Russia while on a reporting trip and accused of espionage, making him the first American journalist detained in Russia on such charges since the Cold War. The Journal vehemently denies the allegations. President Biden and news organizations around the world have joined the Journal in calling for Gershkovich’s immediate release. Gershkovich, the American son of Soviet-born Jewish exiles, grew up in New Jersey. He graduated from Bowdoin College, a liberal-arts school in Maine, in 2014.
Congratulations to Kristen Welker for her Fourth Estate Award honor, and thank you to the National Press Club and its nonprofit Journalism Institute for upholding press freedom for our democracy.

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TO KRISTEN WELKER
AND THE OUTSTANDING JOURNALISTS HONORED AT THE 2023 NPC FOURTH ESTATE AWARD GALA

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The War on Gaza.
Getting the Facts.

Watch Now
Congratulations to Kristen Welker, NBC News chief White House correspondent, and all other Fourth Estate honorees.

We are a proud sponsor of the National Press Club's 2023 Fourth Estate Awards Gala to celebrate our nation's press freedom and recognize the value of investigative journalism.

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Freedom of the press is not just important to democracy, it is democracy.

Walter Cronkite, 1973 Fourth Estate Award Honoree

Congratulations to the 2023 honorees Kristen Welker and Kat Stafford for their impressive body of work. **We demand all journalists — including our Aubuchon honorees — have the freedom to do their work unencumbered.** Thank you to the National Press Club, the National Press Club Journalism Institute, and the press freedom team for your amazing efforts this year.

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NPC President Eileen Drage O'Reilly & Cary O'Reilly
Thank you to the volunteer instructors who devoted their time and expertise to growing our field. You showed us how to work better, a little more each day.

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