


2023  
*Fourth Estate  
Award Gala*

50

YEARS  
OF THE  
GALA

THE NATIONAL  
PRESS CLUB

 JOURNALISM  
INSTITUTE  
NATIONAL PRESS CLUB



Kristen Welker is shown from the waist up, sitting at a glass news desk. She is wearing a light pink blazer over a white top. She has dark hair and is smiling slightly. In her right hand, she holds a blue pen, and her left hand rests on the desk. The background is a blurred image of the United States Capitol building under a clear blue sky. To the left, a framed American flag is visible on the wall.

# 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.

Tonight, we honor Kristen Welker of NBC News and “Meet the Press,” Niloofar Hamedi of *Shargh Daily*, Elaheh Mohammadi of *Ham-Mihan*, Evan Gershkovich of *The Wall Street Journal* and Kat Stafford of Reuters.

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*



# #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*



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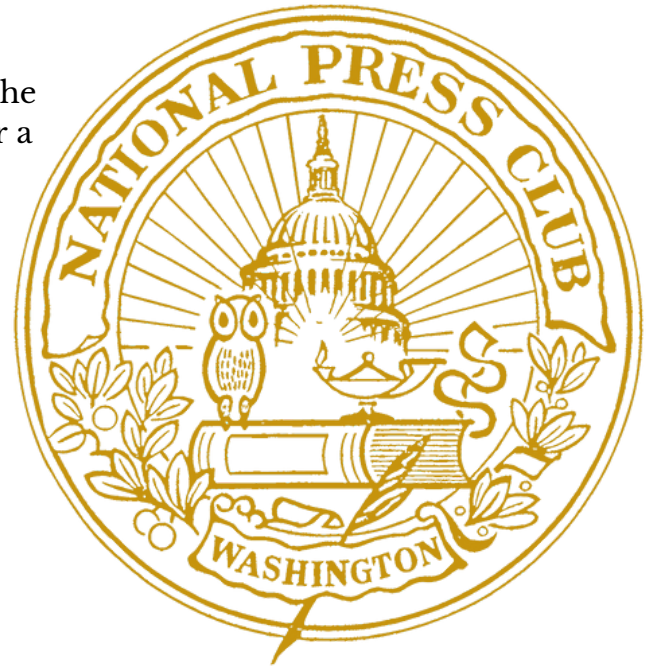


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# PAST HONOREES

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  
**2018:** Martin Baron & Dean Baquet, *The Washington Post* and *The New York Times*  
**2017:** Tony Kornheiser & Michael Wilbon, ESPN  
**2016:** Wolf Blitzer, CNN  
**2015:** Gwen Ifill, PBS Newshour  
**2013:** Andrea Mitchell, NBC News  
**2012:** Bob Woodward, *The Washington Post*  
**2011:** Jim Lehrer, PBS Newshour  
**2010:** Bob Schieffer, CBS News  
**2009:** Thomas Friedman, *The New York Times*  
**2008:** Christiane Amanpour, CNN  
**2007:** Paul E. Steiger, *The Wall Street Journal*  
**2006:** Marvin Kalb, The Joan Shorenstein Center for Press and Public Policy, Harvard University  
**2005:** Austin Kiplinger, Kiplinger Washington Editors  
**2004:** William J. Raspberry, Washington Post Writers Group  
**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  
**1998:** Mary McGrory, *The Washington Post*  
**1997:** James M. Perry, *The Wall Street Journal*  
**1996:** Charles R. McDowell, *The Richmond Times-Dispatch*

**1995:** Shirley Povich, *The Washington Post*  
**1994:** Charles Kuralt, CBS News  
**1993:** Eugene Roberts, *The Philadelphia Inquirer*  
**1992:** George Tames, *The New York Times*  
**1991:** Peter Arnett, CNN  
**1990:** Mike Royko, *Chicago Tribune*  
**1989:** Russell Baker, *The New York Times*  
**1988:** David S. Broder, *The Washington Post*  
**1987:** David Brinkley, ABC News  
**1986:** Art Buchwald, Syndicated Columnist  
**1985:** Flora Lewis, *The New York Times*  
**1984:** Helen Thomas, United Press International  
**1983:** Eric Sevareid, CBS News  
**1982:** Simeon S. Booker, Johnson Publishing Company Inc.  
**1981:** Nick B. Williams, *Los Angeles Times*  
**1980:** Theodore H. White, Author  
**1979:** Clayton Kirkpatrick, *Chicago Tribune*  
**1978:** Vermont Royster, *The Wall Street Journal*  
**1977:** Herbert Block, *The Washington Post*  
**1976:** John S. Knight, Knight-Ridder Newspapers  
**1975:** Richard Strout, *The Christian Science Monitor* and *New Republic*  
**1974:** James Reston, *The New York Times*  
**1973:** Walter Cronkite, CBS News



# 2023 FOURTH ESTATE AWARD

## KRISTEN WELKER

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.

The incredible power of words extends beyond mere communication, transcending the boundaries of time and space. It wields the power to uplift and inspire, to wound and discourage, to restore and rekindle. The Hastings-Lambert strategic partnership recognizes the indispensable role of a free press in nurturing the seeds of democracy. Our partnership is reflected in our commitment to those companies who share our unwavering dedication to the Constitution.





# 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.

## JOHN AUBUCHON PRESS FREEDOM AWARD HONOREES

*This award is given each year to an honoree in the United States and an honoree overseas who bravely push to disclose the truth in trying circumstances.*



### 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. Asmini'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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# **CHEERS! TO KRISTEN WELKER**

**AND THE OUTSTANDING  
JOURNALISTS HONORED  
AT THE 2023 NPC FOURTH  
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**AND EACH DISTINGUISHED  
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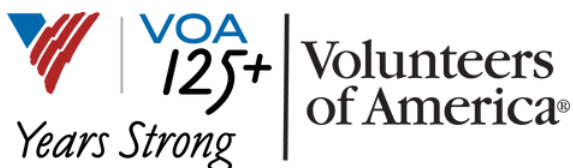


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**Congratulations to Kristen Welker, NBC News chief White House correspondent, and all other Fourth Estate honorees.**

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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**



# Sharing experiences. Growing together.

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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