

# 2023 Annual Report

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# FromThePresident

## The world needs journalists and journalism now more than ever.

In 2023, the Institute took great steps to serve as many journalists as possible with what they needed, when they needed it. In her first year as Executive Director, Beth Francesco and her staff grew the Institute's reach 25 percent, to **9,443 individuals** across the U.S. and beyond. Those journalists have come to rely on the Institute's **online training programs**, daily journalism newsletter, career support and skill-building opportunities.

In the pages of this annual report, you'll learn how the Institute has ramped up programming to champion essential reporting and writing skills, beat-specific reporting, and press freedom issues.

Our efforts to spotlight and amplify best practices in our industry shine in our programs and published resources. And we're committed, with the National Press Club, to **removing press freedom barriers** affecting journalists in the U.S. and around the globe.

Your support this year made our team's work possible. As we look ahead to what, no doubt, will be an unpredictable 2024, we hope we can continue to count on you.

**Together, we're powering journalism in the public interest.**



### **Gil Klein**

National Press Club  
Journalism Institute  
President

Washington Program  
Director for the University of Oklahoma's Gaylord College of Journalism and Mass Communication



# Our Mission

**The National Press Club Journalism Institute promotes an engaged global citizenry through an independent and free press, and equips journalists with skills and standards to inform the public in ways that inspire a more representative democracy. As the nonprofit affiliate of the National Press Club, the Institute powers journalism in the public interest.**

The Institute accomplished this mission in 2023 by:

- Offering 17 virtual and in-person public programs designed to increase journalists' well-being and enhance the quality of their work, in addition to partnering with newsrooms to deliver **custom, needs-based training**
- Serving a global community of more than **4,800 subscriber journalists and media leaders** through our afternoon industry newsletter
- Administering **\$30,000 in scholarships** for student journalists at the high school, college, and graduate level, with an emphasis on students from underrepresented backgrounds
- And, with the National Press Club, **advocating for unjustly detained journalists** and those facing significant safety and other barriers to their newsgathering efforts

The Institute is a 501(c)(3) educational organization and the nonprofit affiliate of the National Press Club (Tax ID 52-1750908).

## 2023 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**President:** Gil Klein, past National Press Club president, University of Oklahoma

**Treasurer:** Paul Merrion, former Crain's Washington Bureau

**Secretary:** Andrea Edney, past National Press Club president

### Directors:

- Danielle Coffey, News Media Alliance
- Sam Feist, CNN
- Mike Freedman, past National Press Club president (deceased)
- Mara Gassmann, First Amendment attorney
- Doug Harbrecht, past National Press Club president
- Tom Huang, The Dallas Morning News
- Rick Hutzell, Fallen Journalists Memorial Foundation
- Jen Judson, past National Press Club president, Defense News
- Anita Kumar, POLITICO
- Paul Minehart, Syngenta
- Eileen O'Reilly, 2023 National Press Club President, Axios
- Mizell Stewart III, Kent State University Emerging Leaders, LLC
- Emily Wilkins, 2024 National Press Club President, CNBC

### Staff:

- Beth Francesco, Executive Director
- Bara Vaida, Director of Training
- Holly Butcher Grant, Operations Manager
- Mitch Harle, Development Manager

# 2023 Programs

**Journalists from around the world advanced their skills and careers through the Institute's 2023 programming on techniques for newsgathering, writing, and ethical ways to use artificial intelligence in reporting.**

Guest experts highlighted press freedom trends and provided tips for journalists' safety while working. They supplied insight on timely topics including vaccines, covering a government shutdown, and reporting on campaign finance issues. For the first time since March 2020, the Institute also hosted in-person training, including programs on using information databases and building a freelance business.

## WHAT PARTICIPANTS SAID



**"I wish I'd had the breadth of this information while working as a journalist. It would've added more depth to my reporting and made my searches for data/information easier and more efficient."**

**"I appreciate the opportunity to gain wisdom directly from experts, as well as the chance to get to experience what these professionals are like as actual people. Well done, very enjoyable and informational!"**

**"Because of this program, I will continue efforts to diversify my newsroom and think more about centering stories from the perspective of who's affected."**

**17**  
free, public  
trainings

**3,365**  
Program  
registrations

**2,676**  
first-time  
participants

**90%**  
survey  
respondents who  
said programs met  
or exceed  
expectations

**94%**  
survey  
respondents who  
said their work  
would change  
because of  
attending an  
Institute program

**50**  
instructors - 62%  
identify as women,  
and 40% from  
underrepresented  
backgrounds



Behind the Paywall  
238

Money in Politics  
241

Using Leadership Connect

Journalists in Exile

Mobile Journalism  
402

Covering a U.S. Government Shutdown

Exploring Craft: A master class in copyediting from the author of Dreyer's English  
1,611

Maximizing the Bloomberg Terminal

Scholarships 101

Hate in the Headlines

Firewalls & Journalism

Fall Health Coverage

Arrested on the Job

Taking Charge as a Freelancer

AI + News  
454

Faster than FOIA  
499

Living Under Threat

PROGRAM TOPICS

- Reporting, writing & editing
- Special topics
- Newsgathering
- Press freedom



... Having three panels all with differing POVs was helpful, insightful for someone new or veteran to the field. ... **LOVED LOVED LOVED** the diversity of the speakers - age and race and culture. I felt seen as a Black woman."



# Publishing



October 10, 2023

## Top stories

- The Washington Post to cut 240 jobs as voluntary separation packages... Stonesifer. (Sara Fischer) / Read the full story
- News networks 'scrambling' to get moment unfolds in Israel, the media to speak after Israeli woman made reporter in Gaza: 'I could hear kids crying'
- 'You are in the line of fire': What it's like for journalists in Israel (CNJ) / Goodbye to my wife: Israel's NBC News' Richard Engel and other journalists' lives in Israel (CNJ) / At least six Palestinian journalists killed in Gaza (CNJ) / Club statement on journalist safety
- As false war information spreads on social media, how Musk's X is amplifying it (CNJ) / How Musk's X is amplifying it (CNJ)
- Israel-Hamas crisis: CNN CEO Mark Thompson / CNN boss Mark Thompson's future (Wall Street Journal)
- Russian court upholds detention of journalist (CNJ)

## CRAFT



### Sunshine Week: 5 public records to ask for when reporting on crime

It is **Sunshine Week**, an annual celebration of access to public information launched by the **News Leaders Association** in 2005. To commemorate the occasion, we've asked journalists across different beats to share their tips for requesting open records and responding when facing roadblocks to access.

Today, we hear from **Lakeidra Chavis**, staff writer at **The Marshall Project**. Chavis has written on topics including the rise in Black suicides during the pandemic, the changing structure of gangs, the opioid crisis, and victim compensation.



#### What are five public records that reporters should ask for on the crime beat?

**Chavis:** Five public records that reporters should ask for on the crime beat are your city's latest homicide and property crime data going back five to 10 years, your police department's records

## CRAFT

### 'Show up': Why (and how) journalists should respond to reader comments

Your article has been published and shared widely. The comments section is lighting up. Do you respond?

Engaging with reader comments might not be high on every journalist's priority list, but it's an important part of building trust and community. By **responding to comments**, journalists can continue the conversation, answer follow-up questions, and even combat misinformation.

We asked **Joy Mayer**, director of Trusting News, to share best practices for journalists when responding to comments online.

#### Why should journalists consider responding to comments?

**Mayer:** The comment sections connected to news stories often remind me of a poorly thrown party. Imagine you decide to have people over. You stock the bar, put on some music, and throw open the door. And then you ... leave. You hope (assume?) people will be on their best behavior, and you expect to come home to a house that's still in order.



you to dive deeper into the story. You can also use the information — like records the are supposed to at might be insig

## CAREER

### Advice for freelance journalists: 'Learn when to move on from a pitch'

Freelancing offers journalists the chance to create their own hours, publish work in different places, and secure income in a volatile industry. And as more newsrooms announce **budget cuts and layoffs** this year, more journalists are **considering going freelance full time**.

We reached out to journalist **Sonia Weiser** to learn more about making the transition to a full-time freelance career.



Weiser has helped other freelancers find opportunities for work, first through **social media**, and then through the **Opportunities of the Week** newsletter, which she launched in July 2018.

#### How can the Opportunities of the Week newsletter help other freelancers. What that you frequently offer freelance journalists?

I help people or organizations whose opinions and advice you trust and/or you respect and make them your core resources.

Portfolio to showcase your best work — not all your work. No one has to know all do to make money. If it ruins your personal brand to admit that you're someone's dating profile messages in exchange for cash, then don't put it on

move on from a pitch. It is very possible that your idea is not good and editors own to save you from yourself.

#### What advice do you have for journalists considering a full-time freelance career?

When I started freelancing, it was less a choice and more a necessity. I had enough a full-time, in-office employee and enough experience getting fired from my time, in-office employee to know (or at least believe), that I was not cut out for an office. Fresh out of college, I had little respect for office hierarchies and understand what professionalism looked like, had trouble understanding it didn't bother hiding my self-destructive behavior. I had grown up excelling at it I foolishly believed that my smarts alone would carry me.

## COMMUNITY

In honor of **World Press Freedom Day** on May 3, members of the National Press Club's **Press Freedom Team** have interviewed journalists in exile from around the world. We will feature their stories every day this week to shed light on press freedom issues worldwide.

### Interview with founder of Syrian Investigative Reporting for Accountability Journalism

by NPC Press Freedom Team volunteer **Ahmed Omar**

Ten years ago, when he had to leave his country, family, and friends behind him to start a new life, **Mohammed Bassiki** did not know it would be the birth of his new career as a leading investigative journalist and founder of one of the leading investigative journalism hubs in the region.

Bassiki not only pursued his career as an independent journalist after leaving Syria in 2013, he also created **Syrian Investigative Reporting for Accountability Journalism** — a platform designed to support independent investigative journalists reporting from/about Syria.

The National Press Club spoke with Bassiki about his career, journalism inside Syria, how journalists are managing to survive within authoritarian regimes, and the story of founding SIRAJ.



**The Latest is the Institute's afternoon industry newsletter that reaches nearly 5,000 reporters, editors, news leaders, and communication professionals Mondays through Thursdays.**

In addition to original reporting on critical issues that journalists face, such as creating accessible journalism, overcoming barriers to public records and information, covering natural disasters, and launching news products, The Latest features:

- Daily craft advice on reporting, writing, and editing
- Career guidance for job-seekers and employers
- Timely tipsheets, webinars, and other resources

**156**  
editions of The Latest in 2023

**4,885**  
subscribers to The Latest

**52%**  
average daily open rate for The Latest



**The Institute promotes an independent and free press to ensure the public has full access to information that affects their lives. With dedicated volunteers and the National Press Club, we hold accountable those who restrict journalists in their pursuit of the truth. We help journalists obtain the tools to break barriers to a free press, and we salute journalists who overcome obstacles to report the news.**

## 2023 JOHN AUBUCHON PRESS FREEDOM AWARD HONOREES

The Aubuchon Press Freedom Award is given each year to honorees who bravely push to disclose the truth in trying circumstances.



### **Evan Gershkovich, Domestic honoree**

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 worldwide have joined the Journal in calling for Gershkovich's immediate release.



### **Iranian journalists Niloofar Hamedi and Elaheh Mohammadi, International honorees**

Hamedi and 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.

# 74

Statements condemning attacks on journalists and barriers to a free press, issued with the National Press Club

# 13

Amicus briefs and letters to support press freedom cases the Institute joined in 2023

**“Every day, I’m struck by the incredible courage and unrelenting determination of journalists to deliver the unbiased truth to the public. As Evan remains in prison, we are continually amazed by the solidarity shown by news organizations and journalists worldwide for one of their own.”**

**Danielle Gershkovich, Evan’s sister**





**"I hope that my case will shine a light on the need to protect those journalists in Mexico and around the world who are working and risking their lives to tell the truth."**

**Emilio Gutiérrez Soto**

## GUTIÉRREZ SOTO RULED ELIGIBLE FOR ASYLUM

Fifteen years after coming to the U.S. legally and seeking refuge, Mexican journalist Emilio Gutiérrez Soto received word September 2023 that the Board of Immigration Appeals ruled him eligible for asylum.

In a five-page opinion sent to Gutiérrez's lawyer, Eduardo Beckett, the BIA ruled that an El Paso immigration judge's two decisions against Gutiérrez were "clearly erroneous."

"It has been a long journey, and these past 15 years have been difficult. But today, justice has won," Gutiérrez, 60, said from Ann Arbor, Michigan, where he now resides. He was 45 when he fled Ascensión, Chihuahua, Mexico, after a confidential source told him that his reporting on the military's efforts to shake down locals had made him a marked man. In Mexico, journalists are routinely targeted by drug cartels and corrupt government officials.

The ruling is a victory for the National Press Club, the Institute, and numerous press freedom organizations. The Press Club and Institute became involved in the Gutiérrez case six years ago, after inviting him to accept the John Aubuchon Press Freedom Award on behalf of journalists in Mexico.

## FIGHT CONTINUES TO #BringAustinHome

Aug. 14, 2023, marked 11 years since award-winning photojournalist Austin Tice was abducted in Syria. Tice, a Georgetown graduate, law student, and Marine Corps veteran, was detained near Damascus in 2012 while covering escalating conflict in the region.

The National Press Club and the Institute have worked closely with the Tice family advocating for Austin's swift and safe release. The Club hosted several press conferences and discussions on Austin's case in 2023, and the Institute joined forces during World Press Freedom Week on an "Action for Austin Day."

On Nov. 18, the third Run For Austin Virtual 5K raised further awareness and public support for Tice. Runners showed their support across 14 states, and the event raised more than \$7,000 to help support the Tice family's effort to bring him home.



Tice was the 2015 recipient of the John Aubuchon Press Freedom Award. An exhibit including his notebooks, awards, and well-worn Chuck Taylors is available to view at the Eric Friedheim National Journalism Library overseen by the Institute.

## KRISTEN WELKER HONORED WITH FOURTH ESTATE AWARD

The 2023 Fourth Estate Award Gala took place in the National Press Club ballroom on Nov. 28, 2023, bringing together journalists, communicators, and supporters from around the world to recognize excellence in a year of extraordinary challenges.

In addition to Welker, the evening honored:

- **Evan Gershkovich**, Wall Street Journal reporter, John Aubuchon Press Freedom Award (domestic)
- Iranian journalists **Niloofar Hamed** and **Elaheh Mohammadi**, John Aubuchon Press Freedom Award (international)
- **Kat Stafford**, Reuters' global race and justice editor, Neil and Susan Sheehan Award for Investigative Journalism

The gala is the primary fundraiser supporting the National Press Club Journalism Institute. With support from ticketholders and generous sponsors, the Institute raised just over \$200,000.



Eileen O'Reilly, 2023 National Press Club President, presents Kristen Welker the Fourth Estate Award at the Fourth Estate Award Gala.

**“We are confronting a crisis of trust in our institutions, in government, and yes, in media as well. And so it has never been more important to revitalize the spirit of the Fourth Estate, to hold those in power to account and those who seek positions of power to account for their words and their actions, to respect our readers, our viewers, our listeners enough to know that we don’t need to shield them from the complexities of the world in which we live.”**

**Kristen Welker, “Meet the Press” moderator and 2023 Fourth Estate Award honoree**



## PRESS VS. POLITICIANS SPELLING BEE

A Washington, D.C., favorite, the 2023 'Press vs. Politicians' Spelling Bee took place Sept. 20, 2023, and brought much B-U-Z-Z to the National Press Club and Institute. The Bee, a fundraiser for the Institute, pitted five members of Congress against five D.C. journalists in a spelling battle that left the audience in stitches. The journalists triumphed over lawmakers in the Bee, with Amy Wang of The Washington Post winning for a second consecutive year.

## CUSTOM TRAINING OFFERINGS GROW

The Institute has expanded its training portfolio to include designing programs for news and communications organizations that meet their specific professional development needs.

The Institute's clients grew in 2023, as did the topics covered:

- Editing for Excellence: Helping writers grow
- Enterprise Journalism: Strengthening a story's impact
- Coaching and Fixing: How editors help writers (even on deadline)
- Writing tools for communicators
- Mastering the Pitch: PR
- Tackling dis- and misinformation as leaders

Contact Executive Director Beth Francesco to schedule a custom training.

**"We had an incredible time attending and supporting this unique competition, where the press and politicians battled it out with words, all in good spirits! Even better, part of the proceeds from this event were directed towards the Journalism Institute, an organization dedicated to defending press freedom worldwide. ... Here's to a future where the press continues to thrive - and we will be returning as a sponsor in 2024!"**  
**Jeanot Tapp, Vice President, Client Services for Publir**



# StudentSupport

In classrooms and labs throughout the country, student journalists are developing the skills and passion to deliver news to their communities. In 2023, the Institute expanded its work supporting the future of journalism through special programs, scholarship opportunities, and career preparation.

**“I am so grateful to receive this honor from the National Press Club. ... It is mind-blowing to me that this kid from St. Louis is interning with the team at NBC’s “Andrea Mitchell Reports” in Washington D.C. Journalism is truly a passion for me, and this opportunity was made possible thanks to the generosity and support of the National Press Club/Journalism Institute. Words cannot express how appreciative I am, and I cannot wait to take the next step of my career in D.C.”**

**Komlavi Adissem, Spring 2023 Lewis Scholarship recipient**

## INSTITUTE HOSTS NATIONAL STUDENT LEADERSHIP CENTER STUDENTS

More than 70 high school seniors aspiring to careers related to journalism toured the National Press Club in June and spent part of their day discussing how to combat mis- and disinformation. Joining as part of their National Student Leadership Center summer program, the students learned about their own susceptibility to “fake news” before exploring their roles in stopping the spread of misinformation in their journalism and in their personal lives.

## 2023 NATIONAL PRESS CLUB SCHOLARSHIPS RECIPIENTS



**Wes Vernon  
Broadcast  
Scholarship**

Tanya Velázquez of Fort Worth, Texas



**Dennis and Shirley  
Feldman Fellowship**

Veronica Irwin of San Francisco, California



**The Scholarship for  
Journalism Diversity  
Honoring Julie Schoo**

Amaya Collier of Austin, Texas



**Richard G.  
Zimmerman  
Scholarship**

Alexa D’Amato of Boxford, Massachusetts



**Spring Lewis  
Scholarship**

Komlavi Adissem of St. Louis, Missouri



**Summer Lewis  
Scholarship**

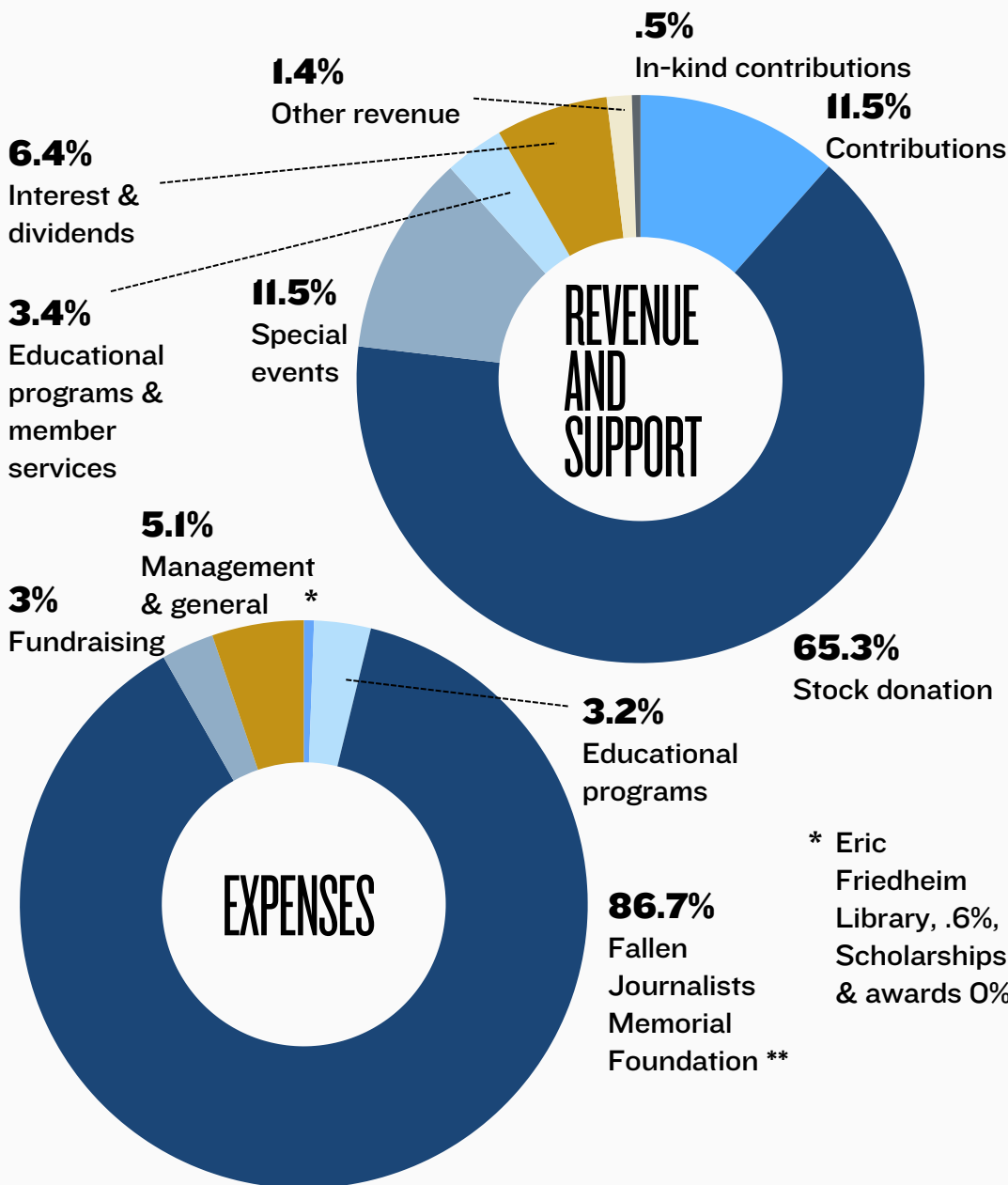
Heidi Perez-Moreno of Miami, Florida

# Fiscal Responsibility

The National Press Club Journalism Institute relies on a variety of support to provide top-quality programming and experiences for journalists and the public they serve. Grants from foundations, as well as corporate sponsorships, workshop fees, and individual donors, helped sustain and expand our work in 2023. Investment income supplements our operations. Thanks to our variety of generous supporters, the Institute met its fundraising goals in 2023.

## OPERATING FUNDS

Percentages are based on a 2022 audit by Jones, Maresca & McQuade, PA, the most recent available audited figures.



**148**

Total number of donors to general operating fund

**79**

Number of first-time donors to the general operating fund

**32**

Number of fundraising event sponsors

\* Eric Friedheim Library, .6%, Scholarships & awards 0%

\*\*Until fall 2022, the Institute was the fiscal sponsor of the now independent FJMF.

# DonorSupport

Thank you to the generous donors who supported the Institute's programs, events, and operational work in 2023.

Beryl Adcock	Efrain Hernandez	Benjamin Palumbo
Helen Barrington	Blake Thompson Heuer	Alisa Parenti
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Victoria Bendure	Rick Hutzell	Megan Pell
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Peter Bhatia	Carol James	Kate Pennington
Hannah Bloch	Alicia Jennings	Jeffrey Phillips
Kevin Bohn	Jessica Jerreat	Claude Porsella
Suzanne Boothby	Fawn Johnson	Sheridan Prasso
Elizabeth Brown	Marael Johnson	Sarakshi Rai
Haley Bull	Marvin Kalb	Harshawn Ratenpal
Catalina Camia	Ed Kelley	Maria Recio
Douglas Cannon	Arlene Kimata	Jen Reeder
Theodora Lee Carvell	Gilbert Klein	Kie Relyea
Irv Chapman	Grant Kornberg	Danya Ristic-Schacherl
John Chevedden	Andrew Kreig	Stephanie Roberts
Mari Clark	Jim Kuhnhen	Joe Rothstein
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Maeve Duggan	Matt Lindsay	Leland Schwartz
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Laura Faul	Joseph Mancias, Jr.	Peggy Simpson
Elliot Feldman	Joel Marino	Mike Smith
Ellyn Ferguson	David Martens	Sheila Smith
Andrew Fisher	Lisa Matthews	Technology News & Literature
Lani Gill Flesch	William McCarren	Todd South
Wendy Fox	Beth McHenry	Pamela Stallsmith
Beth Francesco	Ian McKendry	Andrew Stanfill
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Ann Marie Gothard	Carrick O'Reilly	Tony Vaida
Angela Greiling Keane	Eileen & Cary O'Reilly	Hariana Veras
Douglas Harbrecht	Susan Ohnstad	Kathryn Vose
James & Mary Harle	Ann Oldenburg	Barclay Walsh
Gillie Haynes	Rachel Oswald	Denise Watson

## SUPPORT FOR RESTRICTED FUNDS

**Austin Tice Fund**  
121 donors

**\$7,083**

**NPC Awards**  
4 donors

**\$6,100**

**Student Scholarships**  
1 donor

**\$200\***

\*Student Scholarship funds are self-sustaining through investment income and do not require further donations. To support student work, please direct your gift to "student training & support."

Lucille Weener  
Joan K. Westlake  
Celia Wexler  
Emily Wilkins  
James Butcher & Carolyn Williams  
Shernay Williams  
Joanne Williams  
David Wharton  
Laura Zasoski  
Kate Zaykowski

# PartnerSupport

Collaboration is critical to any organization's success. In 2023, the Institute partnered with outstanding organizations and sponsors to plan innovative programming and to fight for press freedom. We closely value these relationships.



THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.



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Bloomberg

The Washington Post

CBS NEWS



Jack & Elaine Drage



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## GRANT FUNDERS

- **Horace W. Goldsmith Foundation:** General operating support
- **Inasmuch Foundation:** Programmatic support
- **WISH-WISE Foundation:** General operating support



## CONTACT US

For more about the Institute's mission and impact, press freedom work and special initiatives:

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For more on how to financially support the Institute's growing body of work:

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For inquiries related to our newsletters, scholarships, and library services:

**Holly Butcher Grant**, operations manager, [hgrant@press.org](mailto:hgrant@press.org)

## SUPPORT OUR WORK



The Institute is a 501(c)(3) educational organization  
and the nonprofit affiliate of the National Press Club  
(Tax ID 52-1750908).