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The American Legion Announces Recipients of 4th Estate Journalism Awards

INDIANAPOLIS (May 19, 2025) – An Austin, Texas television station and a Louisville, Ky., newspaper will receive American Legion Fourth Estate Awards during the 106th National Convention of the nation's largest veterans organization in Tampa, Fla., on August 28.

The Fourth Estate Award has been presented annually by The American Legion since 1958 for outstanding achievement in the field of journalism. Nominations in 2025 were considered in broadcast and print categories. They were selected by the organization's Media & Communications Commission during its meeting in Indianapolis earlier this month.

Taking top honor in the broadcast category is *KXAN*, an NBC affiliate. In its special four-part docuseries, "A Hanging on Backbone Creek," investigative reporter Josh Hinkle investigated the mysterious death of a 13-year-old girl that occurred 59 years earlier. The local justice of the peace ruled the death as an accident, though many believe there is evidence of murder. The station examined a statewide policy that allows elected justices of the peace to determine causes of death without requiring autopsies from medical examiners or coroners. The station also pointed out that many justices of the peace lack law enforcement or medical backgrounds.

The Courier Journal of Louisville, Ky., is being recognized for its 2024 series "Silence & Secrets." Lead reporter Stephanie Kuzydym explored cases of sexual misconduct and molestation that have occurred in

Kentucky schools. The reporting has pressured state lawmakers to strengthen preventative measures during its recent legislative session. It is the second consecutive Fourth Estate Award for the *Courier Journal* and Kuzydym.

“The American Legion has always valued the role that the free press has played in shaping policy for a free and democratic society,’ said James A. LaCoursiere, Jr., national commander of The American Legion. “Our Fourth Estate Award winners are being recognized not just for excellent journalism but for the positive impact that their work has had in their communities. I look forward to congratulating these outstanding winners when I present them their awards in Tampa this summer.”

Previous winners of the award include CNN, CBS, USA Today, ABC News, C-SPAN, the Milwaukee Journal, and Life Magazine, among others.

About The American Legion. The American Legion is dedicated to the motto of “Veterans Strengthening America” and calls on all Americans to “Be the One” to stop veteran suicide. Chartered by Congress in 1919, The American Legion is committed to mentoring youth and sponsoring wholesome community programs, advocating patriotism and honor, promoting a strong national security and continued devotion to servicemembers and veterans. Legionnaires in more than 12,000 posts across the nation and regions overseas serve their communities with a devotion to mutual helpfulness.

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