

Edward Alwood wins national award for book about journalism during McCarthyism



Edward Alwood, associate professor of journalism, won the Tankard Book Award for his book "Dark Days in the Newsroom: McCarthyism Aimed at the Press."

The Association for Education in Journalism & Mass Communication presented the award at the association's annual convention Aug. 6 in Chicago.

The award honors Dr. James W. Tankard Jr. for his journalism scholarship, creativity and character, and celebrates books written by association members. All first edition books, including scholarly monographs, textbooks and edited collections published during the previous calendar year by association members are eligible for the Tankard Book Award competition. Alwood was one of three finalists.

Published in 2007 by Temple University Press in Philadelphia, the book examines investigations of newsrooms by Congress during the McCarthy era and underreported issues about the relationship between news agencies and the government. The book details how radical journalists during the Depression era became targets of Sen. Joseph McCarthy and like-minded anti-communists during the 1950s, and how Congress questioned journalists suspected of being members of the Communist Party.

The book includes Alwood's interviews with former New York Times Copy Editor Melvin Barnet, who didn't work in journalism again after he refused to answer questions about his political affiliation. The New York Times fired Barnet in 1955 for being a member of the Communist Party even though he told the Times he left the party in the 1940s.

"Dark Days in the Newsroom" also shows how conflicts journalists faced during the McCarthy era parallel modern conflicts over the right of journalists to protect sources, such as New York Times reporter Judith Miller and Time magazine reporter Matthew Cooper, who refused to reveal sources before a grand jury.

"Judith Miller refused to testify and was sent to jail, and the Supreme Court refused to review the cases in the 50s and now," Alwood said.

While doing research for his previous book, "Straight News: Gays, Lesbians, and the News Media," published by Columbia University Press in 1996, Alwood interviewed New York Times Publisher Arthur Ochs Sulzberger Jr. He later allowed Alwood to review private archives at The New York Times for "Dark Days in the Newsroom." Alwood also obtained through freedom of information requests undisclosed documents from the FBI, The U.S. National Archives and Records Administration, the U.S. Department of State and congressional investigative committees.

During Alwood's 14 years as a television reporter, he was a Washington correspondent for CNN chosen to cover President Reagan's trip to the World Economic Summit in Tokyo.

"Straight News" was Alwood's first book. It evaluated how mainstream American news media has depicted gays and lesbians over the past 50 years. The New York Times selected it as a "Notable Book of the Year."

Alwood earned a doctorate in mass communication in 2000, a bachelor's degree in journalism and political science in 1972, all from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. He also earned a master's degree in public communication from American University in Washington, D.C., in 1994.

Founded in Chicago in 1912, the Association for Education in Journalism & Mass Communication is a nonprofit, educational association of journalism and mass communication faculty, administrators, students and media professionals. The Association has some 3,600 members worldwide. Dedicated to promoting the highest standards for education, the association provides resources for news, research and career opportunities, including a multicultural network of practitioners from every discipline of journalism and mass communication