

Cronkite Students Win Prestigious RFK Award

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Thursday, 16 April 2009 17:03 - Last Updated Friday, 17 April 2009 16:04

Walter Cronkite School of Journalism and Mass Communication at Arizona State awarded 17 students with an esteemed Robert F. Kennedy Journalism Award for a project highlighting families divided by the U.S.-Mexico border.



The students worked on the project, "Divided Families," in their In-Depth Reporting class with the guidance of Assistant Cronkite Dean Kristin Gilger and Faculty Associate Robert Sherwood. In order to report, record and photograph their stories, the award-winning project was the result of over 30 trips to the border, deep into Mexico and various parts of Arizona.

The Cronkite students involved in the project were Adrian Barrera, Deanna Dent, Leah Duran, Branden Eastwood, Kristi Eaton, Brian Indrelunas, Ryan Kost, Jordan LaPier, Angela Hong-Anh-Le, Ashley Lowery, Ryan A. Ruiz, Codie Sanchez, Courtney Sargent, Amanda Soares, Michael Struening, Teana Wagner and Aja Viafora.

The semester long, Divided Families project reveals families who have been separated by both legal and illegal immigration and displays the consequences of the stringent border laws. The students produced 22 stories, hundreds of photographs, and nearly a dozen videos for this in-depth project, which won in the Robert F. Kennedy, college print journalism category.

The RFK Journalism Awards program honors exceptional reporting on issues that emphasize Robert F. Kennedy's concerns on human rights and social justice. Winning pieces for this award examine the causes and conditions of injustice and analyze the public policies and actions performed.

The other 2009 RFK winners announced in nine professional categories included *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *National Public Radio* and *the Charlotte Observer*. The awards will be presented on May 28 at George Washington University in Washington. The Grand Prize winner will be announced at the ceremony.

The Divided Families stories and photographs were printed in a magazine distributed by the Cronkite School and have also appeared in several different magazines around the state that subscribe to Cronkite News Service. In their July 2008 issue, Phoenix Magazine dedicated eight pages to one of the Divided Families stories, about U.S. children stranded in a Mexican orphanage.

The extensive project was made possible with the support, and a generous grant from the Howard G. Buffett Foundation, an Illinois-based nonprofit organization. Founder Howard G. Buffett is an international photojournalist, author, environmentalist, philanthropist, as well as vital supporter of the Cronkite School's in-depth reporting program.

Ethel Kennedy, the widow of Robert F. Kennedy, contacted Assistant Dean Kristin Gilger herself to share the remarkable news.