



Veteran Journalist Tom Bier Wins UW's First Journalism Ethics Award



The Center for Journalism Ethics at the University of Wisconsin-Madison will honor television broadcaster Tom Bier, vice president and station manager of WISC-TV, Channel 3000.com, with its first Wisconsin Commitment to Journalism Ethics Award on April 30. Bier, a 39-year veteran of the television, radio and web broadcast industry, will be recognized for his lifelong practice of the highest ethical standards.

Despite the recent downturn in media industry profits, Bier didn't cut corners, co-workers said. They pointed to his tireless work to uphold ethical standards as a reporter, news director, station manager and news executive.

"To work with Tom is to see an ethical journalist in action," said Neil Heinen, WISC-TV editorial director, who works with Bier and nominated him for the award.

A committee of working and retired journalists considered Bier's tenure as a member of the Radio TV News Directors Association (RTNDA) Board of Directors, including a stint as chair in 1989-90. He helped re-write that organization's ethics code and developed a program, "You Be The News Director," that allowed audiences to learn how to make ethical decisions based on real-life news programs.

Bier was the committee's unanimous choice. A native of Janesville, WI, Bier is a Vietnam veteran and a graduate of the University of Wisconsin-Madison in speech communications. He is married to Kathy Bier. They live in Madison and have two grown daughters.

Judges included Herman Baumann, principal, Green Line Strategies, of Palatine, Ill.; Dan Flannery, executive editor of *The Post Crescent* in Appleton, Wisc.; Ellen Foley, executive assistant and director of development at Madison Area Technical College; Judy Frankel, project manager at Putnam Roby Williamson Communications in Madison; Jack Mitchell, professor emeritus of journalism at UW; and John Smalley, editor of the *Wisconsin State Journal* in Madison.

Foley was the committee's chair. Foley was editor of the *Wisconsin State Journal* for five years. She has also worked at the *Philadelphia Daily News*, the *Kansas City Star*, the *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, the *Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel* and *The Detroit News*.

The Wisconsin Commitment to Journalism Ethics seeks those who have acted with integrity without compromising or ignoring ethical principles, said Stephen J. A. Ward, director of the Center for Journalism Ethics. When faced with a tough judgment call, an ethical dilemma, or pressure to ignore ethical values, the honorees have made firm decisions with clarity and according to ethical principles, added Ward, who is also Burgess Professor of Journalism Ethics.

The committee will give Bier the award midmorning at the Second Annual Journalism Ethics Conference, April 30, sponsored by the Center for Journalism Ethics. The center is in the UW-School of Journalism and Mass Communications. For more information on the award and the conference, visit www.journalismethics.info.