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On Friday, April 6th, 2001, the 57<sup>th</sup> Annual Temple Press Tournament got underway with high school journalists from 19 area schools bustling inside Ritter Hall's Walk Auditorium to begin a day of workshops, contests and seminars run by some of the region's top media professionals, as well as Journalism, Public Relations and Advertising faculty. Competitions included categories such as News Writing, Speech Reporting and Editorial Cartooning, and workshop topics covered areas ranging from Media Ethics to Web Publishing to Photojournalism. The event also included the presentation of the JPRA Department's "Free Speech Award," which honors area journalists whose work exemplifies a dedication to the First Amendment and a commitment to community well-being.

The day began with brief welcome speeches by SCAT Dean Concetta Stewart and JPRA Chair Karen Turner. Stewart and Turner then presented the Free Speech Award to reporters Mark Bowden of *The Philadelphia Inquirer* and Linn Washington of *The Philadelphia Tribune*. Washington is also a member of the JPRA faculty, teaching News Writing and News Reporting.

Washington and Bowden were honored because they refused to turn over their notebooks to the court as evidence against Brian Tyson, a man accused of first-degree murder. Both reporters had interviewed Tyson and had published news stories concerning his case. They cited the Shield Law, which upholds a reporter's right to protect confidential sources, in their defense.

The State case against Washington and Bowden worked through the appeal system while the case against Tyson continued. The reporters' case reached a head on the day Tyson was to take the stand. A judge ordered both reporters in contempt

of court and imposed a mandatory \$100 per minute fine until the end of the trial. The total fine reached \$40,000 and Tyson was found guilty of third degree murder. Both cases are now on appeal.

Mark Bowden, a writer for *The Philadelphia Inquirer* for the past 18 years, has reported widely in the United States and abroad. In accepting the Free Speech Award, he addressed the packed auditorium with enthusiasm. "In a free society, the free flow of information is as important as any law enforcement objective," Bowden said. Though he said there was "nothing heroic" in what he did, he expressed the good fortune he felt in living in the United States. "I live in a country where the worst that could happen to journalists is to get fined in court or spend a night or two in jail. Obviously in a lot of countries throughout the world, journalists could be shot," Bowden emphasized.

"It's important to understand that, as a journalist, you need to be free to go to the jailhouse or to the White House to gather information. As soon as law enforcement agencies use you as a tool to do their investigation, it begins to close down your access to information," Bowden said.

In his speech, Linn Washington echoed Bowden's remarks and got a few laughs from the early-morning crowd as well.

"Journalism is a great life...I love this job," Washington said. "It's given me the opportunity to travel all over the world, all around the country, and occasionally you get a chance to perhaps go to jail and meet people like burglars and robbers and murderers and crack heads," he said with a laugh.

On a more serious note, Washington stressed the importance of the laws that allow him to practice journalism. "The founders of this nation wanted to stress the independence [of journalists] to be a monitor of what happens in the government and in our society," Washington said. He stated that journalists are meant to play a "special role" in independently examining the activities of the government without

fear of reprisal. "I couldn't do half of what I did if I lived anywhere other than America," Washington said.

Washington commended the high school journalists in the audience for attending the Temple Press Tournament and for their commitment to "this thing we call journalism." He left the students with these words of encouragement: "If you learn only one thing today, I hope it is this — what you do helps people. It can help change society, it can help illuminate things...or it can help one individual."