

SMU DEDMAN PARTNERS WITH ABA SILVER GAVEL

Educating the Public About American Constitutional and Legal Systems



For 54 years, the American Bar Association Silver Gavel Award for Media and the Arts has honored

those who use the mass media to shine a spotlight on the law and the justice system.

The prestigious Silver Gavel has been awarded to historic movies, including the 1958 film *12 Angry Men* with Henry Fonda and the beloved 1963 drama *To Kill A Mockingbird*, and great books, including Fred Friendly's 1982 book *Minnesota Rag* and James Stewart's 1992 bestseller *Den of Thieves*. Newspapers such as the *Washington Post*, *Chicago Tribune*, *The Dallas Morning News*, and the *New York Times Sunday Magazine*, have been repeatedly honored for their excellence in legal journalism.

For the second consecutive year, SMU Dedman School of Law is proud to have sponsored the ABA's Silver Gavel Award ceremony and dinner at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C. in July. More than a hundred of the nation's leading legal journalists and ABA officials, including ABA Past President Carolyn Lamm, attended the event. The keynote speaker was ABC News legal analyst Dan Abrams, who is the son of famed First Amendment lawyer Floyd Abrams.

The ABA presents Silver Gavels in categories that include books, magazines, newspapers, commentary, drama and literature, documentaries, television, radio, and websites. Selection criteria includes educational value of the legal information or issues addressed in the entry; the impact on the public; the thoroughness and accuracy in presentation of issues; the creativity and originality in approach to subject matter and effectiveness of presentation; and the technical skill involved in the entry.



"We are so pleased to have SMU Dedman Law School's support for the second year," said ABA Silver Gavel Award Chairwoman Sheila Hollis. "The law school is a great partner in showcasing efforts by the media to promote the rule of law. We are thankful for SMU's commitment to this important program."

"The law school is a great partner in showcasing the efforts by the media to promote the rule of law."

Dean John Attanasio said that the ABA Silver Gavel Awards are exactly the kind of public outreach efforts that SMU Dedman Law wants to support.

"The very purpose of the Silver Gavel Awards is to educate the public about the American constitutional and legal systems and how they operate," said Dean Attanasio. "The intent of the Silver Gavel is to put a spotlight on our courts, legislatures and other legal institutions. The articles and programs tend to

focus on significant problems that need reforms. And the very best way to reach the public is through the media."

In 2011, the ABA received nearly 200 entries in all categories. After significant review, the Silver Gavel committee selected six Silver Gavel winners and two honorable mentions.

"We would like to congratulate the honorees and thank them for their amazing efforts," said Dean Attanasio. ■

The honorees were:

Books: *Scorpions: The Battles and Triumphs of FDR's Great Supreme Court Justices* by Noah Feldman.

Magazines: "Profiting from Fallen Soldiers" by David Evans, a senior writer for *Bloomberg Markets*.

Newspapers: "Hounded: Debtors and the New Breed of Collectors" by *Minneapolis Star Tribune* business reporters Chris Serres and Glenn Howatt.

Radio: "Bonding for Profit" by National Public Radio Correspondent Laura Sullivan and NPR Editor Steven Drummond.

Television: "The Lord is Not on Trial Here Today" is a one-hour film by Jay Rosenstein, who produced, wrote and directed for PBS.

Documentaries: "A Call to Act: *Ledbetter v. Goodyear*," was written, produced and directed by Robe Imbriano of The Documentary Group in New York.