

*About the*  
**MISSOURI HONOR MEDAL**

The Missouri School of Journalism has awarded the Missouri Honor Medal for Distinguished Service annually since 1930 to outstanding journalists, advertising and public relations practitioners, business people, institutions and media organizations from around the world.

Medalists are chosen by the faculty of the School based on lifetime or superior achievement, for distinguished service performed in the fields of journalistic and strategic communication endeavors.

The annual awards shall not be restricted necessarily to any particular forms of journalistic or strategic communication service, nor will there be, necessarily, any designated number voted annually by the School. The award in each instance shall consist of a bronze medal, uniform in size, of appropriate design, and suitably inscribed with the recipient's name. Awards shall be made only to those persons who, upon invitation, are present in person to receive them, or in the case of news outlets, agencies and other organizations, when such are represented in person by an official representative.



**Missouri School of Journalism**  
University of Missouri



**2024**

**THE  
MISSOURI  
HONOR  
MEDAL**

**FOR  
DISTINGUISHED  
SERVICE IN  
JOURNALISM**

MONDAY, SEPT. 23, 2024

THE ATRIUM

22 N. TENTH ST. • COLUMBIA, MO

## Program

### Welcome

David Kurpius  
Dean, Missouri School of Journalism

### Dinner

### Master of Ceremonies

David Kurpius

### Presidential Address

Mun Y Choi  
President, University of Missouri

### Presentation of Medals

### Conclusion

David Kurpius



## Renatta McCann

Renatta McCann has worked in advertising and public relations for half a century. Beginning with an entry-level position at Leo Burnett Company, she would become the company's media director, then—after a brief sojourn that included becoming the global CEO of Starcom Mediavest Group—its chief talent officer.

She is now the chief inclusion experiences officer for Publicis Groupe, which bought Leo Burnett in 2002, and she also serves as an educator through an adjunct post at Northwestern University. McCann said these positions allow her, as a Black woman who found her footing in the industry at a time not far removed from the peak of the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960's, to focus on helping others from a variety of backgrounds find a path to success—a priority that has been part of her work for many years.

McCann has been recognized throughout her career for both her skill at building brand profiles and for her influence on the industry in introducing and sustaining diversity and inclusion efforts in hiring, management and mentorship. She has been named one of "50 Women Who are Changing the World" by "Essence," was "Black Enterprise Magazine's" 2022 Corporate Executive of the Year and was inducted last year into the American Advertising Federation's Hall of Fame.



## Radiolab

Founded in 2002 by Jad Abumrad before co-host Robert Krulwich came aboard in 2004, Radiolab quickly made a name for itself as a quirky, often comical exploration of complex topics in the realms of science, politics and even philosophy.

A trademark of the show's style, in addition to the distinctive dynamic between its co-hosts that helped inform much of today's podcast craze, is the liberal use of sound effects and other ambient noises originally produced by Abumrad to supplement the program's storytelling and interviews. But perhaps more significantly at a time when journalism is experiencing a crisis in public trust, Radiolab has often been singled out for praise on the accessibility of its science content.

Originally airing on NPR, the show now appears on New York public radio station WNYC. The original co-hosts have also moved on to other things: Krulwich left Radiolab in 2020, and Abumrad departed two years later. But the spirit of eschewing self-seriousness while tackling serious subject matter remains, as evidenced by the description on the Radiolab website, which declares, "Radiolab is on a curiosity bender."

It's a spirit that extends even to elements typically seen as formalities, such as the credits, which are read by listeners and interview subjects. This and the show's "musicality" are just a few examples of radio's ability to engage with audiences in ways that differ greatly from other mediums, creating opportunities for fresh approaches to informing the public.



## Donald Suggs

Donald Suggs has served as publisher of the St. Louis American since 1984, taking the Black community newspaper from a circulation of just over 4,000 to its current position as the largest weekly newspaper in Missouri.

Suggs' entry into journalism came relatively late in his career. Born in 1932, just four years after the St. Louis American published its first issue in 1928, he became a successful oral surgeon but, in the burgeoning days of the Civil Rights Movement, he faced obstacles in finding a faculty position in academia. He ultimately became the first Black associate clinical professor at Saint Louis University Dental School.

Suggs was active in the Civil Rights Movement and played a key role in organizing the Poor People's March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom in 1968, a march originally planned by Martin Luther King Jr. before his assassination. He sees his involvement in journalism as a natural extension of his efforts to bring communities together, noting that he was impressed by the impact of journalism even as a young man.

Suggs' tenure at the St. Louis American has seen the newspaper not only dramatically rise in circulation but introduce more content raising awareness of health disparities in the Black community. Programs like Newspapers in Education, which provides free newspapers to public elementary school students with an emphasis on STEM education, have also aimed to increase news literacy and education outcomes among young people.