



January 2, 2018
For Immediate Release
Contact: Rachel Gelbmann, 850.224.4555
rachel@floridafaf.org

THE FIRST AMENDMENT FOUNDATION ANNOUNCES WINNERS OF ITS 2017 SUNSHINE AWARDS

The First Amendment Foundation's 2017 Sunshine Awards recognize those who have made significant contributions to furthering open government through service, litigation, and reporting. In addition to the Pete Weitzel/Friend of the First Amendment Award and the James C. Adkins/Sunshine Litigation Award, this year FAF introduced the Lucy Morgan Award for Open Government Reporting.

The 2017 Sunshine Award Winners are:

- Fane Lozman, 2017 Pete Weitzel/Friend of the First Amendment Award
- Kenneth Weiss, 2017 James C. Adkins/Sunshine Litigation Award
- Carol Marbin Miller and Audra D.S. Burch – *Miami Herald*, Lucy Morgan Award for Open Government Reporting

The nomination for the Pete Weitzel/Friend of the First Amendment Award was based on Mr. Lozman's most recent case before the US Supreme Court. Fane was arrested after speaking at a city commission meeting and is claiming that arrest violated his First Amendment rights. Mr. Lozman is a formidable citizen activist who has been engaged in sunshine issues for years. He is an original member of our Sunshine Coalition and a tenacious open government advocate. The Pete Weitzel/Friend of the First Amendment Award was created to recognize the significant contribution made by Pete Weitzel, former managing editor of *The Miami Herald*, and founder and past president of the First Amendment Foundation, in the area of open government. The Weitzel Award is given annually to someone in Florida who has made a significant contribution to the cause of furthering open government.

Mr. Weiss, recipient of the James C. Adkins/Sunshine Litigation Award, is an attorney in the Tampa Bay area who has aggressively pursued open government violations in numerous cities throughout the Bay area. After winning a major lawsuit against St. Petersburg Beach, Weiss created a legal fellowship for law students with an interest in open government at the First Amendment Foundation. The James C. Adkins/Sunshine Litigation Award was created to recognize the importance and continuing value of Justice Adkins' open government opinions while on the Florida Supreme Court and is given to attorneys or citizens who have made a significant contribution to the cause of furthering open government through litigation.

The nomination for the Lucy Morgan Award for Open Government Reporting was based on Carol Marbin Miller and Audra D. S. Burch's [Fight Club: Dark secrets of Florida Juvenile Justice](#), a series of stories in *The Miami Herald*. Miller and Burch secured data sets from four state agencies and analyzed 10 years of data for the series, which revealed systematic chaos, cruelty and human rights violations within some of the state's juvenile justice institutions. The first Lucy Morgan Award for Open Government Reporting – named for the

Pulitzer Prize-winning reporter for the *St. Petersburg Times* (now the *Tampa Bay Times*) who broke countless stories using public records – is awarded to two reporters whose work exemplifies the tenacity, drive, and courage that characterizes Lucy Morgan. The award honors a Florida journalist who smartly uses public records to report stories exposing corruption, revealing government conflicts of interest or otherwise serving the public interest.

We received many compelling and worthy submissions for this award. The *Sarasota Herald-Tribune's* [One War: Two Races](#) by Josh Salman, Michael Braga and Dak Le deserves special mention for its revelation of the persistent imbalance in sentences meted out to black and white defendants for drug crimes.

We owe all of this year's award winners special thanks for all they have done for the public. They set a standard that citizens, the press, and those in government should emulate.

The awards will be presented at the Foundation's annual Sunshine Recognition luncheon on Tuesday, January 23, 2018, at the Governors Club in Tallahassee.

Past recipients of the award can be found on the Foundation's website, www.floridafaf.org.

For more information or to purchase tickets for the luncheon, please contact the First Amendment Foundation at 850.224.4555. The First Amendment Foundation's purpose is to protect and advance the public's constitutional right to open government by providing education and training, legal aid and information services.