



Washington Coalition *for* Open Government

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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National Freedom of Information Coalition President, Dave Cuillier (University of Arizona) and Seattle Times Editorial Page Editor, Kate Riley, will be honored by the Washington Coalition for Open Government when the Coalition presents the 2020 James Madison and 2020 James Andersen Awards this fall.

WCOG Executive Director, Juli Bunting, says Cuillier, President of the National Freedom of Information Coalition, has a long history of advocating for open government and transparency both in the Pacific Northwest and nationally. “This award is for life time achievement in the area of advocating for open government. Dave fought for transparency as a reporter and editor in Washington and now leads this very important national movement. NFOIC could not have more dedicated leadership.”

Cuillier responded to news of the award by saying transparent, accountable government is more important than ever and the nation can look to Washington state for inspiration. “We saw in recent years citizens fight back against attempts to exempt the Legislature from the state public records law. We’ve seen recalcitrant public agencies held accountable through hefty fines. It’s this special frontier attitude that

reminds the elected who is in charge. Washingtonians are lucky to have been served by dedicated, tireless volunteers, working two decades through WCOG to ensure that people know what their government is up to. I can say definitely from the research and data, that WCOG's work has made a difference in people's lives, and that its influence radiates throughout the country. It makes me proud to be an Evergreen State native and fortunate to have been shaped by such amazing transparency warriors in WCOG. Together, we will hold the line."

Seattle Times Editorial Page Editor, Kate Riley is being honored with the 2020 James Andersen award for her relentless pursuit of government accountability, and for educating the public on the editorial pages of the Seattle Times. Riley says the cause of open government has never been more important.

"In times of controversy, even the best-intentioned elected official might be tempted to skirt open-government laws. As traditional news organizations struggle, fewer journalists from fewer newspapers are asking questions of elected officials. That's why it is even more important that all community members are able to access information that rightly belongs to them. WCOG is a great ally of the people in this regard. I am humbled to receive this award and will continue to do my part to shed a light on government."

"The Board is very excited to honor these two outstanding individuals who are such strong advocates for transparency at all levels of government, says Bunting, who noted the awards will be presented during a virtual event in mid-September.