



Religion Communicators Council

An Interfaith Association of Religion Communicators since 1929

Wilbur Awards

2012 Wilbur Awards presented by Religion Communicators Council (RCC)

by Toya Richards

The best of the best in religious communicating were honored at the 2012 Wilbur Awards April 14 during the Religion Communicators Council (RCC) national convention in Philadelphia.

The awards banquet, underwritten this year by the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and its Presbyterian Disaster Assistance ministry, celebrated professionals in categories including television and cable documentary, feature film (drama), blogs, and magazines.

“The Wilbur awards are unique in that they recognize the value and importance of public and secular media and their intersection with religious issues of the day,” said Sara Pottschmidt Lisherness, director of the Compassion, Peace and Justice ministry area of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

“Throughout the centuries, communicators have often brought to light critical issues that demand engagement by the religious community. And often the faith community has borne witness to realities that the rest of the world might have otherwise ignored,” she said.

The RCC is the oldest association of religion communicators in North America. Its Wilbur Awards recognize excellence in communicating religious faith and values in the public arena and encourage understanding among faith groups.



Among the most famous recipients of the Wilbur Award are former President Jimmy Carter, Bill Moyers, and Steven Spielberg. The award is named for longtime Presbyterian Church executive Marvin Wilbur, who was one of the leaders of the RCC for many years.

Wilbur Award recipients often thank the organization for recognizing that their work has worth and meaning, said Shirley Struchen, RCC executive director. She noted that there are many really good movies, books, television programs and other communication forms out there, but “we need to reward them so that we will continue to have them.”

Winners this year included the feature film *The Help*, based on the novel by Kathryn Stockett and the screenplay and direction by Tate Taylor; the television and cable documentary “Serving Life” from writer, producer and director Lisa Cohen; and the book *Miles To Go* by Richard Paul Evans.

“When I got the email (about the Wilbur) I was elated,” said Anthony Laudato, who won for his *CBS News Sunday Morning* story “Spreading the Word.” The piece he produced with reporter Daniel Sieberg focused on how communities of faith and religious groups are using the Web and mobile applications.

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How to do ministry online is a huge question, and churches will continue to grapple with this issue, said Laudato. “It was great to talk to people who are wrestling with these issues.”

Winning the Wilbur “reaffirmed my faith in journalism,” he said. “It was a thrill to have my work recognized.”



A “**Special Wilbur**” was presented to Dr. Andrew “Andy” B. Rawls, Producer Extraordinaire for 22 years of creatively producing the RCC Wilbur Program.

About the Religion Communicators Council

The [Religion Communicators Council](http://www.religioncommunicators.org) is an interfaith association of more than 400 religion communicators working in print and electronic communication, advertising, and public relations. Members represent Baha’i, Christian, Hindu, Jewish and Muslim faith communities. Founded in 1929, the council is the oldest public relations professional association in the United States.

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