



## PARTNERSHIP FOR PUBLIC SERVICE

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### **JEFF BEZOS, MICHAEL LEWIS AND JUDY WOODRUFF HEADLINE THE FEDERAL WORKFORCE'S BIGGEST NIGHT – THE 2018 SAMMIES**

Partnership for Public Service honors civil servants and presents first-ever  
*Spirit of Service* award at *Samuel J. Heyman Service to America Medals gala*

**WASHINGTON** – The nonprofit, nonpartisan Partnership for Public Service will host the 17th annual *Samuel J. Heyman Service to America Medals (Sammies)* awards gala on Tuesday, October 2 to honor outstanding civil servants who have made significant contributions to the health, safety and prosperity of the American people. Considered the “Oscars of government service,” the *Sammies* have earned a reputation as the premier awards program recognizing innovation in the federal government.

The Partnership also will present the first-ever *Spirit of Service* award to **Jeff Bezos** – founder and CEO, Amazon.com; founder, Blue Origin; and owner, The Washington Post. Designed to shine a spotlight on individuals outside of government who have made significant contributions to public service, the award recognizes Bezos for the countless ways he and his companies work to advance important fields such as space exploration and national security, as well as help government deliver services more effectively and efficiently.

“These are not normal times for our nation’s civil servants. Yet, they continue to serve in extraordinary ways, and we need to recognize and celebrate their important work,” said Max Stier, president and CEO, of the Partnership for Public Service. “The 2018 *Service to America Medal* recipients represent the best in government, the dedicated, smart and innovative public servants who work tirelessly behind-the-scenes to serve the public interest.”

Judy Woodruff, the anchor and managing editor of “PBS NewsHour,” will emcee the gala. Adding to the evening’s excitement will be best-selling author and 2018 *Sammies* selection committee member **Michael Lewis**, who will engage Bezos in a fireside chat. Lewis’ newly released book, “The Fifth Risk,” takes readers behind the scenes during the 2016 presidential transition at the departments of Agriculture, Commerce and Energy and includes stories about dedicated public servants who are on the frontlines serving the American public during the change in administrations.

Special gala presenters include: Department of Veterans Affairs Secretary Robert Wilkie; Federal Trade Commission Chairman Joseph Simons; National Institutes of Health Director Francis Collins; Office of Management and Budget Deputy Director for Management Margaret Weichert; and Rep. Mark Meadows (R-N.C.).

The seven award winners were among 27 finalists announced in May 2018 and chosen from more than 300 nominations submitted to the Partnership for Public Service. The medalists were chosen by a prestigious selection committee of leaders from government, business, foundations, academia, entertainment and the media.

The 2018 Samuel J. Heyman Service to America Medals recipients are:

- The evening's top honor, **Federal Employee of the Year**, will be presented to [Dr. Daniel L. Kastner](#) of the National Institutes of Health (Bethesda, Maryland). Thousands of people, including young children, are afflicted by mysterious genetic diseases that cause recurring strokes, high fevers, arthritis, severe pain, inflammation and other symptoms. Kastner uncovered the genetic causes of seven rare, debilitating illnesses he categorized as auto inflammatory diseases. He also identified 14 previously undiagnosed illnesses and found effective treatments for 12 of them, alleviating suffering for thousands of patients in the U.S. and around the world.
- **The Career Achievement Medal** recipient is [Dr. Marshalyn Yeargin-Allsopp](#) of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (Atlanta, Georgia). As awareness about the number of children with autism and other developmental disabilities grew sharply in the 1980s, no one knew how common these conditions were or how to effectively deploy resources for health, education and social services. Yeargin-Allsopp pioneered ground-breaking research and surveillance systems that for the first time documented the prevalence of autism, intellectual disabilities, cerebral palsy, hearing loss, vision impairment and epilepsy among children.
- The **Homeland Security and Law Enforcement Medal** winners are [Karen D. Dodge](#) of the Federal Trade Commission (Chicago, Illinois) and [Margaret \(Molly\) Moeser](#) of the Department of Justice (Washington, D.C.). Con artists for years used Western Union's money transfer system to fraudulently obtain hundreds of millions of dollars from consumers who were duped into paying for services and products that were never provided. Moeser and Dodge led parallel nationwide criminal and civil investigations that resulted in the world's largest money transfer company admitting to allowing criminals to use its service to collect scam-related payments. The company forfeited \$586 million to reimburse the victims and committed to identify and stop future illegal transactions.
- [Andrew M. Herscowitz and the Power Africa Team](#) of the U.S. Agency for International Development (Pretoria, South Africa) are the winners of the **National Security and International Affairs Medal**. About 600 million people in sub-Saharan Africa lack access to electricity, trapping millions in poverty and stunting economic growth. Herscowitz and the Power Africa team brought together technical and legal experts, the private sector, financial institutions, 12 federal agencies, and governments from around the world to provide electricity to more than 50 million people in this region. The team's 117 electrification projects have spurred economic development, while generating hundreds of millions of dollars in export opportunities for U.S. companies.
- [Marcella \(Marcy\) Jacobs and the Digital Service Team](#) of the Department of Veterans Affairs (Washington, D.C.) are honored with the **Management Excellence Medal**. Veterans who go online to obtain information, benefits and services from the VA often have been frustrated by a complicated tangle of websites, forms, logins and insufficient status updates. Jacobs and the Digital Service team streamlined many online processes for veterans so they can more easily discover, apply for, track and manage the services and benefits they have earned. This includes a simplified login system and new ways for veterans to apply for health and education benefits and monitor disability claims and appeals.
- **The Promising Innovations Medal** winners are [Parimal Kopardekar \(PK\), Ph.D., and the UTM Team](#) of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration's Ames Research Center (Moffett Field, California). By 2020, an estimated 700,000 commercial drones will be flying millions of times a year in low-altitude airspace, creating the prospect of accidents and congestion in an unregulated, airborne Wild West. Kopardekar and his team worked across agencies and with

private-sector partners to design the first-of-its-kind traffic management system for unmanned aerial vehicles. They developed a set of concepts, rules and technologies that will allow commercial drones to safely deliver packages, monitor traffic and aid search and rescue operations.

- [Margaret \(Peggy\) Honein, Ph.D.](#) of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (Atlanta, Georgia) is the recipient of the **Science and Environment Medal**. The mosquito-borne Zika virus began spreading to the U.S. and its territories in 2015 and 2016, triggering devastating birth defects and causing widespread alarm as the government grappled with how to control this health crisis. Honein quickly assembled a team that collected and analyzed critical nationwide data on the spread of the Zika virus in order to protect pregnant women and babies from this terrible health threat. They determined how the virus worked, established clinical guidelines for physicians, disseminated vital information to the public and provided resources to help women find and access specialty services.

The fourth annual **Service to America Medals People's Choice** award was presented in July to [Alison Smith, Ph.D.](#) of the Naval Surface Warfare Center (Crane, Indiana). While all 27 Sammies finalists were eligible to win this award, the public voted for Smith because they believed she made the most admirable contribution to the American people. The Defense Department spends billions of dollars a year on parts for weapons and military equipment that run the gamut from microelectronics for fighter jets and missile guidance systems to materials used in engine mounts. If a shady operator along the supply chain slips in counterfeit or potentially defective components, it puts at risk the nation's security and the lives of military service members. Smith pioneered the use of nanoparticles to mark sensitive military equipment with a unique fingerprint to guard against counterfeit products and protect our nation's warfighters.

The entire awards ceremony will be streamed live from Washington, D.C. and viewable on the Partnership for Public Service's [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) accounts beginning at 6:30 p.m. EDT.

The premier and national sponsors for the 2018 *Service to America Medals* are Mrs. Ronnie Heyman and the Heyman Family, Bloomberg Philanthropies, Chevron, and Ingeborg and Ira Leon Rennert.

Renamed the *Samuel J. Heyman Service to America Medals* in 2010 to commemorate the organization's founder, the program has honored more than 500 outstanding federal employees since its inception in 2002. For profiles and videos of the medalists, and to nominate a federal employee for a 2019 Service to America Medal, visit [servicetoamericamedals.org](http://servicetoamericamedals.org).

During the past 17 years, the nonpartisan, nonprofit Partnership for Public Service has been dedicated to making the federal government more effective for the American people. We work across administrations to help transform the way government operates by increasing collaboration, accountability, efficiency and innovation. Visit [ourpublicservice.org](http://ourpublicservice.org) to learn more. Follow us on social [@RPublicService](#) and [subscribe](#) today to get the latest federal news, information on upcoming Partnership programs and events, and more.

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