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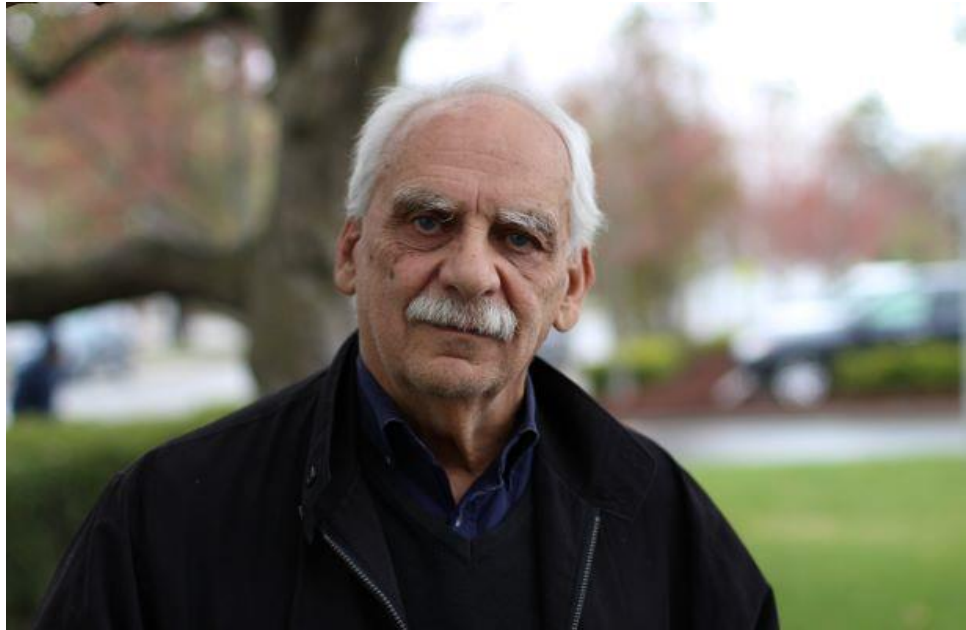
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Robert Azzi to be honored at First Amendment Event

MANCHESTER – An Arab-American who crisscrosses New Hampshire to promote civility and public awareness about Muslims will be honored at the 2018 Nackey S. Loeb School of Communications' First Amendment Awards event.

Robert Azzi of Exeter will be recognized at the 16th annual event on Nov. 15 at the Palace Theatre.



Robert Azzi

The featured speaker – a week after the important mid-term elections -- will be Ohio Gov. John Kasich, a former, and potentially future, presidential hopeful.

Azzi is a photo journalist, columnist, public speaker, education consultant and world traveler whose columns appear in many New Hampshire publications. He also has presented his program, "Ask a Muslim Anything," at more than 50 public events and forums around the state, where he works to encourage tolerance, understanding and interfaith discussion.

"I want to open up new perspectives for my audiences, especially for those who don't often agree with me, and expose them to points of view I believe are important and which they might not have previously considered," he says.

The First Amendment Award judges said they admired Azzi's courage and his "vocal, forthright and honest" presentations about what it's like being Muslim in post-911 America.

Azzi was chosen from nominees submitted by the public.

The First Amendment Awards Event is the only fundraiser for the nonprofit school, which was founded in 1999 by Nackey S. Loeb, the late president and publisher of the Union Leader and Sunday News. Its free classes and low-cost workshops attract students from middle-schoolers to retirees. Instructors from media outlets and businesses around the state teach topics such as the First Amendment, journalism, photography, broadcasting, audio and video production, social media and public speaking.

Tickets for the First Amendment Event are available at www.palacetheatre.org or the Box Office at 603-668-5588.

Past recipients of the First Amendment Award are: former state Attorney General Philip McLaughlin, former Keene Sentinel Executive Editor Thomas Kearney, The Laconia Citizen, former legislator Daniel Hughes, former Dover City Councilor David Scott, Londonderry High School Journalism Adviser Mary Lukas, First Amendment attorney William Chapman, ConVal School Board member Gail Pierson Cromwell, The Portsmouth Herald, David Lang and the Professional Fire Fighters of New Hampshire, The Telegraph of Nashua, slain journalist James Foley, former Portsmouth Police Officer John Connors, citizen activists Donna Green and the late David Pearl and Right to Know NH.

Previous recipients John Howe and Mary Lukas are First Amendment Award judges, along with retired New Hampshire Supreme Court Justice Richard Galway, retired Foster's Daily Democrat Editor Rod Doherty and First Amendment attorney Gregory Sullivan.

Led by Presenting Sponsor People's United Bank, the growing list of 2018 First Amendment Event sponsors and supporters includes: EverSource Energy, The Brodsky Prize, AutoFair, AT&T, Brady Sullivan Properties, McLane Middleton, The Common Man Family of Restaurants and U.S. Trust.

Other sponsors are: Consolidated Communications; Elliot Health System; Joseph and Signe McQuaid, Silvertch; BAE; Citizens Bank, Dartmouth-Hitchcock, Fidelity Investments, Daniel and Carol Hughes, Massachusetts College of Pharmacy and Health Services University; Merchants Automotive Group; Amoskeag Beverages; Anagnost Investments; Bar Harbor Bank & Trust; Bellwether Community Credit Union; Joyce and Daniel Levesque; Sean and Kirsten Mahoney; NH Beverage Association; NH Healthy Families; Northeast Delta Dental; St. Mary's Bank; Union Leader Corp.; AARP; Bernstein Shur Group; Business and Industry Association; Douglas, Leonard & Garvey; New Hampshire College and University Council; Howe, Riley and Howe; Keystone Press.

Media partners are the New Hampshire Union Leader, WMUR-TV and WGIR.

For other information about the event, visit www.loeb.school.org or call 603 627-0005.

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