

NEWS RELEASE

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Jim Bettinger Challenge Fund for Newsroom Innovation to promote new experiments in journalism with \$100,000 from Knight Foundation

New funding will help John S. Knight Journalism Fellowship alumni further advance innovation in newsrooms

STANFORD, Calif.—July 11, 2016— The John S. Knight Journalism Fellowships at Stanford University today announced the launch of the Jim Bettinger Challenge Fund for Newsroom Innovation, which will support U.S.-based fellowship alumni who initiate disruptive, innovative journalism experiments inside newsrooms. The John S. and James L. Knight Foundation is investing \$100,000 in seed funding to help launch the initiative, which honors Director Jim Bettinger, who is retiring after 27 years at Stanford University.

Bettinger joined Stanford in 1989 as the fellowship program’s deputy director, after a career in daily newspapers in Riverside and San Jose, California. He was named director in 2000, and in 2009 led a program shift that has dramatically enhanced the fellowships’ impact. With strategic planning support from Knight Foundation, the fellowships emphasize journalism innovation, entrepreneurship and leadership. The goal is to develop leaders with transformative ideas and approaches that they can use throughout their journalism careers to advance the field.

Now celebrating its 50th anniversary, the John S. Knight Journalism Fellowships bring 20 journalists and journalism innovators to Stanford each year, where they work on specific, self-identified journalism challenges.

Adding to the impact of the program, the Jim Bettinger Challenge Fund will provide support of \$5,000 to \$20,000 to U.S.-based John S. Knight Journalism Fellowship alumni for innovative journalism experiments in newsrooms. Experiments will focus on topics that reflect the current needs of newsrooms and will be chosen by fellowship program leadership. Lessons will be documented and shared by the chosen alumni and through the wider fellowship program.

“I’m deeply moved and honored by the creation of this fund,” Bettinger said. “It will support a cause near and dear to my heart — fostering innovation in newsrooms so that journalists can continue to give their audiences the news and information they need. I can’t wait to see the results!”



“The fund will allow fellowship alumni to apply their learning around innovation, entrepreneurship and leadership right back into news organizations,” said Shazna Nessa, Knight Foundation director for journalism. “This will encourage bold experiments in journalism and advance transformation in the field.”

Recent fellows have launched journalism startups, created cross-border investigative reporting partnerships, established training and mentoring for Afghan female journalists, and crafted tools to enhance reporting, to cite a few examples. Others are leading innovation in established news organizations, including training journalists in user-centered design, data visualization, coding and other skills.

Dawn Garcia is the current managing director of the John S. Knight Journalism Fellowships at Stanford University and will become the program’s director on Sept. 1.

Support for the fellowships is part of Knight Foundation’s efforts to expand digital journalism training opportunities, support emerging leaders and strengthen the network of people working to advance the practice of journalism. Knight has made various other investments in this area including support to a Challenge Fund for Innovation in Journalism Education and recent grants to Poynter’s News University, the Online News Association, and The Knight Center for Journalism in the Americas at The University of Texas at Austin.

For more information on the fellowships, visit jsk.stanford.edu.

About the John S. Knight Journalism Fellowships at Stanford

The John S. Knight Journalism Fellowships program fosters journalistic innovation, entrepreneurship and leadership. Our fellows come from all over the world and from all types of journalism, including daily newspapers, radio and television, nonprofit news startups, blogs and ethnic media. They take their cues from our partners and allies in Silicon Valley as they prototype, refine and retest their ideas. It was founded in 1966 as the Stanford Professional Journalism Fellowships program; it was renamed for Knight Foundation co-founder John S. Knight in 1984, after the foundation made a major gift to endow the program. For more visit, jsk.stanford.edu.

About the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation

Knight Foundation supports transformational ideas that promote quality journalism, advance media innovation, engage communities and foster the arts. We believe that democracy thrives when people and communities are informed and engaged. For more visit, www.knightfoundation.org.