

THE NORMAN LEAR CENTER | USC ANNENBERG
HOLLYWOOD, HEALTH & SOCIETY
Entertainment Education for Television, Movies & New Media

2016 Sentinel Award Winners Include *black-ish*, *Madam Secretary*,
Born This Way, *East Los High*; Norman Lear Makes Special Appearance

Los Angeles, Oct. 5, 2016—The winners of the 17th annual Sentinel Awards, honoring exemplary achievements in television storylines that inform, educate and motivate viewers to make choices for healthier and safer lives, were announced in a glittering ceremony Sept. 28 in Hollywood.

More than 200 guests attended the gala to celebrate outstanding depictions of health and climate change topics in television, and offered a huge round of applause to the special guest of the night—legendary TV producer and philanthropist Norman Lear.

“Five, six years ago, at 88, 89, I didn't get that kind of applause,” Lear said. “But now I can get a standing ovation walking across a room—and that’s in my own home.”

“This evening acknowledges the fact that entertainment matters,” said Marty Kaplan, the Norman Lear Professor of Entertainment, Media and Society at the USC Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism, and founding director of The Norman Lear Center. “And it matters especially in the arena of public health.”

For the Comedy category, Lear himself presented the top award to co-executive producer and writer Gail Lerner of ABC’s “black-ish,” which won for an episode where Pops, played by Laurence Fishburne, is finally persuaded to go to the doctor and learns that he needs an angioplasty to clear a blocked artery in his heart.

The CBS hit series “Madam Secretary” received first place in the Drama category for its story about suicide and depression, and the effect it has on a family. Tony Award winner and Emmy nominee Kate Burton, who played Maureen Ryan in the episode, presented the Sentinel Award to co-executive producer and writer Moira Kirland.

“It’s such a joy to be here tonight and to honor all the writers,” Burton said. “This is my favorite awards show.”

In the Reality category, “Born This Way” on A&E won the Sentinel Award for its candid look at the lives of seven young adults born with Down syndrome and their families. Five cast members—Elena Ashmore, Sean McElwee, Rachel Osterbach, Cristina Sanz and John Tucker—presented the award to the show’s executive producer, Jonathan Murray.

“For too long people with disabilities, including Down syndrome, have been placed on the sidelines of life and on the margins of prime-time television,” Murray said. “With ‘Born This Way’ airing on A&E, that is no longer the case.”

“East Los High” on Hulu won in the Serial Drama category with a powerful story about sexual abuse. Actors Alexandra Rodriguez and Vannessa Vasquez, who play Gina and Camila Barrios on the show, presented the award to executive producer Carlos Portugal, producer Kathy Le Backes and the writer of the winning episode, Nancy De Los Santos. In her remarks, Vasquez—whose “East Los High” character was sexually abused by her father when she was a little girl—read a poignant comment from a fan on Instagram who said that she found the courage to talk about her own abuse after watching the episode.

HBO’s “Last Week Tonight with John Oliver” won in the Talk Show category for a segment exposing the problems with the national system for treating mental illness. “Body Team 12” took top honors in the Documentary category, spotlighting a Liberian group tasked with collecting dead bodies at the height of the Ebola outbreak—one of the most dangerous and gruesome jobs in the world. Coordinating producer Jannat Gargi accepted the award on behalf of RYOT Films, Vulcan Productions and HBO.

The awards event, which was held at the Taglyan Complex, is presented in partnership with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention by Hollywood, Health & Society (HH&S), a program of the Lear Center at the University of Southern California’s Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism.

A full list of the winners follows:

Drama

[First Place]

Madam Secretary—*Invasive Species* (CBS)

Topic: Suicide, grief and mental health

[Second Place]

Code Black—*The Son Rises* (CBS)

Topic: End-of-life care

Comedy

[First Place]

black-ish—*Dr. Hell No* (ABC)

Topic: Angioplasty

[Second Place]

Getting On—*No, I Don’t Want a F**king Smiley Face* (HBO)

Topic: Healthcare

[Third Place]

Jane the Virgin—*Chapter Twenty-Eight* (The CW)

Topic: Parenting and plagiocephaly

Climate Change

Explorer: Bill Nye's Global Meltdown (National Geographic Channel)

Topic: Climate change

Talk Show

Last Week Tonight with John Oliver (HBO)

Topic: Mental health

Spanish Language

Vive la Salud con la Dra. Azaret (CNN en Español)

Topic: Cardiology

Documentary

[First Place]

Body Team 12 (HBO)

Topic: Ebola

[Second Place]

Vice—Right to Die (HBO)

Topic: End-of-life policy

Serial Drama

East Los High—End of an Era (Hulu)

Topic: Sexual abuse

Reality

Born This Way—Up Syndrome (A&E)

Topic: Down syndrome

Children's Programming

Doc McStuffins—Selfless Snowman (Disney Junior)

Topic: Blood transfusion

TV Movie

How to Let Go of the World and Love All the Things Climate Can't Change (HBO)

Topic: Climate change

HH&S provides entertainment industry professionals with accurate and timely information for storylines dealing with health and climate change through consultations and briefings with experts. HH&S has been funded by the CDC, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, The California Endowment and The SCAN Foundation, among others. For more information about resources for writers, go to www.usc.edu/hhs.

The Norman Lear Center is a multidisciplinary research and public policy center studying and shaping the impact of entertainment and media on society. From its base in the Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism, the Lear Center builds bridges between faculty who study aspects of entertainment, media and culture. Beyond campus, it bridges the gap between entertainment industry and academia, and between them and the public. For more information, visit www.learcenter.org.

Located in Los Angeles at the University of Southern California, the Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism is among the nation's leading institutions devoted to the study of journalism and communication, and their impact on politics, culture and society. USC Annenberg offers bachelor's, master's and doctoral degrees in journalism, communication, public diplomacy and public relations. For information, visit www.annenberg.usc.edu.