

# The 1989 Network News All-Star Team

The 1988-89 television news season had almost as many roster changes as the NFL. High-priced free agent Diane Sawyer (for a reported \$1.5 million a year) moved from CBS to ABC. Connie Chung (for \$1.6 million a year) switched her team symbol from NBC's peacock to CBS's eye. All three networks shook up their Washington special teams. At ABC, all-pro linebacker Sam Donaldson left the White House after 12 years of sacking Presidents. At CBS, first-string offensive guard Phil Jones was pulled from the Capitol Hill lineup. NBC's veteran political punter Ken Bode left the league to join a college team in the Midwest. (He's now a professor.)

How did these changes affect TV GUIDE's Second Annual Network News All-Star Team?

The answer is: not very much. Nine of last year's 14 all-stars returned (see box, page 5), although two of them—CBS's Jones and Lesley Stahl—hold dif-

ferent jobs today. And CBS still commands a lead in elected all-stars—six, with ABC way behind at three and NBC in last place among the broadcast networks with two. This year, TV GUIDE's editors decided to split the anchor category into broadcast and cable. *World Monitor's* John Hart won cable handily, and in '89 (as in '88) there was a tie between NBC's Tom Brokaw and ABC's Peter Jennings for broadcast laurels.

Who did the judging? Our informal panel included a critic, academics and media professionals. Our critic was Eric Mink of the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*. Academics included Mark Levy of the University of Maryland; Iris Burnett of American University in Washington, D.C.; and Joe S. Foote of Southern Illinois University, Carbondale.

Our media professionals included Scott Goodfellow, vice-president and Washington bureau chief for Conus Communications; Susan Peterson, a former CBS →

Charles Kuralt,  
CBS

Tom Brokaw, NBC  
Peter Jennings, ABC  
(tie)

Rita Braver, CBS

David Brinkley,  
ABC

Jeff Greenfield, ABC

Susan Spencer, CBS

John Hart, Discovery

Lesley Stahl, CBS

the toughest interviewer out there."

**Congress:** NBC's Andrea Mitchell by a half-vote margin over ABC's Cokie Roberts. Pat Oliphant liked Mitchell because "she's the most fun to draw." University of Maryland's Mark Levy says that Mitchell may be "the new girl on the block in the sense of being [new to] Capitol Hill, but she's bright and as hard-working as any journalist in this town."

**Defense:** No winner.

**Diplomatic:** ABC's John McWethy. Says Goodfellow, "His dogged persistence works." Adds TV critic Eric Mink: "He is smart and precise, and he gets the stories."

**Politics:** Newcomer Jeff Greenfield of ABC was elected. Iris Burnett says she voted for Greenfield because of his "ability to communicate to the population what political insiders think that only they know."

**Foreign:** Bob Simon of CBS won. Goodfellow says that Simon "writes better than any of them." Oliphant likes Simon because "he seems like a good bloke—always in the middle of it, too."

**Economics/Business:** No winner.

**Justice/Law:** CBS's Rita Braver was

a repeat winner. Says Joe Foote: "She was a producer, and she understands the nuts and bolts of gathering news. She knows how to put together good TV."

**Science/Medicine:** Susan Spencer of CBS. Mark Levy says he's talked "with my colleagues who watch science stuff, and they say she's covered AIDS better than anyone else."

**General Assignment:** Phil Jones of CBS. Oliphant likes the "air of authority" Jones exudes. Says Mink: "Jones knows where the bodies are buried. He is a terrific storyteller and an expert at compression."

**Specialty:** CBS veteran Charles Kuralt won again. "His writing is luminous," says Mink.

So there they are—the 1989 TV GUIDE Network News All-Star Team. Only this year we're adding a special award—to ABC's broadcast icon David Brinkley. Brinkley gets the title of Best All-Around Camper. As Linda Ellerbee puts it, "He really screwed up all my other choices—because if David Brinkley was up against 'em, I'd have to have gone with Brinkley."

And that, as another TV news icon used to say, is the way it is—for this year. (END)

## News All-Stars, 1988 and 1989

<u>1988</u>	<u>Beat</u>	<u>1989</u>
<b>Peter Jennings, ABC</b>	<i>Anchor (Broadcast)</i>	<b>Peter Jennings, ABC</b>
<b>Tom Brokaw, NBC (tie)</b>		<b>Tom Brokaw, NBC (tie)</b>
<b>No winner</b>	<i>Anchor (Cable)</i>	<b>John Hart, Discovery</b>
<b>Sam Donaldson, ABC</b>	<i>White House</i>	<b>Lesley Stahl, CBS</b>
<b>Phil Jones, CBS</b>	<i>Congress</i>	<b>Andrea Mitchell, NBC</b>
<b>David Martin, CBS</b>	<i>Defense</i>	<b>No winner</b>
<b>John McWethy, ABC</b>	<i>Diplomatic</i>	<b>John McWethy, ABC</b>
<b>Bruce Morton, CBS</b>	<i>Politics</i>	<b>Jeff Greenfield, ABC</b>
<b>Bob Simon, CBS</b>	<i>Foreign</i>	<b>Bob Simon, CBS</b>
<b>Mike Jensen, NBC</b>	<i>Economics/Business</i>	<b>No winner</b>
<b>Rita Braver, CBS</b>	<i>Justice/Law</i>	<b>Rita Braver, CBS</b>
<b>Susan Spencer, CBS</b>	<i>Science/Medicine</i>	<b>Susan Spencer, CBS</b>
<b>Robert Bazell, NBC (tie)</b>		
<b>Lesley Stahl, CBS</b>	<i>General Assignment</i>	<b>Phil Jones, CBS</b>
<b>Charles Kuralt, CBS</b>	<i>Specialty</i>	<b>Charles Kuralt, CBS</b>
<b>No winner</b>	<i>Best All-Around</i>	<b>David Brinkley, ABC</b>