

2021 Walter C. Alvarez Award Recipient: Harriet Washington

Sarah Dobney, MPH / AMWA Annual Conference Chair, Galion, OH

The Walter C. Alvarez Award, named in honor of an early medical communicator, is presented to an individual who is the epitome of excellence in communicating health care developments and concepts to the public. This year's Alvarez Award winner is Ms Harriet Washington.

Harriet A. Washington is a science writer, editor, and ethicist who is the author of *Carte Blanche: The Erosion of Informed Consent in Medical Research* (2021, Columbia Global Reports) and *A Terrible Thing to Waste: Environmental Racism and Its Assault on the American Mind*. She has been Writing Fellow in Bioethics at Harvard Medical School, the 2015-2016 Miriam Shearing Fellow at the University of Nevada's Black Mountain Institute, a Research Fellow in Medical Ethics at Harvard Medical School, Visiting Fellow at the Harvard TH Chan School of Public Health, a visiting scholar at DePaul University College of Law, and a senior research scholar at the National Center for Bioethics at Tuskegee University. She has also held fellowships at Stanford University and teaches bioethics at Columbia University, where she delivered the 2020 commencement speech to Columbia's School of Public Health graduates, and won the 2020 Mailman School of Public Health's Public Health Leadership Award, as well as the 2020-2021 Kenneth and Mamie Clark Distinguished Lecture Award. In 2016, she was elected a Fellow of the New York Academy of Medicine.

Her work helped provide the basis for the AMA apology to the nation's black physicians in 2008 and led to the banishment of the James Marion Sims statue from Central Park in 2018.

Ms Washington has written widely for popular and science publications and has been published in referenced books and journals such as *Nature*, *JAMA*, *The American Journal of Public Health*, *The New England Journal of Medicine*, the *Harvard Public Health Review*, *Isis*, and *The Journal of Law, Medicine, and Ethics*. She has been Editor of the *Harvard Journal of Minority Public Health*, has been a guest Editor of the *Journal of Law, Medicine and Ethics*, and is a reviewer for the *Journal of the American Association of Bioethics and the Humanities*. Her other books include *Infectious Madness: The Surprising Science of How We "Catch" Mental Illness*, *Deadly Monopolies: The Shocking Corporate Takeover of Life Itself*, and *Medical Apartheid: The Dark History of Experimentation from Colonial Times to the Present*, which won a National Book Critics Circle Award, the PEN/Oakland Award, and the American Library Association Black Caucus Nonfiction Award.

A film buff and lover of baroque music, Ms Washington has also worked as manager of a poison-control center and as a classical-music announcer for public radio station WXXI-FM in Rochester, New York, and she curates a medical-film series.

Author declaration and disclosures: *The author notes no commercial associations that may pose a conflict of interest in relation to this article.*

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