

Elizabeth A. Stawicki, J.D.

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CV SUMMARY

Combination of expertise in law, journalism, government investigations and accountability.

- Legal Counsel, Special Investigations, Office of the Legislative Auditor, State of Minnesota.
- Former news correspondent, winner of six national journalism awards including two Silver Gavel, and a Knight-Wallace Fellowship at the University of Michigan.
- Frequent presenter on open government both foreign and domestically, most recently in Uzbekistan.

LAW/SPECIAL INVESTIGATIONS

Legal Counsel, Special Investigations, Office of the Legislative Auditor, State of Minnesota

Similar to the U.S. Government Accountability Office, the [Office of the Legislative Auditor](#) is a non-partisan, independent, government watchdog agency. It audits and investigates the Executive and Judicial branches of state government, the University of Minnesota, and groups that receive public funding.

From 2014-2021, provided counsel and legal analysis to the Legislative Auditor, 60 auditors, and the Minnesota Legislature. Managed the office's responses to data requests under the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act (state version of FOIA); testified at legislative hearings; and conducted special investigations of high-profile organizations. These included:

- An investigation (2015) into the suicide death of Dan Markingson, which led the [University of Minnesota](#) to suspend and [overhaul](#) its Department of Psychiatry human subject drug trials.
- An investigation (2018) into the [Department of Commerce](#) found an examiner did not comply with the state Government Data Practices Act when he disclosed information during an ongoing investigation.
- An investigation (2019) into a whistleblower's public allegations that fraud from a [federal/state-funded child care assistance program](#) reached \$100 million annually, a politician interfered with an investigation, and fraud money was supporting terrorism. We found most of what the whistleblower alleged was untrue.
- An investigation (2019) that found the [Department of Human Services](#) had no legal authority to claim \$29 million in federal Medicaid funds for opioid addiction treatment medication.

JOURNALISM

Correspondent, Minnesota Public Radio (MPR)

(MPR is the largest regional public radio network in the U.S.)

From 1994 to 2014, I covered a wide range of legal issues for [national](#) as well as regional audiences. I was also part of a National Public Radio (NPR)/Kaiser Health News collaboration for national reporting on the Affordable Care Act, which included an investigation into the state health insurance exchange, MNsure.

I also covered Minnesota's landmark tobacco trial for NPR, which won a Silver Gavel from the American Bar Association and is also part of the American [Archive of Public Broadcasting](#) (a collaboration between the Library of Congress and WGBH).

I also covered terrorism cases such as the legal saga of Mohamed [Warsame](#). I reported on Minnesota's Ojibwe spearfishing trial in U.S. District Court; scrutiny of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act ([FISA](#)) court; the Franken/Coleman U.S. Senate ballot recount; Minnesota's [role](#) in *Gideon v. Wainwright*; and the lack of a free press on many American Indian reservations.

National Journalism Awards

ABA Silver Gavel – The American Bar Association's top national award for legal journalism; awarded for *The Color of Justice*, a series about the causes and effects of racial bias in Minnesota's criminal justice system (2002).

ABA Silver Gavel for *Tobacco on Trial*, covered the trial for NPR/MPR (1999).

The Gracie Award from the Alliance for Women in Media for *Mabel's Story*, the story about the hidden abuse among elderly couples (2010).

The Gracie Award for *Janet's Children*, for best radio documentary, which detailed how the state was accelerating the time troubled parents had to fix their lives or lose permanent custody of their children. The story followed Janet, a woman and mother of seven who was fighting to keep custody of her last two children after she lost custody of her previous five (1997).

Unity Award for *The Sacred Gift*, a National Public Radio report about the soaring rise of tobacco use among Native Americans. The report focused on the difficulty in smoking cessation programs among tribes because tobacco is a cultural sacred gift. The Unity Awards serve to “encourage and showcase journalistic excellence in covering issues of race and ethnicity” (1999).

Public Radio News Directors Award for best use of audio and hard news feature for *Heroin House*, a two-part story that detailed an influx of heroin into the Twin Cities (1995).

National Headliner Award for investigative reporting, *Commuter Air Safety*. A five-part series that exposed wide gaps in the FAA's ability to monitor and inspect commuter airlines (1995).

FREELANCE REPORTING

ABC Radio, Associated Press, BBC World Service, CBC Radio, CBS Radio, APM Marketplace, National Public Radio, and Reuters.

EDUCATION

J.D., University of Saint Thomas, Minneapolis, Minnesota 2007.

Knight-Wallace Fellow, University of Michigan 2000. One of a 12 journalists selected nationally.

B.A., Journalism, University of Minnesota 1988.

OPEN GOVERNMENT ACTIVITIES (INTERNATIONAL)

Presenter/panelist at [Regional Dialogue](#) virtual conference (May 2021) on the role of journalists in rooting out government corruption.

Presenter/panelist in Tashkent, Uzbekistan (Regional Dialogue) Enhancing Uzbekistan Judicial-Media Relations to Raise Public Trust and Transparency of Judiciary (July 2019).

[Open World Program](#), an independent legislative branch entity of the Library of Congress. Presenter/panelist to foreign judges visiting Minnesota from Turkey (2014), Uzbekistan (2013), Ukraine (2012), Russia (2010), and Kyrgyzstan (2008).

OPEN GOVERNMENT ACTIVITIES (U.S.)

Chauvin Case Proved the Value and Efficacy of Cameras in the Courtroom, St. Paul [Pioneer Press](#), June 24, 2021.

The Douglas K. Amdahl American Inn of Court *Talking to the Press: Why You Should, Even If You've Never Considered It Before* (April 2014).

Criminal Justice Institute CLE breakout session *Compassion Fatigue and Its Impact on the Criminal Justice Process* (August 2013).

William Mitchell College of Law, guest lecturer as part of Mitchell Fellows Program, *Law and Truth: A Reporter's Take on the Art of Synopsis* (Fall 2008).

The Future of Cameras in the Courts: Florida Sunshine or Judge Judy, 8 PGH. J. Tech. L. & Pol'y 4 (2008).

University of Minnesota Law School, moderator for *Lawrence v. Texas* Symposium (2003).

Duke University School of Law, *Voices of American Law Video Project*, an initiative to "provide unique, high-quality educational materials to assist in studying the Supreme Court and its role in American society." Participated in the series for covering the First Amendment case, *Republican Party of Minnesota v. White* (2002).

National Convention of Appellate Court Clerks, *Dealing with the Press*. Spoke to appellate court clerks about a reporter's perspective on how the news media and court system can better understand each other's worlds (August 2002).

Minnesota Continuing Legal Education seminar *Dealing with the Media in a High Profile Case*. Spoke to attorneys about how, when, and why reporters cover particular legal cases (August 2001).