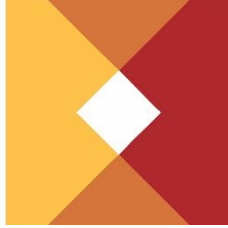


**Coachella
Valley
Journalism
Foundation**



February 2025 Newsletter

Coachella Valley Giving Day: Help us raise money for summer interns

The third annual Coachella Valley Giving Day kicks off today with its “early” giving period leading up to the big day on Tuesday, March 4.

The Coachella Valley Journalism Foundation has actively participated in this fundraiser each year, and your generous support has helped us raise significant money to support our summer internship program. In the first year, your donations funded three internships at various local news organizations, while last year’s effort allowed us to hire four interns. To meet those interns, go to www.cvjf.org/cvjf-grant-awards/.

In honor of the third anniversary, we would appreciate it if every CVJF supporter would chip in just \$30. Just go to www.cvgivingday.org/organization/supportjournalism and make your contribution. Thank you!

Racist Trees: Local journalism making a difference

How does local journalism make a difference? It tells the stories that matter to our friends and families, communities and towns.

That’s the case in the telling of the “Racist Trees” story in Palm Springs.

Starting in 2017, *The Desert Sun* began reporting on a wall of tall, dense tamarisk trees that left residents of a predominantly Black neighborhood feeling isolated from their own city. The trees concealed their homes from the neighboring Tahquitz Creek Golf Course and blocked their views of Palm Springs’ iconic San Jacinto Mountains. For years, residents viewed the trees as a racist symbol of segregation and demanded that they be removed.



The newspaper's reporting inspired a documentary, "*Racist Trees*," that debuted at the Palm Springs International Film Festival in 2023.

Now, CVJF and the Palm Springs Black History Committee are hosting a special screening of "*Racist Trees*" at the Palm Springs Cultural Center, 2300 E. Baristo Road, at 3 p.m. on Sunday, Feb. 16.

Join us for an afternoon that showcases local journalism and learn what has happened since the story first came to light. Tickets are available at www.cvjf.org. If you join our Fourth Estate Membership Program by Friday, you will be eligible to attend the event for free – a \$28 value.

The film's producers, residents of the Crossley Tract neighborhood, and the editor of *The Desert Sun* will participate in a panel discussion and audience Q&A after the film.

No Joke: There's a new date to 'Laugh Out Loud' with political cartoonist Mike Thompson



Yes, award-winning political cartoonist, Mike Thompson, had to cancel his appearance at the Palm Springs Library in December due to a family emergency – but we've got him back!

Thompson will now appear at the library, 300 S. Sunrise Way, at 6 p.m. on Tuesday, March 18. Fourth Estate members will be invited to a reception to meet Thompson before the program.

His free lecture, "Laughing Out Loud: The Provocative History of Political Cartoons in America from Ben Franklin to Donald Trump," traces the evolution of political cartoons from America's colonial past to the present day.

Thompson is a four-time finalist for the Pulitzer Prize and a longtime editorial cartoonist and animator with *USA TODAY* and the *Detroit Free Press*. He won the Robert F. Kennedy Journalism Award for cartooning in 2017.

Enthusiasm for the Coachella Valley Media Hall of Fame grows

We couldn't be happier with the turn-out and enthusiasm for our second annual Coachella Valley Media Hall of Fame luncheon last month at the Omni Rancho Las Palmas resort. About 250 of you and other supporters filled the ballroom to capacity.

The 2025 Hall of Fame inductees included KESQ anchor John White; media educator and fill-in anchor Laurilie Jackson; "La Poderosa" radio personality Adolfo Iñiguez; and (posthumously) celebrity columnist and broadcaster Gloria Greer.



(Shown left to right are Jodeci Alcocer, Jennifer Cortez, Taya Gray, Olivia Sandusky, CVJF President Randy Lovely, and KESQ anchor Karen Devine, emcee of the awards banquet)

The winners of the Journalist of the Year and Rising Star awards also were announced at the luncheon. NBC Palm Springs anchor Olivia Sandusky won Journalist of the Year, with *The Desert Sun* photographer Taya Gray receiving an honorable mention. Jennifer Cortez of *The Desert Sun* won the Rising Star award, with freelance journalist Jodeci Alcocer receiving an honorable mention.

Each of the journalism award winners received a cash prize underwritten by the California News Publishers Association.

[Click here to see a photo gallery](#) of the event and to watch tribute videos of our honorees.

Planning is already underway for the 2026 Media Hall of Fame induction ceremony. We hope to see you there!

Fourth Estate Membership Program attracts loyal supporters

In just a few months since we launched our membership program, more than 75 donors have made contributions that qualified them for the Fourth Estate Membership Program. This fundraising effort provides us with sustained funding while offering donors benefits from CVJF in return.

We have set a goal to have 200 donors qualified as members by the end of the year. If you have not joined up, please consider doing so. The membership program offers a range of giving levels that fit your gifting strategy.

To join the membership program, which offers perks to members, such as free access to events like the *"Racist Trees"* film screening detailed above, just go to www.cvjf.org/membership.

Once again, we thank you for your ongoing support of the Coachella Valley Journalism Foundation and our local newsrooms.

Randy Lovely
Board President
Coachella Valley Journalism Foundation
cvjournalismfoundation@gmail.com www.cvjf.org

To donate, go to our website and click the donate button using a credit or debit card or send a check to the Coachella Valley Journalism Foundation to PO Box 207, Palm Springs, CA 92263.