

# Biography

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Jana Bommersbach is an acclaimed and respected journalist whose work has encompassed every facet of the profession: she's been a reporter and editor for both weekly and daily newspapers; she's written a book and is a major contributor to an anthology; she's written columns and investigative stories for magazines; she's appeared on television with both political commentaries and investigative stories.

And in each of those endeavors, she's excelled.

- In 2008: St. Martin's Press is releasing Jana's new book on October 1: ***Bones in the Desert: The true story of a Mother's Murder and a Daughter's Search***. It examines the 2004 murder and secret desert burial of Loretta Bowersock, mother of Arizona's "domestic diva," Terri Bowersock of Terri's Design & Consign. The book discovers the horrible secrets that led to this "classic case of elder abuse" and examines the impact of this tragedy on all it touched.
- In 2007: Jana was named **Media Person of the Year** by the Arizona Psychological Association for her columns in Phoenix magazine that "consistently shed light on issues relating to domestic violence, mental illness, minorities and other often overlooked and under served populations."
- In 2006, Jana won four writing awards from the Arizona Press Club, honoring her investigation into the Kobe Bryant rape case; her probe into the entrapment of a teenager by Sheriff Joe Arpaio for a publicity stunt; her behind-the-scenes story on how a raped wife got Arizona's "spousal rape" law changed, and her insightful profile into legendary Arizona broadcaster Kent Dana.
- In 2006, Jana was inducted as an inaugural honoree in the **Order of the Silver Key**, created by the Society of Professional Journalists to recognize longtime Arizona journalists "whose accomplishments serve as an inspiration to the state's media community."
- In 2005, Jana was inducted as an inaugural honoree in the Arizona Music and Entertainment **Hall of Fame**.
- In 2005, Jana was a major contributor to an anthology published by a division of Random House: "True Tales and Amazing Legends of the Old West from True West Magazine." Jana wrote the introduction to this 26-story compilation that included four of her original articles: "Vera McGinnis: The Most Daring Cowgirl who ever Rode the West"; "Eating his Weight in Democrats, the Strange Tastes of Alfred Packer"; "The Warrior who Killed Custer?", and "The Alamo." The book was published by Clarkson Potter /Publishers.
- In 2005, she was awarded the **Cherish the Children Award** from the Great Phoenix Child Abuse Prevention Council.
- In 2004, she was awarded the Arizona Press Club's highest honor--**The Distinguished Service Award**, recognizing her lifetime achievements in journalism.
- In 2004, she won the state's **top news columnist** award for her Jana's View, and the **top feature** award for her Phoenix Magazine article on mobster [Sammy "The Bull" Gravano](#).
- In 2003, she won the annual leadership award form the Arizona Chapter of the **ACLU** for her straightforward, gutsy commentaries and columns that "speak truth to power"
- In 2002, she won **five awards in the Arizona Press Club** competition for her work in Phoenix

Magazine-more than any other single journalist in the state; she also was the first journalist to win the top prizes in both news column writing and feature column writing.

- In 2002, she also was honored with the "**Vera Beaton Volunteer Award**" from Girls Ranch of Arizona.
  - In 2002, she also received the "**Distinguished Achievement Award**" from the International Association of Firefighters.
  - In 2001, she won a **Regional Emmy** for the television services she created for KTVK-TV entitled "Hurrah for Arizona." Her Emmy story profiled a camp that helps children deal with the death of a loved one.
  - In 2001, she also was honored with the "**Presidential Award for Media Excellence**" from the Arizona Education Association for her commentaries on KTVK-TV in support of education.
  - In 2001, she also received a "**Laurel**" accolade in Columbia Journalism Review for her coverage-in both Phoenix Magazine and on KTVK-TV-of The Carol Herriman Story: a woman serving 25 years in prison for killing her abusive husband. Bommersbach's four-year coverage of this story is credited with helping Herriman win her release from prison.
  - In 2000, she was honored with Phoenix Theater's "**Women Who Care**" Award.
  - In 1999, she received Toastmaster International's "**Communication and Leadership Award.**"
  - In both 1999 and 1997, Jana received the **Gold Medal** as the nation's outstanding columnist for her Phoenix magazine column, "Jana's View," presented by the National City and Regional Magazine Association. In 1999, the Arizona Press Club also named her Arizona's outstanding columnist.
  - In 1994, Jana was honored with the first "**Communicator Award**" from the YWCA's inaugural Tribute to Women program, which has become an annual event.
  - In 1993, her debut book, "The Trunk Murderess: Winnie Ruth Judd" was nominated for the prestigious **Edgar Allan Poe Award** from the Mystery Writers of America, recognizing it as one of the five outstanding non-fiction books published in the United States in 1992. She also received **Arizona's only literary prize** for the book, which has been optioned for a mini-series.
  - In both 1991 and 1988, Bommersbach won **The Don Bolles Award** for Investigative Reporting from the Arizona Press Club-the state's most acclaimed reporting award named in honor of the journalist who was assassinated in broad daylight in 1976. In 1988, the award recognized her investigation into the state's medical malpractice insurance company for New Times, which led to an \$18 million rebate to Arizona doctors. In 1991, the award was given for a series of articles in New Times on Winnie Ruth Judd.
  - In the late 1980s, Bommersbach won **two national awards** for her commentaries on KAET-TV, Arizona's largest public television station. One came from the National Commission on Working Women, the other from American Women in Radio and Television.
  - In 1987, she won a **Silver Gavel Award** for "Outstanding Public Service" from the American Bar Association for her stories in New Times about tort reform.
  - In 1983, The Arizona Press Club named Jana **Arizona's Journalist of the Year**.
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