



## Consumer Federation of America

### PRESS ADVISORY

For Immediate Release

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## **CFA TO PRESENT FOUR AWARDS FOR DISTINGUISHED LIFETIME SERVICE TO AMERICAN CONSUMERS**

### ***45<sup>th</sup> Year of Honoring Outstanding Consumer Service***

Washington, D.C. – At its forty-fifth annual Awards Dinner at the Capital Hilton on Wednesday, June 24<sup>th</sup> at approximately 7:30 p.m., the Consumer Federation of America (CFA) will honor distinguished lifetime service to consumers. The recipients for this year are:

### **THE HONORABLE AL FRANKEN, PHILIP HART PUBLIC SERVICE AWARD**

During the more than three decades that Senator Al Franken spent as a comedy writer, author, and radio talk show host, he increasingly saw the need for political engagement to ensure greater progress and fairness in our society. Spurred by the example of the late Senator Paul Wellstone, he won election to the U.S. Senate in 2008 and, since then, has taken the lead on numerous consumer issues. On financial services, his efforts to reduce credit rating agency conflicts of interest have included adding related provisions to the Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act. On health care, his amendment to the Affordable Care Act required that insurance companies would spend at least four-fifths of their premium dollars on actual health care. On product safety, he has introduced legislation that would require full disclosure of harmful chemicals in household cleaners and would ban the use of dangerous heavy metals in children's jewelry. On civil justice, he has sponsored legislation that would restrict big companies from employing arbitration as a shield against abused consumers. But it is on "information age" issues where Senator Franken is now having the greatest impact. His opposition to competition-killing mergers between AT&T and T-Mobile and between Comcast and NBC helped kill these deals. His outspoken defense of net neutrality has influenced the national debate on this issue, including helping convince the FCC to strongly defend this principle. And he has put large information companies on notice that their use of consumer information, of which they collect massive amounts, is being scrutinized. Senator Franken indeed is the "feisty, fearless, and energetic" progressive he considers Senator Wellstone to have been. CFA is pleased to present our highest public service award to him. (This award will be presented by Edmund Mierzwinski, Consumer Program Director, U.S. PIRG.)

### **ROBERT ADLER, PHILIP HART PUBLIC SERVICE AWARD**

Since 2009, Robert (Bob) Adler has effectively worked to enhance the safety of consumer products as a commissioner at the Consumer Product Safety Commission. Among many contributions, he played a major role in implementing the Consumer Product Safety Improvement Act and persuading the agency to focus more attention on carbon monoxide hazards and on safety issues affecting older Americans. Yet, throughout his earlier career spanning four decades, Bob also advanced the consumer interest. In the early 1970s, he headed the southwest regional office

of the Pennsylvania Bureau of Consumer Protection and also helped organize the grassroots group, Pittsburgh Alliance for Consumer Protection. He then spent nearly a decade as attorney-advisor to two CPSC commissioners and followed this with a stint as counsel to the House Subcommittee on Health and the Environment, where he broadened his consumer work to a wide array of health and safety issues. He then left government and joined the faculty of the University of North Carolina business school, where he continued his involvement in consumer issues by publishing related research, advising the Obama administration on product safety issues, and serving six terms on the board of Consumers Union. Bob's effectiveness reflects not only great expertise and skill but also an amiability that allows him to work productively with those with whom he may disagree. He is deserving of both CFA's public service and consumer service awards. (This award will be presented by R. David Pittle, Former Commissioner, U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission.)

### **JANETTE FENNEL, ESTHER PETERSON CONSUMER SERVICE AWARD**

Spurred by a horrific personal experience, Janette Fennell has demonstrated that one smart and determined person can make a huge difference. Kidnapped and left for dead (with her husband) in the trunk of their car, Janette built a successful campaign to convince auto manufacturers and the federal government that trunk entrapment was a serious problem. Thanks to her efforts, in 2001, all vehicles sold or leased in the U.S. were required to have an internal trunk release mechanism. Since then, through the KidsAndCars.org group she founded in 1995 and still leads, Janette has made other significant contributions to reducing the risks of non-traffic, vehicle-related accidents. For example, she deserves much credit for reforms in 2005 and 2008 transportation laws that require power windows to reverse direction when obstructed and an expanded field of view for drivers when backing up. When the U.S. Department of Transportation delayed issuing a rule on the latter issue, she led a national campaign that included a lawsuit resulting in the DOT issuing a rule effectively requiring rear view cameras in all new cars. Janette's contributions to auto safety extend beyond federal legislation. She has strongly influenced the passage of many state laws. She has persuaded Consumers Union to pay more attention to non-traffic hazards in their product testing. And through numerous national media interviews and stories, she has educated tens of millions of Americans about these and related hazards, including the dangers of leaving kids in cars. Esther Peterson would be very pleased that we are recognizing Janette for her relentless and successful efforts to protect consumers. (This award will be presented by Congresswoman Jan Schakowsky.)

### **BRIAN ROSS, BETTY FURNESS CONSUMER MEDIA SERVICE AWARD**

Since the early 1970s, after graduating from the University of Iowa journalism school, Brian Ross has reported the news for television networks or their affiliates. But his most significant contributions to investigative journalism have been since 1995, when he joined ABC News. While his reporting has ranged across varied foreign and domestic issues, it has included influential stories on many consumer issues, including Enron document shredding, retail pharmacy errors, unsafe Toyotas, Medicare fraud, BBB member evaluations, and the Madoff scandal, which was the subject of his first book, *The Madoff Chronicles*. Brian has won just about every prestigious journalism award, often many times, yet his outreach and influence continue to grow. He now not only serves as ABC News' Chief Investigative Correspondent, but also reports frequently for World News Tonight, Nightline, Good Morning America, 20/20, ABC News Radio, and The Blotter on ABCNEWS.com. His recent stories uncovered unsafe products on Craigslist, defective airbags, Ford Focus steering issues, and unsafe highway guardrails, which provoked a

government investigation and legislation proposed by Senator Blumenthal. CFA is pleased to recognize Brian's decades of effective service to American consumers and citizens. (This award presented by Senator Richard Blumenthal.)

*The Consumer Federation of America is an association of more than 250 non-profit organizations that was established in 1968 to advance the consumer interest through research, advocacy, and education.*

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