

**EMBARGOED UNTIL 12:01 A.M. ET, FEBRUARY 5, 2021**

**For further information, contact:**

Maya Brod, 301-467-4917

[mbrod@burrness.com](mailto:mbrod@burrness.com)

## **Two Freelance Journalists Awarded \$100,000 Each for Elevating Stories of Black Americans, Immigrant Families**

*David Dennis, Jr., and Michelle García have been named the recipients of the 2021 American Mosaic Journalism Prize*

Los Altos, Calif. (February 5, 2021) – The Heising-Simons Foundation announced today that freelance journalists David Dennis, Jr., and Michelle García are the recipients of the 2021 American Mosaic Journalism Prize, which includes an unrestricted cash prize of \$100,000 for each. This is one of the largest dollar amounts given for a journalism prize in the United States.

Dennis' journalism includes a 2020 cover story in *Atlanta Magazine*, "[Ahmaud Arbery Will Not Be Erased](#)," which sheds light on the injustice—and historical pattern leading up to—the murder of a young Black man in Georgia, and a piece in *Gay Mag*, "[An Ode To The Black Women At Dillard's](#)," that reflects on the solidarity and community Black women have fostered over department store counters. García's work includes a 2019 feature in *Adi Magazine*, "[Hand of Terror](#)," about the degrading and inhumane conditions of U.S. detention centers at the U.S.-Mexico border, reminiscent of Guantanamo Bay, and a story in *Bon Appétit*, "[In the Midst of a Border Crisis, Cooking Is About More Than Survival](#)," exploring how families seeking asylum have built community and found comfort through food.

The Prize is awarded for excellence in long-form, narrative, or deep reporting about underrepresented and/or misrepresented groups in the United States. It recognizes journalism's ability to foster understanding and empathy, and aims to support freelance journalists.

Dennis is a freelance writer, editor, educator and social commentator based in Atlanta, Georgia, whose work has also been featured in *The Atlantic*, ESPN's *The Undefeated*, *The Washington Post*, *HuffPost*, and numerous publications on Medium. He frequently writes about Black American culture, and the intersection of race, politics, civil rights, sports and entertainment. As a visiting professor of journalism at Morehouse College, Dennis is committed to mentoring his students and has previously advised the school's newspaper. He is currently writing a book entitled, *The Movement Made Us*, set to be published next year by HarperCollins, about his father's experience in the civil rights movement written from a first person perspective. The book is a study of memory—both individual and collective—and the trauma that can be passed down in Black families, especially from fathers to sons.

"My work is all about telling the stories that need to be told, like Ahmaud Arbery's, whose life was full of beauty and power beyond its tragic ending," said Dennis. "These are the stories of people who are ignored and gaslit, whose perspectives are most often never shared in this country. I often write about the person who is the one marginalized voice in the room so they feel less alone."

García is a freelance print, audio and broadcast journalist who writes on issues related to U.S. identity, race and national histories, specifically in the U.S. West and border. Her recent work has both unveiled human rights abuses and celebrated the humanity of those living in limbo at the U.S.-Mexico border. García's work has appeared in *The Washington Post*, the *Oxford American*, *Guernica*, the *New York*

*Times*, *Columbia Journalism Review*, and *palabra.*, among others. She was previously a 2018 [Soros Equality Fellow](#) and recipient of the Jesse H. Jones Writing Fellowship through the Dobie Paisano fellowship awarded by the University of Texas at Austin and Texas Institute of Letters. She is on the advisory committee for [IDAR/E](#), a project of the Women’s Media Center named for fearless Tejana journalist Jovita Idár. She curated and edited *Re/Writing the West*, a series published in partnership with *Guernica*, that renarrates foundational myths and histories of the U.S. West. García is currently working on a book about borders and their influence in shaping U.S. identity and race relations. She splits her time between New York City and her home state of Texas.

“We’re in a critical moment, when our nation is reckoning with its foundational injustices, and I believe that journalism can provide us with possibilities to better understand each other and dismantle the walls that have divided us for centuries,” said García.

The prize is based on confidential nominations invited from more than 150 leaders in journalism throughout the country. A panel of 10 judges—including journalists from *NPR*, *NBC News*, *CBS News*, *Telemundo*, the *Boston Globe*, *The Wall Street Journal*, and *Oxford American*—selected the recipients. For more information about the American Mosaic Journalism Prize, visit <https://www.hsfoundation.org/prize>.

###

### **The 2021 American Mosaic Journalism Prize Judges**

#### **Hannah Allam**

National Security Correspondent  
NPR

#### **Wesley Lowery**

Correspondent  
CBS News

#### **Talal Ansari**

U.S. News Reporter  
*The Wall Street Journal*

#### **Mirta Ojito**

Senior Director, News Standards  
NBC/Telemundo

#### **Eliza Borné**

Editor  
*Oxford American*

#### **Deanna Pan**

Enterprise and Features Reporter  
*The Boston Globe*

#### **Antonia Hylton**

Correspondent  
NBC News and MSNBC

#### **Kit Rachlis**

Former Senior Editor  
*California Sunday Magazine*

#### **Cindi Leive**

Co-founder  
The Meteor

#### **Keith Woods**

Chief Diversity Officer  
NPR

### **About the Heising-Simons Foundation**

The Heising-Simons Foundation is a family foundation based in Los Altos and San Francisco, California. The Foundation works with its many partners to advance sustainable solutions in climate and clean energy, enable groundbreaking research in science, enhance the education of our youngest learners, and support human rights for all people. For more information visit, [www.hsfoundation.org](http://www.hsfoundation.org).