



# KAPPA TAU ALPHA

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NATIONAL HONOR SOCIETY IN JOURNALISM AND MASS COMMUNICATION

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

***Northern Illinois University Professor Bill Cassidy named outstanding adviser for national honor society***

COLUMBIA, Mo. -- Kappa Tau Alpha plans to honor journalism Professor Bill Cassidy of Northern Illinois University with the William H. Taft Outstanding Adviser Award during the annual convention of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication in San Francisco this August.

The Taft award is named in honor of the national honor society's longest-serving executive director. Cassidy is the 36th award recipient and has served as the Kappa Tau Alpha adviser at NIU since 2007.

As the KTA adviser, Cassidy plays an essential role in making sure NIU's top students garner the recognition they deserve. Cassidy said one of the highlights of his year is inducting new students at the department's annual Journalism Banquet. In 2019, the chapter initiated six new students.

"A lot of my students probably don't even know it's a possibility, and so they're very excited about it," Cassidy said. "But to see them get rewarded for all their hard work is something I take a lot of pleasure in."

Mehdi Semati, chair of the Department of Communication at NIU, praised Cassidy's dedication to the ceremony.

"We all witness it every year, and it is one of those things that makes us proud to have Bill as a colleague," Semati said.

Cassidy is also an accomplished scholar and has published research on sports journalism, media credibility and AIDS coverage. He recently wrote two books, *Sports Journalism and Women Athletes: Coverage of Coming Out Stories* and *Sports Journalism and Coming Out Stories: Jason Collins and Michael Sam*, detailing how sports journalists covered gay and lesbian athletes coming out. In 2017, he received a KTA grant to further this research.

*About Kappa Tau Alpha:* The national honor society was founded at the University of Missouri's School of Journalism in 1910 and has chapters at 98 universities. The national headquarters has been permanently located at MU since 1944. Students must be in the top 10% of their journalism and mass communication class to be invited to join.