

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **McCormick Foundation and Poynter announce reporting workshops on covering guns, Medicare, immigration and more**

*Reporters and journalism professors can receive free travel and tuition to attend one of seven nationwide seminars.*

**ST. PETERSBURG, FL (Feb. 13, 2013)** — To ensure citizens benefit from the best possible reporting on critical issues, The Robert R. McCormick Foundation and The Poynter Institute for Media Studies today announced seven new issue-centered workshops for journalists in 2013.

The McCormick Specialized Reporting Institutes are free training seminars, focused on creating a strong democracy through an informed public. They are scheduled from Long Island to Chicago and El Paso, Texas, from April through October. The McCormick Foundation is funding the training (which also includes e-learning) through a \$710,000, two-year grant to Poynter — an international media strategy center and school for journalists.

The seven topics and workshop hosts are:

- **Covering Guns**, April 1-3 in Chicago, organized by The Poynter Institute;
- **Covering Medicare: Care, Costs, Control and Consequences**, May 5-7 in St. Petersburg, Fla., organized by the Medicare NewsGroup;
- **Grading the Teachers**, May 8-10 in Detroit and in October in Chicago, organized by Michigan State University School of Journalism and the Education Trust-Midwest;
- **Covering Big Agribusiness in the Heartland**, in June in Champaign, Ill., organized by the Midwest Center for Investigative Reporting and Investigative Reporters and Editors;
- **Poverty in the Suburbs: The New Poor, the Old Poor and the Growing Poor**, in September at Hofstra University in Hempstead, NY, on Long Island;
- **Reporting on Immigration Reform**, in September or October at The University of Texas at El Paso; and
- **Reporting Sex Trafficking: A Local Problem with Global Dimensions**, in October at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

The McCormick Journalism Program and Poynter made these selections from almost 60 applications. To ensure as many people as possible benefit from the workshops, each host also will produce a Webinar on the topic and a page of reporting resources on Poynter's e-learning site, News University ([www.NewsU.org](http://www.NewsU.org)). McCormick and Poynter require journalists who attend to commit to producing significant coverage on the issue.

"Every news organization in America is challenged to provide quality coverage on these sensitive, hot-button social and economic issues," said Clark Bell, director of the McCormick Foundation's journalism program.

Reporters interested in applying should contact workshop hosts. The first two Specialized Reporting Institutes, or SRIs, are accepting applications. Apply for Poynter's workshop in Chicago on Covering Guns at [www.poynter.org/13srigun](http://www.poynter.org/13srigun). To apply for Medicare NewsGroup's workshop in St. Petersburg, go to <http://medicarenewsgroup.info/events/>. The Grading the Teachers workshop will post its information soon at [www.gradingtheteachers.com](http://www.gradingtheteachers.com), and look for information about Poverty in the Suburbs at [www.suburbanpoverty.com](http://www.suburbanpoverty.com).

The McCormick Foundation awarded The Poynter Institute a one-year grant to administer its SRI program in 2011, then gave Poynter a second grant to continue that work through 2013. The program complements Poynter's curriculum, which teaches the craft and values of journalism to reporters, bloggers, students and others interested in storytelling in print, on radio or TV and on screens of all kinds.

"We continue to be thrilled to partner with McCormick on such important work," said Stephen Buckley, Poynter's dean of faculty. "We especially appreciate the opportunity to help reporters from small and mid-sized organizations tackle these issues that are so crucial to their communities."

This initiative supports the Robert R. McCormick Foundation's commitment to ensuring that citizens have access to quality news content by providing resources and training to journalists. The ongoing transformation in the way news is reported and shared has created a need for specialized training for those whose work helps keep the public informed.

"The McCormick Foundation is dedicated to building a more news literate audience," Bell said. "We believe that news literacy is dependent on quality content and press freedoms."

Previous Specialized Reporting Institutes have informed journalists' work on covering child sexual abuse, veterans returning home, Super PACs and more. To see tip sheets, slide presentations and other reporting resources from prior McCormick SRIs, go to [www.newsu.org/resources/mccormick-sri/all](http://www.newsu.org/resources/mccormick-sri/all).

The Robert R. McCormick Foundation developed the SRI program in 2007 to provide journalists and others with subject-specific expertise and practical reporting training in key issues. The training convenes a diverse group of journalists, often from small to mid-sized news organizations, plus educators for a program lasting two to three days. Participants represent all media platforms. Grant funds pay for participants' tuition and travel.

### **About the Robert R. McCormick Foundation**

The Robert R. McCormick Foundation is committed to fostering communities of educated, informed and engaged citizens. Through philanthropic programs, Cantigny Park and museums, the Foundation helps develop citizen leaders and works to make life better in our communities. The Foundation was established as a charitable trust in 1955, upon the death of Colonel Robert R. McCormick, the longtime editor and publisher of the Chicago Tribune. The Robert R. McCormick Foundation is one of the nation's largest foundations, with more than \$1 billion in assets. For more information, please visit [www.McCormickFoundation.org](http://www.McCormickFoundation.org).

## **About The Poynter Institute**

The Poynter Institute for Media Studies is an international leader in journalism education, and a strategy center that stands for uncompromising excellence in journalism, media and 21st century public discourse. Poynter faculty teach seminars and workshops at the Institute in St. Petersburg, Fla., and at conferences and organizational sites around the world. Its e-learning division, News University ([www.NewsU.org](http://www.NewsU.org)) offers the world's largest online journalism curriculum, with more than 250 interactive courses and 240,000 students. The Institute's website, [Poynter.org](http://Poynter.org), produces 24-hour coverage of news about media, ethics, technology, the business of news and the trends that currently define and redefine journalism news reporting. The world's top journalists and media innovators come to Poynter to learn – and to teach new generations of reporters, storytellers, media inventors, designers, visual journalists, documentarians and broadcast producers, and to build public awareness about journalism, media and the First Amendment-protected discourse that ensures public good and the democracy that serves it.

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