

## Wishing Austin Could Speak to this Honor

### Polk Awards 2012

As you know, our son, Austin Tice, like far too many journalists, is being held captive for bringing the truth of troubled places to the attention of the world. Announcement of his receipt of this coveted award makes his absence all the more poignant. We are, of course, proud of this recognition of his remarkable writing talent. Since he is currently unavailable to acknowledge this honor, we will reluctantly presume to speak on his behalf.

We thank Long Island University for conferring the Award for War Reporting on the staff of McClatchy Newspapers, with special citations for David Enders and Austin. The people of Syria deserve to have their story told widely and well. All the contributors to the McClatchy series "Inside Syria" – Hannah Allam, Jonathan S. Landay, Roy Gutman in addition to David and Austin – accomplish this with consummate skill and professionalism.

We know Austin feels fortunate to be part of this team. Austin has been honing his writing skills since he first held a pencil, faithfully journaling and always eager to participate in journalism opportunities at school. His work for McClatchy may be his professional debut, but it is the culmination of a dream he has nurtured his entire life.

We also know Austin would express his deepest gratitude to McClatchy's Chief of Correspondents, Mark Seibel, for his personal mentoring, and to James Asher, Washington Bureau Chief, for taking a leap of faith in hiring an unknown freelancer. Austin shared with us how these men personify, and how much he respects, the culture of integrity which defines McClatchy Newspapers. We are now also deeply, personally aware of how deep that integrity runs. They and the entire McClatchy organization have our most profound gratitude for their ongoing efforts to secure Austin's safe release from captivity in Syria.

We are immensely proud of this moment for Austin. We profoundly wish he were here to share it with us.