



**NEWS from the
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**NATIONAL FEDERATION OF PRESS WOMEN
NAMES 2005 COMMUNICATOR OF ACHIEVEMENT**

SEATTLE, WASH. – Sept. 9, 2005 – The National Federation of Press Women (NFPW) named Ree Strange Sheck of Santa Fe, N.M., its 2005 Communicator of Achievement on Friday, Sept. 9.

Sheck's 40-plus-year journalism career and her work in Central America on behalf of tropical rain forest conservation and the rural poor reflect her stated commitment to "making a difference in people's lives and helping one person gain an understanding of another."

First runner-up for NFPW Communicator of Achievement is Rhonda McBride of Anchorage, Alaska, a broadcast journalist with a passion for storytelling and a dedication to improving coverage of rural Alaskans.

The awards were announced at the Communicator of Achievement banquet during the NFPW annual conference Sept. 8 to 10 in Seattle.

Communicator of Achievement is the highest honor bestowed by NFPW, an organization of professional journalists and communicators. The award recognizes achievement in communications, contributions to NFPW and its affiliates, and community service. Nineteen members were nominated by their state affiliates.

Honoree Ree Strange Sheck, nominated by New Mexico Press Women, until recently was associate editor of *Pasatiempo*, a weekly arts, culture and entertainment magazine of The Santa Fe New Mexican newspaper. Bilingual (English/Spanish) author of a critically acclaimed nature travel guide to Costa Rica, she worked in that country for eight years with nonprofit

groups dedicated to conserving tropical rain forests and other natural resources. She studied in Ecuador under a Fulbright-Hays grant and lived in Guatemala and Mexico.

In July, Sheck returned to Turrialba, Costa Rica, for an assignment with CATIE, an international agricultural center seeking to reduce rural poverty in the tropics. The freelance writer and editor established a nonprofit foundation in 1984 that supports rural education in Costa Rica.

A member of New Mexico Press Women since 1974, Sheck has held offices in both its Las Cruces and Santa Fe chapters. She graduated in journalism from the University of Texas-Austin and pursued graduate studies in Latin American history there and at Ohio State University.

The mother and grandmother counts community service as integral to her life, whether it has been leading a Camp Fire group, helping bereaved parents as a Compassionate Friends volunteer, assisting Central American refugees in New Mexico, volunteering at nutrition centers in Guatemala or developing a learning center in Costa Rica.

First runner-up Rhonda McBride, nominated by Alaska Press Women, is a television reporter for the NBC affiliate in Anchorage, KTUU. She credits her storytelling skills to working for almost a decade at one of the nation's most remote TV and radio stations, KYUK in Bethel, Alaska, which serves a mostly Yup'ik (Eskimo) population.

Committed to improving coverage of rural Alaskan issues, McBride won a national award this year from the Society of Professional Journalists for her series "Courting the Rural Vote." She is a two-time Scripps Howard Foundation national winner for small-market television and has received more than 100 awards from Alaska Press Women, Alaska Press Club and the Alaska Broadcasters Association.

McBride, second vice president of Alaska Press Women, also hosted and produced the weekly Anchorage Public Television talk show, "Consider This."

Nominations for NFPW Communicator of Achievement were forwarded to three judges, who chose the top two women nationwide.

For 68 years, the National Federation of Press Women has promoted the highest ethical standards in communications; provided professional development, youth programs and networking; and advocated protection of First Amendment rights.

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