

Ahead of World Press Freedom Day, New Book on Hope Spotlights Legacy of Free Press Champion Jon Wolman

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[/EINPresswire.com/](https://EINPresswire.com/) -- As preparations are underway to mark World Press Freedom Day on May 3 and in a moment marked by deep inequality, eroding public trust, and growing threats to independent journalism, a powerful new book scheduled to be published later in May is set to challenge leaders, institutions, and everyday people to rethink the future of America. The book confronts the nation's defining challenges with a call for hope, economic justice, democracy and a free press.

Nationally acclaimed Detroit journalist, standard-bearer for economic justice issues and six-time author Bankole Thompson's forthcoming book, "HOPE: On The Mountain Of Fear," delivers a timely and urgent argument: that democracy cannot endure without an independent press. Through sharp analysis and compelling narrative, the book examines how concentrated power, systemic inequities, and weakened media institutions are reshaping the nation's moral and democratic landscape.



The late legendary journalist and media leader Jonathan Wolman.

The book provides a realistic prescription for how to engender hope and resilience in these challenging times in the nation. It is a compendium of insightful and analytical essays expertly written by diverse individuals from around the country who are described as messengers of hope on some of the most pressing issues facing the nation ranging from healthcare affordability including veterans care, the future of the nation's Historically Black Colleges and Universities, state of the news media to the debilitating housing crisis. It offers pragmatic and thoughtful solutions to end the nightmare of hopelessness that many are currently dealing with.

Among the contributors to the book is the San Francisco-based attorney Jacob Wolman, the son of the late legendary journalist and visionary media leader Jonathan P. Wolman, who died in

2019. He once served as senior vice president, executive editor and Washington bureau chief for the Associated Press as well as former publisher and editor of The Detroit News.

The book dwells on the rigor of journalism with the urgency of a public call to action highlighting the indispensable function of a free and independent press in holding power accountable and making the case that without accountability, there is no justice—and without truth, there is no democracy.

Jacob in the book discusses his father's legacy and how he became a voice for democracy and accountability as well as how he was a principled and an institutional champion of journalism, civic trust and the public good demonstrating courage, hope, justice in defending the value of a free press.

Thompson and Jonathan Wolman had a special relationship that extended to his family. In 2015, when Thompson resigned as the longtime editor of the Michigan Chronicle, Wolman invited him to join the opinion section of The Detroit News as a twice-a-week columnist, praising his journalistic work.

"Jonathan Wolman embodied a legacy of truth and trust in journalism. His civic vision was to confront an unequal society with the power of fearless journalism. He understood with uncommon moral clarity that a free press is both a public trust and a democratic obligation. What his son



Bankole Thompson's forthcoming sixth book.



Jacob Wolman, a San Francisco-based attorney contributed an essay in the book about the state of the news media and the journalism legacy of his legendary father Jonathan Wolman.

Jacob wrote in the book about not only the state of the media in our nation, but also about his father's enduring legacy matters in our strive for an informed public. Because without an informed public, there is no way to achieve economic justice, hope and democracy," Thompson said. "Jacob's contribution to the book is extending the issues that Wolman truly cared about in the fight for an equitable society in this era."

The book grounded in the tradition of truth-telling shaped by figures such as the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel, James Baldwin, Maya Angelou and others, the book offers searing analysis and urgent moral clarity on the issues defining this era and challenges leaders across government, academia, business and media to move beyond performative commitments to equity and instead take measurable, structural action for change.

The essays deliver a blunt argument: democracy is not simply under pressure. It is being undermined by economic inequality and institutional silence and that hope is not a slogan. It is a strategy that requires action.

"Everyone in the Congress – and the country – ought to read my friend Bankole Thompson's book. At a time when division, inequality, and injustice in America often feel inescapable, Thompson reminds us that there is a way out: the path of solidarity, democracy, and hope," Maryland Democratic Congressman and former U.S. House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer wrote in endorsing the book.

Sister Simone Campbell, one of the most powerful voices for social and economic justice in the modern American Catholic Church, a close ally of the late Pope Francis' anti-poverty crusades and a 2022 Presidential Medal of Freedom recipient, wrote the book's foreword.

"Hope can weave us together in challenging times if we stay connected in community of some sort. Wherever we look there are opportunities to make a difference by being part of the fabric of our society. None of us have to do BIG things, but we each must do SOME thing. Hope in these challenging times might just be the new green shoots of spring time growth that we need. That is what will see us through," Campbell wrote in the foreword.

Marc Morial, one of the nation's most prominent civil rights leaders and former president of the U.S. Conference of Mayors, and who is the president and CEO of the National Urban League, the nation's largest civil rights organization, wrote the book's epilogue. In it Morial described Thompson as an "award-winning journalist and public thinker," while calling the book a "groundbreaking anthology," adding that, "In a time of division, uncertainty, and urgent questions about the future of the American democratic experiment, HOPE: On The Mountain Of Fear, is a resounding call to courage, conviction, and collective purpose."

Among other notable figures endorsing the book is the highly acclaimed dean of the University of California Berkeley School of Law, Erwin Chemerinsky, who was named twice as the most

influential person in legal education in the United States.

"At a time when the possibility of progressive change seems bleak, this collection of wonderful essays provides urgently needed hope. Written from a variety of perspectives and on many different topics, these essays provide a blueprint for a future with economic justice and meaningful equality of opportunity. The inescapable conclusion from this book is that we can make it happen," Chemerinsky wrote in endorsing the book.

Dr. Walter Kimbrough, the former president of Dillard University, one of the nation's most prominent Historically Black Colleges and Universities founded during Reconstruction, also praised the book.

"In the days following the passing of Rev. Jesse Jackson, some began to ask, how do we replace such a monumental figure in this nation's history, a figure whose influence reached beyond our shores. Jackson often exhorted us to 'Keep Hope Alive! Bankole Thompson and associates do their part through a series of essays to address how we can keep hope alive by addressing key issues, from housing to criminal justice to mental health. Despite a mountain of fear, Thompson and colleagues provide guidance on keeping hope alive as Jackson would want," Kimbrough wrote.

Thompson is a leading journalistic voice known for confronting injustice, challenging power, and advancing a fearless vision of equity, accountability and democratic renewal. He is one of the first Black editors in the nation to conduct a series of historic exclusive sit-down interviews with former President Barack Obama, is the founder of the national anti-poverty and economic justice think tank, The PuLSE Institute, a twice-a-week opinion columnist at The Detroit News and the host of the podcast, Bankole's Nation. He is also the founder of The Bankole Thompson Center, a newly established youth leadership empowerment initiative to help build next generation leaders, which is chaired by former White House spokesman Robert Weiner.

A member of the National Press Club of Washington D.C., Thompson is an accomplished author of several books, including "Fiery Conscience," about his decades of speaking truth to power reviewed by Forbes and listed as a reference in the Jean Blackwell Hutson Research and Reference Division of the New Public Library's Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture. He has appeared severally on CNN and other major news outlets.

Thompson's work defined by a rigorous focus on economic justice, racial equality and poverty is often linked to the tradition of Frederick Douglass' speaking truth to power.

In January of 2018, the late civil rights leader Rev. Jesse Louis Jackson Sr., personally presented Thompson with the Rainbow PUSH Coalition's Let Freedom Ring Journalism Award for being a preeminent voice of conscience and courage during a ceremony to mark the 50th anniversary death of Dr. King.

In a rare honor, the University of Michigan Bentley Historical Library in 2015, established the Bankole Thompson Papers to preserve his work alongside the papers of Michigan governors. In 2018, he received the U.S. Congressional Record of Testimonial placing his body of work into the official record of the 118th Congress.

His advocacy has been partly centered on what has been called the Bankole Thompson Doctrine, which declares that business leaders have a moral and ethical obligation to invest in anti-poverty and economic justice efforts in underserved communities.

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