

American Journalists Stamp Backgrounder

The U.S. Postal Service® Commemorative Stamp Program: American Journalists recognizes the contributions of American journalists to the betterment of American society — exposing and exploring the people, processes, challenges and accomplishments of a country, its people, and its role in the world.

With this stamp sheet, the U.S. Postal Service honors five distinguished journalists who reported — often at great personal sacrifice — some of the most important stories of the 20th century. Working in radio, television, or print, the distinguished members of this group did their part to keep citizens informed about the world around them. They were drawn to hot spots, and their description of conflicts and issues helped people respond more intelligently to events.

The *American Journalists* stamp series honors the following journalists:

- Ruben Salazar, the first Mexican-American journalist to have a major voice in mainstream media.
- Martha Gellhorn, a ground-breaking war correspondent who covered the Spanish Civil War, World War II, and the Vietnam War.
- John Hersey, whose most famous work documented the story of *Hiroshima*; the book was named the top work of journalism of the 20th century by New York University.
- George Polk, a CBS radio correspondent who filed hard-hitting reports on the civil strife in Greece in the aftermath of World War II.
- Eric Sevareid, writer and broadcast journalist.

Ruben Salazar

Ruben Salazar was the first Mexican-American journalist to have a major voice in mainstream news media in the United States. He wrote many influential articles for the *Los Angeles Times* in the 1960s; his work presents a valuable view of the evolution of Mexican-American politics into the larger Chicano movement.

As a young reporter for his hometown newspaper, the *El Paso Herald-Post*, Salazar distinguished himself with a series of investigative articles exploring the lives of poor Mexican-Americans.

Salazar's professional ambition soon took him to California, where he eventually joined the staff of the *Los Angeles Times*. There, he wrote articles on many aspects of Mexican-American life, including a series of influential reports on a variety of issues such as politics, labor (he interviewed the young activist Cesar Chavez), and education.

In 1965, Salazar became a foreign correspondent, traveling to the Dominican Republic and South Vietnam before becoming chief of his paper's Mexico City bureau. When he returned to Los Angeles, he described the discrimination faced by members of the Mexican-American community, killed in disproportionate numbers in Vietnam and frequently abused by police and other institutional forces at home.

In 1970, Salazar became news director of *KMEX*, a Spanish-language television station, and scaled back his writing for the *Times* to a weekly column that attracted wide notice.

On August 29, 1970, while covering the National Chicano Moratorium against the Vietnam War, Salazar was shot and killed by a member of the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department. Salazar has been awarded many posthumous honors, including a special Robert F. Kennedy Journalism Award "for his columns which communicated effectively and compassionately the culture and alienation of Chicanos." Laguna Park, the site of the Chicano Moratorium rally, was renamed Salazar Park.

Martha Gellhorn

Martha Gellhorn was one of the most acclaimed war reporters of her era. In a long career that broke new ground for women in journalism, she covered many major conflicts of the 20th century, including the Spanish Civil War, World War II, and the Vietnam War. Well past the age when most people retire, she filed reports from Central America in the 1980s.

Early in her career, Gellhorn worked as a crime reporter in Albany, NY. During the Depression, she interviewed textile workers in New England and the South for the Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA). She spent time at the White House as a guest of First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt, who became a lifelong friend.

In Europe, Gellhorn covered the Spanish Civil War for *Collier's*. During World War II, she reported on the Allied landing on D-Day and, later, the liberation of Dachau concentration camp. Later, she covered the war crimes trial of Adolf Eichmann for *Atlantic Monthly*. For many years, Gellhorn made her home in London; a British paper, the *Guardian*, published pieces she wrote on Vietnam in 1966 and on Israel in 1967.

A collection of Gellhorn's war reportage, entitled *The Face of War*, was first published in 1959. A later book, *Travels with Myself and Another* (1978), is a popular and funny memoir.

John Hersey

John Hersey was a versatile writer whose most famous work, *Hiroshima*, is a nonfiction account of what happened