

**Drake Group Honors Dan Kane, Reporter for The Raleigh News and Observer
As the Recipient of the 2018 Drake Hero Award**

Dan Kane, an investigative reporter for Raleigh, North Carolina's The News & Observer was selected to receive the 2018 Drake Hero Award. The award was presented at The Drake Group Awards Luncheon on April 13, 2018 at the Columbia Metropolitan Conference Center in Columbia, South Carolina.

The Drake Hero Award was established in 2015 to honor *an individual who has demonstrated extraordinary effort and produced a recognizable impact in advancing collegiate sports reform. The individual, through her(his) hard work and effort, has created a recognizable impact within the world of sports reform. The individual must have also demonstrated extraordinary effort and a recognizable impact in advancing collegiate sports reform.* Dan, through his tireless commitment to quality investigative journalism, specifically his reporting on the long running athletic academic fraud scandal at the University of North Carolina, has been unafraid to tell the truth and report the facts in all matters he covers, making him a very deserving recipient of this award.

Kane is largely credited with leading the expose of athletic academic fraud at the University of North Carolina involving mostly African American athletes in the sports of football and men's basketball who were directed towards phony and/or substandard classes to maintain athletic eligibility. According to The New York Times, Kane was subjected to "violent threats, angry screeds, and Twitter flame campaigns" by UNC fans in response to his investigative reporting. His reporting systematically exposed a pattern of extremely lax oversight at UNC leading to easy or nonexistent classes disproportionately benefiting athletes.

Drake Group President B. David Ridpath noted, "I, like many others, was impressed with Dan's on- the-ground reporting of the facts during the entire UNC debacle. If not for the efforts of Dan, his colleagues and support of The News & Observer, this academic athletic scam would likely still be going on unabated at one of our premier public institutions of higher education. Dan exposed practices occurring in Chapel Hill that are common at other institutions of higher learning seeking athletics success: the sacrifice of institutional integrity and embrace of academic fraud in order to advance the Tar Heels brand and achieve athletics success by any means necessary. It takes courageous and dedicated media as an adversary to powerful embedded interests to counter often used claims that college sports is all about education and caring about the athlete as a bona-fide student. Dan's shoe leather determination against many obstacles to get at the truth and pull back the curtain on the UNC fraud revealed the difference between myth and fact when it comes to college sports and academics. His efforts are a real credit to investigative journalism and freedom of the press. He is certainly deserving of this recognition."