



**PBS
45 & 49**

Northeastern
Educational Television of
Ohio, Inc.

**1750 Campus
Center Drive**

P. O. Box 5191

Kent, Ohio

44240-5191

Phone
330.677.4549

Fax
330.678.0688

E-mail
questions@wneo.pbs.org

Web Site
www.pbs4549.org

press release

Contact: Diane Steinert
steinert@wneo.pbs.org
330-677-4549

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**PBS 45 & 49 CONGRATULATES MELINDA ELKINS,
2005 AKRON NEWSMAKER OF THE YEAR**

*Louisville resident campaigned tirelessly
to prove her husband's innocence*

KENT, Ohio — Friday, Jan. 6, 2006 — Melinda Elkins, the woman whose remarkable efforts in support of her jailed husband, Clarence, led to his release in mid-December, was named 2005 Akron Newsmaker of the Year by panelists of the PBS 45 & 49 program **NewsNight Akron**. The award recognizes the greater Akron individual whose work has had the most positive effect on the area over the past year.

The panel made the unanimous decision after a lively debate about seven nominees during the show's Thursday, Jan. 5 taping at Northside restaurant in downtown Akron. The show airs tonight at 9 p.m. and repeats on Saturday, Jan. 7 at 5 a.m.

Panelists for the show were Vincent Duffy, director of programming and operations at WKSU/89.7; Jody Miller, owner and publisher of *Bath Country Journal*; Steve Hoffman, editorial writer at the *Akron Beacon Journal*; and Ed Esposito, news director at WAKR/WONE/WQMX. They cited Melinda Elkins' nearly eight-year battle to prove her husband's innocence in the rape of Melinda's mother and niece and the murder of her mother. "Here is a woman who waged the ultimate battle on behalf of truth and justice and the American way and really made a change that does impact every citizen in the long term," said Esposito.

Other 2005 nominees were LeBron James, Cleveland Cavaliers player and Akron native; Robert Keegan, chairman and chief executive officer of Goodyear; Carol Cartwright, retiring president of Kent State University; the Akron City School board; Luis Proenza, president of The University of Akron; and Rev. Samuel Ciccolini, executive director and founder of Interval Brotherhood Home.

For eight seasons, PBS 45 & 49 has produced **NewsNight Akron**, a weekly show that reviews and analyzes Akron-area news. This is the fourth year that the show has presented the Akron Newsmaker of the Year Award. Past recipients are Dan Dahl, Rev. Curtis Thomas, Mayor Donald Plusquellic and Connie Humble.

PBS 45 & 49 is owned and operated by Northeastern Educational Television of Ohio, Inc., a private, nonprofit corporation. A trusted community resource, PBS 45 & 49 uses the power of non-commercial television and related services to enrich the lives of people through high-quality programming and educational services that teach, illuminate and inspire.

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