

Lawrence Downes

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Profile

Editor and writer with long journalism record. Opinion writer, book author and editor, story doctor. Immigrant rights and environmental and disability advocacy.

Experience

WRITER AND EDITOR – 2017-NOW

Wrote "Feels Like Home: A Song for the Sonoran Borderlands," a collaboration with Linda Ronstadt, about her Mexican-American life, music and roots. Heyday Books (Oct. 2022).

Wrote "There Is Just Us: Special Olympics Rising" (July 2019), a book on the history and mission of Special Olympics. Commissioned by Timothy Shriver for the organization's 50th anniversary, it traces the growth of the global disability-rights movement from the age of eugenics and institutionalization to the 2019 Special Olympics World Games in Abu Dhabi.

Write op-ed essays and book reviews for publications including The New York Times, Washington Post, Los Angeles Times, El País. Ghostwrite and edit op-eds and essays for leaders of immigrant-rights and environmental organizations.

EDITORIAL BOARD MEMBER, THE NEW YORK TIMES – 2005-2017

Was The Times's lead editorial writer on immigration and New York City while also ranging widely. Covered the 2012 and 2016 presidential campaigns, the Trump election, intellectual and physical disability, Haiti's natural and political disasters, homeless and suicidal veterans, Catholic sexual abuse, the environment, popular culture. Contributed to "High Time," an editorial series on legalizing marijuana. Held the Obama Administration to account on immigration. Deplored Sheriff Joe Arpaio. Saved a Dreamer in Texas from deportation. Shone a light on government ineptitude and maladministration from Hawaii to Chicago to Long Island. Pulitzer-nominated by The Times for immigration editorials.

ENTERPRISE EDITOR, NATIONAL DESK, THE NEW YORK TIMES – 2002-2005

Worked with bureau and beat reporters to launch and land non-deadline pieces, especially the long and problematic ones. Directed and edited a reporting team on a multipart, front-page series on boomtown Las Vegas.

VARIOUS EDITING POSITIONS, THE NEW YORK TIMES – 2003-2005

Worked on Metro and National desks as weekend editor, backfield editor, copy editor.

COPY EDITOR, NEWSDAY – 1992-1993

COPY EDITOR, WIRE EDITOR, NEWS EDITOR, CHICAGO SUN-TIMES – 1989-1992

Education

UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI GRADUATE SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM, 1987-1989

FORDHAM UNIVERSITY, BA ENGLISH, 1986