

A Brandt Award Primer

PART 2

With [the recent](#) reports on the CoB's Louis K. Brandt Research Award, it occurred to USMNEWS.net staffers that many of the website's newer readers are probably unfamiliar with this particular award. It is given out biannually to the top researcher in the b-school. Every odd-numbered year the LKBA goes to that CoB faculty member with the best research record over the prior two calendar years, with the one exception being that the reigning Brandt professor(s) is (are) ineligible for the upcoming trophy. In past years, the award carried with it a cash prize of about \$2,500, though with the [difficulties faced](#) by the USM Foundation [in recent years](#), that amount has likely dwindled to something closer to one-fourth of that total.

A search through the USMNEWS.net Archives reveals just how political this award has been throughout the CoB's history. The USMNEWS.net [report entitled](#) "Is the CoB's Louis K. Brandt Award Becoming a Political Football?" contains a section (entitled "The 2005 Award: CoB Meets Watergate") that tells the story of former CoB marketing chairman Barry Babin's 2005 LKBA win. That year, CoB dean Harold Doty, and Doty's associate dean, Farhang Niroomand, forgot to complete the LKBA process along the usual timetable. This was a harbinger of things to come. Babin would ultimately win, though stories began to circulate shortly thereafter indicating that Babin was about to become Doty's new management, marketing, and fashion merchandising chairman. That meant that Doty had supervised an award process that generated a winner from among the ranks of administration, a problematic situation. That administrative move provided Babin with a \$26,500 raise to go along with the LKBA.

Things were further complicated, or politicized, when stories also emerged about the LKBA portfolios of Babin and the presumed runner-up, CoB finance faculty John Clark. Clark had produced publications in the *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science* and *Financial Review*, among others. Babin countered with three hits in the *Journal of Business Research*. The scandal grew, however, when Babin's position as the marketing section editor of the *JBR* became publicized, thus calling into question the rigor associated with accepting one's own research for publication, as Babin had been able to do via his position with the *JBR*. Another USMNEWS.net report – this one entitled "The Louis K. Brandt Research Award: Friendraising Through Fundraising" – tells the story of the 2001 LKBA, which was won by economics professor Edward Nissan. That year associate dean Farhang Niroomand [selected](#) *his good friend*, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee economist Mohsen Bahmani-Oskooee, [to judge](#) the candidates' portfolios. Bahmani-Oskooee selected Nissan, a long-time co-author with, and *good friend* of, Niroomand, as the big winner.

Clearly, the CoB's Louis K. Brandt Award process is often subject to the same political influences that characterize so many of the other parts of USM's b-school. Such appears to have been the case in 2001 and 2005, where the processes and results were difficult to square with acceptable standards or so-called best practices.