

MARIO LAWSON, THE FIRST WINNER OF THE MICHÈLE LÉRIDON SCHOLARSHIP FOR DIVERSITY IN THE MEDIA

Agence France-Presse and Arcom are pleased to award the first Michèle Léridon Scholarship to promote diversity in the media to Mario Lawson, a 24-year-old journalist trained by the association La Chance.

The winner will soon join the AFP editorial staff on a three-month contract, which will allow him to work at one or several of the agency's services or desks. He will also receive 5,000 euros granted by Arcom to help him carry out his own projects.

The Michèle Léridon Scholarship aims to honor the memory and continue the commitment of the former AFP global news director and member of the advisory committee of the Audiovisual Council (CSA, now Arcom), who died on May 3, 2021.

The contest is aimed at students who have attended La Chance but who have not yet managed to enter a recognized journalism school.

Lawson attended La Chance between 2019-2020, after completing a bachelor's degree in English and a master's degree in Bilingual French-English Journalism at the Sorbonne Nouvelle University.

Since June 2021, he has been a reporter at LFM Radio in Mantes-la-Jolie (Yvelines) where he also presents a program deciphering social phenomena related to youth. He has created «Mantes & Co en action», a podcast highlighting initiatives taken in Mantes and its region.

Mario Lawson: "I am honored and proud to have been chosen as the first recipient of the Michèle Léridon Scholarship", he said. "Rest assured that I will take advantage of this experience, as I will try to be a fully operational journalist and live up to the message conveyed by this scholarship."

Roch-Olivier Maistre, President of Arcom, said: "We are happy that, through this award, Michèle's commitment to a wider diversity in the media continues. Mario Lawson's primary desire was to become a journalist. It is a wonderful sign of fate that this scholarship has been awarded to him."

AFP chairman Fabrice Fries said: "AFP is delighted to soon welcome Mario Lawson. This scholarship is one of the tools we will use to make our newsroom more representative of society and aligned with Michèle Léridon's commitments."

Marc Epstein, president of La Chance: "Mario Lawson has shaped the volunteering journalists of La Chance through his diligence, his productivity, his consideration towards others, and his kindness. Family worries took him away from us too early. Michèle Léridon was committed to equality of opportunity, a supporter of greater diversity among journalists, and a faithful ally of La Chance. She would have been moved and happy to learn about this scholarship and its first winner."

Léridon joined AFP in 1981. She was deputy director of the Abidjan bureau, deputy editor-in-chief for the Europe-Africa bureau, head of the social news service, and Rome bureau chief. In 2014 she became the first woman to be

appointed global news director.

She was appointed by the National Assembly to the advisory committee of the Audiovisual Council (CSA) in 2019. She was mainly responsible for overseeing ethics and political pluralism in programming and followed several elections including the 2019 European elections and the 2020 referendum in New Caledonia before her death last year.

About AFP:

AFP is a leading global news agency providing fast, comprehensive and verified coverage of the events shaping our world and of the issues affecting our daily lives. Drawing from an unparalleled news gathering network across 151 countries, AFP is also a world leader in digital verification. With 2,400 staff representing 100 different nationalities, AFP covers the world in six languages, with a unique quality of multimedia storytelling spanning video, text, photos and graphics.

Join us on:



Press Contact: *Caroline Bulcke -Tel. : +33 (0)1 40 41 81 12-caroline.bulcke@afp.com*