

The Writer

MIRIAM OTTENBERG

The author of "Debtor Beware" won a Pulitzer Prize in 1960 for a series exposing the used car racket in the Washington area.

As an investigative reporter for The Washington Star, she has uncovered crime and corruption on every level and campaigned successfully for new laws to correct old abuses.

Her stories have led to stronger enforcement tools against law breakers as well as pioneering laws in the fields of mental illness, sexual psychopathy, narcotics addiction and commitment of the criminally insane.

She was the first to reveal publicly that the Mafia still thrives in America as the Cosa Nostra. In the field of white collar crime, she has exposed the baby broker racket, phony marriage counselors, the wig racket and fake charities.

Her exposes of the used car and home improvement rackets as well as shoddy investment firms alerted the public to consumer pitfalls while triggering corrective legislation. Her series on the inadequacy of safety measures on many "pleasure" cruises was credited by maritime authorities with spurring "safety-at-sea" legislation.

Among her civic and journalistic honors are seven awards from the Washington Newspaper Guild, including two grand awards; testimonials from both her high school and her university, two citations for service to the armed forces and many others.

In an unprecedented tribute to a newspaper reporter, the law enforcement community and civic leaders gave a reception in her honor where she was presented with a plaque signed by the Attorney General of the United States, congressional leaders, judges, prosecutors and the chief of police.