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DURHAM, N.H. - The major media polls that portrayed Rudolph Giuliani as the early frontrunner for the 2008 Republican Presidential nomination received the top spot in the first annual Top Ten Dubious Polling Awards, released last week on stinkyjournalism.org.

The awards, created by veteran pollster David W. Moore, a senior fellow at the University of New Hampshire's Carsey Institute, and University of Cincinnati political science professor George F. Bishop, look back on the busy polling season of 2008 and call attention to the scientific validity and utility of polls.

"Every year, poll watchers are confronted with poll results and commentary that defy either logic or science," says Moore, a former vice president of the Gallup Organization and author of "The Opinion Makers: An Insider Exposes the Truth Behind the Polls" (Beacon, 2008). "When pollsters focus on what they believe is entertaining and appealing to the audience rather than an accurate reflection of public opinion, they manipulate public opinion."

Moore and Bishop gave their top award - a designation of five crossed fingers, or the polling equivalent of a "Hail Mary" pass to all the major media polls for their prediction of Giuliani as the early Republican frontrunner. They condemn the pollsters for portraying Giuliani as the frontrunner "relentlessly, and without regard for any semblance of political reality."

The complete list of awards is available on www.stinkyjournalism.org, a site that advocates for more rigorous and scientific journalistic methodology.

The Carsey Institute conducts policy research on vulnerable children, youth, and families and on sustainable community development, giving policy makers and practitioners the timely, independent resources they need to effect change in their communities.

The University of New Hampshire, founded in 1866, is a world-class public research university with the feel of a New England liberal arts college. A land, sea and space-grant university, UNH is the state's flagship public institution, enrolling 11,800 undergraduate and 2,400 graduate students.

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