

NewsPro

The Magazine for News Professionals

December 2014 **crain**

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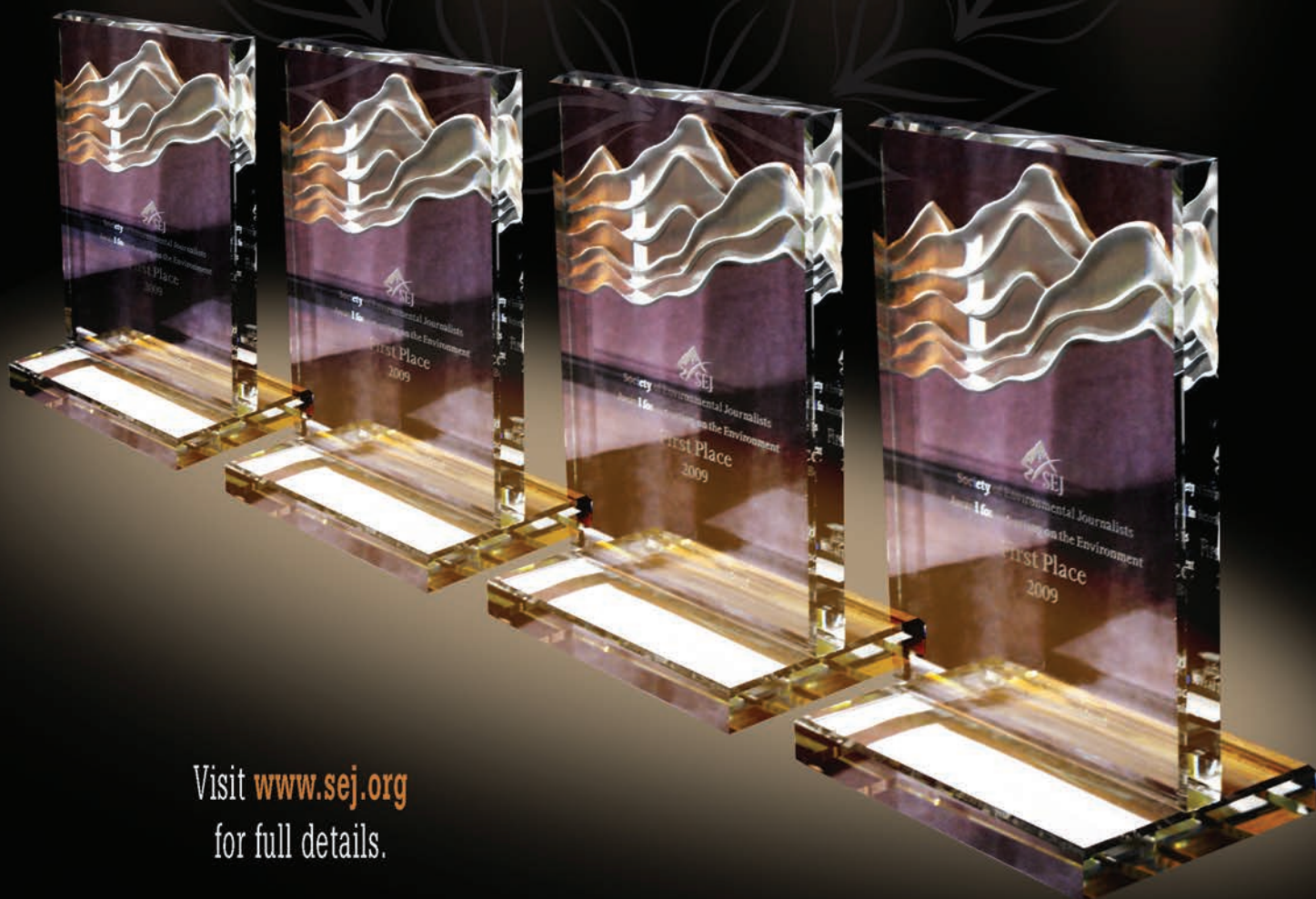




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FROM THE EDITOR

Loss or Gain, It's Change

The subject matter of this issue of NewsPro cuts a wide swath. We feature stories about disruptive change, about loss and gain, and about tradition and innovation. In essence, the terms that best describe the chaotic world of journalism.

Our annual "12 to Watch in TV News" feature offers a look at the professionals who are in positions to make their imprint on — and in some cases change — the TV news business. You'll find among this year's choices both the expected and a few fresh surprises.

On the journalism awards front, our piece discovers that the recession-related drop-off in submissions appears to be over for good, with programs reporting a notable gain in entries, particularly of the longform variety — a development that has caused a dire need for change in the way those organizations judge accomplishment.

Change is also at the heart of a piece by seasoned journalist Amy Wu that originally was written for Poynter.org in August 2013 detailing her radical decision to leave the profession and return to school full time for her Ph.D. As a bonus, Wu gives us an update more than a year into her studies.

As journalism continues to be an evolving frontier, our examination of grants finds that the fostering of innovation, among both students and leaders in the field, is the focus of an impressive share of current funding.

As to loss, we have as a contributor to this issue Julie Drizin, director of the Journalism Center on Children & Families at the Philip Merrill College of Journalism at the University of Maryland, who shares first-hand her thoughts as the center — after 21 years of furthering media coverage on issues that affect children, youth and families — closes its doors for good this month.

Our annual NewsPro-RTDNA survey of news professionals once again ferreted out the top journalism schools in the U.S., soliciting plenty of glowing praise about the state of education in the field — none too few about the No. 1 choice, the University of Missouri School of Journalism.

And fans of the No. 2 choice, University of Georgia's Henry W. Grady College of Journalism, were no less enthusiastic. That school, rich with 100 years of tradition, shares its plans for its upcoming centennial celebrations in this issue. And, we are told, it continues to turn away applicants due to capacity enrollment.

That is indeed reassuring in a profession that has endured so much disconcerting upheaval.

— Tom Gilbert, Editor



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José Díaz-Balart
and all those named on NewsPro's "12 to Watch in TV News"

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12 to Watch in TV News

By Elizabeth Jensen

This year's edition of 12 to Watch in TV News is filled with upstarts, but there could have been many more. (We might have included the new Reuters TV app-based iPhone and iPad news operation, launching in January, for one.)

The likes of Fusion, Vice Media and HBO's "Last Week Tonight With John Oliver" are reinventing the genre in an attempt to grab the millennials — before they all flee to mobile snippets of news.

But legacy media organizations, including the "PBS NewsHour" and CNN, have new energy, as well. Meanwhile, CBS is pioneering a path in the broadband world, ABC just launched a "Facecast" and MSNBC is looking to attract a more diverse audience.

Here, in no particular order, are some of the people we will be watching with interest in the year ahead.

SARA JUST

Executive producer, "PBS NewsHour"

The search for a new executive producer of the "PBS NewsHour" took the better part of a year, but once Just started the job in September, the changes have been swift, literally. The pace of the show has picked up, and evidence of a broader approach to story selection could be seen in a late-October story about the sales strategy for Taylor Swift's new album. Just previously spent more than 25 years at ABC News, rising to the deputy bureau chief in Washington. She joined a show that for the first time in its nearly four decades was no longer under the control of longtime anchors Robert MacNeil and Jim Lehrer and their MacNeil/Lehrer Productions. (WETA, the Washington, D.C., public television station, has taken ownership.) Other on-air changes are expected, including new faces reporting the news, more video and fewer of the lengthy roundtables with talking heads.

JIM LANZONE

President, CBS Interactive

CBS has long coveted a 24-hour cable news network of its own, but periodically rumored deals with CNN never seemed to materialize. Technology has finally caught up to the network's ambitions, however. In early November, CBS News teamed up with its own CBS Interactive to launch CBSN. The first live digital streaming news network, available on Internet-connected TV, mobile and online, CBSN is offering 15 hours of live studio-based coverage every day. Both Lanzone and Rhodes have been at CBS since 2011. In late November, Rhodes — who was instrumental in the launch of the newsier morning alternative "CBS This Morning" — was given sole oversight of CBS News (effective Jan. 1) after Jeff Fager said he would step down and give his full attention to running "60 Minutes."

DAVID RHODES

President, CBS News

continued on page 5



Sara Just



Jim Lanzone



David Rhodes

continued from page 4



Amy Entelis

AMY ENTELIS

Senior vice president, talent and content development, CNN Worldwide

Entelis came to CNN in January 2012, having spent 30 years at ABC News and a relatively short time at an executive search firm. The work of her team on the content development side has ramped up quickly; in 2013 the network had 20 hours of original series; this year it topped 80 hours and next year is expected to go above 100 hours. The personality-driven original series lineup, including “Anthony Bourdain Parts Unknown” and “This is Life With Lisa Ling,” is drawing impressive ratings and helping the network even out the ratings uncertainties that come with a strict focus on breaking news; the October debut of “Somebody’s Gotta Do It” with Mike Rowe in the 9 p.m. hour drew CNN’s best premiere numbers of President Jeff Zucker’s tenure. CNN’s unexpected documentary push has also been impressive; for January, CNN has snagged the television debut of Steve James’ acclaimed “Life Itself,” about the late film critic Roger Ebert. The film, which is on the shortlist for an Oscar nomination, recently was named the year’s best documentary by the National Board of Review.

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PBS CONGRATULATES

SARA JUST

Executive Producer, PBS NewsHour

MARIE NELSON

Vice President, News & Public Affairs, PBS

For being among TelevisionWeek’s NewsPro’s
“12 TO WATCH IN TV NEWS”

12 to Watch in TV News

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JAMES GOLDSTON

President, ABC News

There was little surprise when James Goldston was named president of ABC News in April, succeeding Ben Sherwood, who will take the title of co-chairman, Disney Media Networks and president, Disney/ABC Television Group on Feb. 1, 2015. In 10 years at ABC News, Goldston had already transformed the late-night “Nightline” and taken “Good Morning America” to No. 1 after 17 years of dominance by NBC’s “Today.” Goldston, a Brit who came to ABC from London’s ITV, is now shepherding “World News Tonight,” and new anchor David Muir is already giving NBC’s Brian Williams a run for his money just over three months in. To cover the bases with the non-TV viewers, Muir also just launched a “Facecast” social-media newscast. In October, Goldston’s bosses decided to see if he could work his magic again, and gave him oversight of the flagging talk show “The View,” which moved from ABC Daytime to ABC News control. His mandate is to boost ratings and draw — what else — younger viewers.

SHANE SMITH

Co-founder and CEO, Vice Media

It’s hard to tell what Vice Media will do next, but Smith, the recent winner of a Knight Foundation Innovation Award, has been public about his desire to make inroads in the television world, perhaps with a 24-hour network. (Vice already has a half-hour weekly program on HBO.) Earlier this year, the two-decade-old company, with its punk magazine roots and appeal to young men, looked to be merging with Time Warner and taking over the struggling HLN; in early December, after that deal fell apart, Smith talked of buying HLN outright, calling it a “distressed media asset” (and drawing a sharp rebuke from CNN Worldwide President Jeff Zucker). In lieu of a Time Warner deal, Vice got two investments totaling \$500 million from Silicon Valley’s Technology Crossover Ventures and A&E Networks. Now to see how the money gets spent.

CHUCK TODD

Moderator, NBC’s “Meet the Press”

The ouster of David Gregory as “Meet the Press” moderator couldn’t have been handled any less elegantly, playing out over several tortuous months of negative press. Then, just one month after Chuck Todd, NBC’s White House correspondent and political director, took the chair on Sept. 7, another round of press revealed that NBC had actually approached “Daily Show” host (and comedian) Jon Stewart about the job. After a brief ratings surge at the start, the show under Todd has settled back into third place. NBC News President Deborah Turness told The New York Times the show “needs more edge,” but Todd, author of the just-out “The Stranger: Barack Obama in the White House,” told WNYC’s Brian Lehrer in mid-November that his model is more public media: “I want ‘Meet the Press’ to be mistaken sometimes for Charlie Rose or, frankly, for Brian’s show here, than it is for a cable show where it’s four minutes of puff or ‘gotcha,’ where the questioner is more important than the questionee.”

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James Goldston



Shane Smith



Chuck Todd

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José Díaz-Balart

JOSÉ DÍAZ-BALART

Anchor, Telemundo, and host, MSNBC's "The Rundown With José Díaz-Balart"

"Noticiero Telemundo" anchor Díaz-Balart, the well-respected duPont and Peabody award winner, got a lot busier this year as MSNBC, a sister property to Telemundo, looked to broaden its audience. When Chris Jansing left MSNBC to become NBC News' new White House correspondent, Díaz-Balart was tapped to take over her weekday morning hour, effective mid-June. Then, just months later, when Chuck Todd was named moderator of "Meet the Press," Díaz-Balart got his MSNBC time slot, as well. "The Rundown With José Díaz-Balart" airs from 9-11 a.m. each day. Díaz-Balart, who remains based in Miami, continues to anchor Telemundo's nightly news, as well. Oh, and he also still hosts Telemundo's Sunday "Enfoque con José Díaz-Balart." Meanwhile, Telemundo's station group is on its own expansion spree, launching a new 30-minute newscast at 14 of its stations, staffed by more than two dozen new employees.

MARIE NELSON

Vice president, news & public affairs, PBS

PBS' news offerings include the hard-hitting newsmagazine and investigative show "Frontline" and the weekday and weekend "PBS NewsHour," along with well-regarded documentary strands and independent films. But there is no PBS news department, and only recently have all the component parts started to coordinate, such as in the week devoted to the Sandy Hook school shooting. Nelson joined PBS in early November, taking on a job that previously existed at the director level, with a mandate to "develop and direct innovative approaches to engage audiences in current events." Her background includes public television (production of Maria Hinojosa's "America by the Numbers" documentary about the country's changing demographics), public radio (founding executive producer for NPR's "Tell Me More"), cable news (acting vice president of news and original programming, BET Networks) and ABC News (a producer at "Nightline" and "World News Tonight"). For PBS, she recently produced the multiplatform "America After Ferguson."



Marie Nelson

ALEXIS MADRIGAL

Silicon Valley bureau chief, Fusion

Fusion, the multimedia partnership between Univision and the Disney-ABC Television Group, has broadened its ambitions in the last year, targeting millennials, and not just those who are English-speaking Latinos, its first intended audience. Fusion's election-night coverage was dismissed by The New Republic as "two hours of dirty jokes and puppets." But a hiring spree has brought in some heavy-hitting journalists, including former Reuters economic columnist Felix Salmon, New York magazine's Kevin Roose, and in early December, Hillary Frey, the editorial director at NBCNews.com. Madrigal, former deputy editor at TheAtlantic.com, joined in November and among his planned projects is a highly anticipated television show focused on the intersection of technology and culture. "We want to make TV that doesn't look like any TV right now," he told recode.net. "If we're the R&D lab out here in Silicon Valley, and that's what we're supposed to represent, we better do something different."

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Alexis Madrigal

12 to Watch in TV News

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JOHN OLIVER

Host of HBO's "Last Week Tonight With John Oliver"

"Daily Show" alum John Oliver quickly silenced any skeptics when his "Last Week Tonight" debuted in September, and viewers have responded: The show surged to its largest audience yet, nearly 800,000 viewers, when it wrapped its first season on Nov. 9 (and that doesn't include the YouTube audience). Far from a copycat show, Oliver's program has emerged with a singular voice. Its centerpiece single-subject, in-depth report includes investigative reporting that New York magazine's Frank Rich said at times is "more hard-hitting than what '60 Minutes' now does earlier in the evening on CBS." His targets are eclectic — net neutrality, income inequality and Miss America Pageant scholarships, among others to date — and not the usual TV news fare, making the show immediately a must-see.

MICHELLE MILLER

Correspondent, CBS News

Miller, an award-winning correspondent and former newspaper reporter who is based in New York, is not a new face — she joined CBS News a decade ago — but she's getting new attention. Her beat has run from reporting on Hurricane Sandy and the unrest in Ferguson, Mo., to profiling musician Carlos Santana for "CBS This Morning." This fall, "CBS Evening News With Scott Pelley" has been broadcasting her multipart series following a group of high-school dropouts trying to turn their lives around at a National Guard-run academic boot camp. Most notably, Miller has also been getting plenty of air time as part of the core anchor team at CBSN, along with Jeff Glor, anchor of the Sunday "CBS Evening News" and CBS News correspondents Elaine Quijano, Don Dahler and Vladimir Duthiers.

JOSH TYRANGIEL

Chief content officer, Bloomberg Media

Tyrangiel's Bloomberg empire is vast: He oversees editorial content at Bloomberg Businessweek, Bloomberg Digital and Bloomberg TV. Bloomberg has been on a hiring spree in recent months that has benefited the television network. Mark Halperin and John Heilemann, the "Game Change" co-authors Politico called "synonymous with presidential politics," were hired to launch a stand-alone politics site, and are hosting the daily TV show "With All Due Respect" as well as election-night coverage. Joseph Weisenthal, the executive editor of Business Insider, a finance and technology news site, joined in early November to build a markets and finance news site and he is expected to host a television show as well.

In November, the New York Post's Page Six reported that Tyrangiel was being eyed as a replacement for NBC News President Deborah Turness, even as her bosses insisted they had no plans to replace her. ■



John Oliver



Michelle Miller



Josh Tyrangiel

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THE NATIONAL ACADEMY OF TELEVISION ARTS & SCIENCES

Short Story Long: Awards Programs Awash in Lengthy Submissions

New Formats Are Changing the Way Competitions Evaluate Contenders for Top Honors

By Elizabeth Jensen

The recession-related drop-off in submissions to journalism award programs appears to be over. As the economy recovers and online submission processes make entering more attractive, awards programs are reporting a surge in applicants.

Fueling the many new entries is an explosion in longform and multimedia submissions, not all of them straight works of journalism. That has awards judges rethinking how awards get categorized and how exactly to measure good reporting, when it comes in different forms. Some awards programs are now also feeling compelled to

scrutinize funding of some longform projects and independent films when they don't originate with a traditional newsroom, to make sure the projects are not pure advocacy.

"It's evolving into a different ballgame," said Lisa Cohen, associate director of prizes at Columbia University's Graduate School of Journalism, and administrator of the Alfred I. duPont-Columbia Awards. The program received more than 600 entries this year, the highest number in a decade, Cohen said, and rejected some "because they



LISA COHEN

were advocacy films."

Winners of this year's duPont-Columbia Awards are planned to be announced mid-December. Cohen said the judging process still came down to fundamentals. "Good journalism is good journalism. The critical thing we're looking for is original reporting."

But the process is only going to get more complicated from here on out. New players such as Netflix, which five years ago was simply a way to rent DVDs, are now funding or acquiring documentaries and submitting them for awards. CNN is acquiring theatrical documentary releases such as the acclaimed "Life Itself," about the late film critic Roger Ebert.

Partnerships are bringing together multiple players on a single project. One 2013 duPont winner, a project about abuse of migrant workers called "Rape in the Fields," was a collaboration among PBS' "Frontline," Univision, the Center for Investigative Reporting and U.C. Berkeley Journalism School's Investigative Reporting Project. "You could barely fit all the names on the side of the baton" that award recipients receive, Cohen quipped.

Likewise, in 2013, a Scripps Howard Award was given to the

continued on page 11

RK ROBERT F. KENNEDY
CENTER FOR JUSTICE & HUMAN RIGHTS

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The RFK Journalism Awards honor outstanding coverage of issues that reflect Robert Kennedy's concerns, including human rights, social justice, and the power of individual action in the United States and around the world.

Winning entries provide insights into the causes, conditions, and remedies of human rights violations and injustice as well as critical analyses of relevant policies, programs, individual actions, and private endeavors that foster positive change. Past winners include *The Washington Post*, *National Public Radio*, CBS's *60 Minutes*, ABC's *20/20* and Home Box Office.

Awards are given in both professional and student categories:

Professional prize categories: Print, Television, Radio, Photography, New Media, and Editorial cartoon. Each category allows for submissions by journalists in Internet-based, related media.

Student prize categories (domestic only): Awards are given to college and high school students in print and broadcast categories.

Entries must have been published or broadcast in the United States in 2014.

An entry fee of \$75 is required for all entries, excluding student journalism award entries.

Deadline for all awards:
February 2, 2015

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Awards *continued from page 10*

International Consortium of Investigative Journalists and the Center for Public Integrity, for “Secrecy for Sale: Inside the Global Offshore Money Maze,” a project that involved 112 journalists and 58 worldwide media partners.

The Pulitzer Prizes got ensnared in the thorny issue of partnerships earlier this year, after awarding a Pulitzer for investigative journalism to The Center for Public Integrity.

ABC News complained that its contributions to the joint report about the coal-mining industry had been omitted, setting off a nasty public spat between the two news organizations and forcing the Pulitzer committee to defend its work.

The Pulitzer board in early December amended its rules regarding partnerships. Alongside their own employees, eligible news organizations are now allowed to nominate journalists employed by partnering organizations, even if those organizations are themselves ineligible to compete for Pulitzer Prizes.

The Pulitzers also expanded eligibility for two prize categories, investigative reporting and feature writing, to include many online and print magazines.

Awards programs also have to adapt to the whole new forms of journalism that are being created: In September, the Des Moines Register and Gannett Digital partnered on a first-of-its-kind explanatory journalism project, called “Harvest of Change,” to tell the story of an Iowa farm family and the issues reshaping rural America — using the emerging virtual reality technology Oculus Rift and 360-degree video.

“It starts to become very complicated about what does qualify, what doesn’t qualify,” said Cohen. Part of the awards process is comparing one piece of work to another, but now “trying to evaluate like things is more difficult.”

The Scripps Howard Awards, long perceived as a competition

“Good journalism is good journalism. The critical thing we’re looking for is original reporting.”

— Lisa Cohen

mostly for print media, in 2010 changed its categories to welcome work across media platforms. Helped by a new online submission process, entries have increased. (This cycle’s deadline is Feb. 10, 2015.)

Sue Porter, vice president of programs for the Scripps Howard Foundation, said the depth of broadcast entries has changed markedly in recent years, thanks to multimedia. “Four years ago, print

was still able to go deeper, do more in-depth work,” she said. But with online capabilities now, she said, “broadcast stations are using everything in their toolbox,” and putting longer pieces online. Meanwhile, newspapers are moving into online video. “We’re melding,” she said.

Projects such as “Harvest of Change” raise interesting issues, said David Winn, director of The National Academy of Television Arts & Sciences’ News & Documentary awards. (The awards program received about 250 more submissions this year compared to last, and its highest tally since 2005.)

The project, he said by e-mail, is distinguished by its video-game elements and its immersiveness. He believes the move into virtual reality is “simply an extension of practices that have long been part of documentary and nonfiction filmmaking,” noting that reenactments and animation have been permitted in the past (but not docudramas).


But with the creation of immersive worlds, judges also must consider “the degree to which the nature of the presentation shifts from storytelling (the preferred formula that reporters and documentary filmmakers use to present an issue to a mainstream audience) to what media scholar Henry Jenkins calls world-building, i.e., the elaboration of an environment or context that the viewer/user/player is free to explore,” he wrote. “Harvest of Change,” he notes, had elements of both an immersive presentation and print and linear video telling the story in more conventional terms. ■



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Grant Programs Aim for Innovation

Knight Fellowships at Stanford and Columbia's Brown Institute Paving the Way

By Elizabeth Jensen

Innovation and adaptation are the twin themes animating new academic programs being established at this time of transformation for the journalism business. Here are profiles of two such new programs, one for newsroom leaders and the other for students.

The John S. Knight Journalism Fellowships at Stanford University in March will inaugurate a workshop for newsroom leaders to collaborate and learn with the program's fellows. The workshop is funded as part of a \$1.8 million grant to the fellowships program from the Knight Foundation.

Two members, including one top editor, from each of six news organizations are being invited to the Sunday-to-Tuesday program, where they will hear about relevant innovations coming out of

Silicon Valley and Stanford's own cutting-edge "d.School," and explore possible solutions to challenges they have identified. "Rather than us create a curriculum, we're going to see what they need," said James Bettinger, director of the journalism fellowships program.



The program "grew out of our feeling based on conversations with lots of editors that they were being asked and expected to drive innovations and creativity and change in their newsrooms and that

they didn't have the tools and skills to do that," Bettinger said, citing, in particular, conversations at an American Society of Newspaper Editors meeting in 2013. "They were just in some ways being thrown into that," he added. "We think of this as symptomatic of the great disruption that's gone on in newsrooms over the last 10 years."

"Our goal is for people to come out here, learn what innovators here are doing and what might be helpful to them, and return home with some new abilities to implement change," he said. Their individual projects might be "organizational, process-oriented or a product," he said, with the hope that it "is describable and concrete, rather than big and amorphous and theoretical"—say, "tailor political

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The Carter Center in Atlanta, Ga., announces six one-year journalism fellowships of \$10,000 each. Designed to enhance public understanding of mental health issues and combat stigma and discrimination against people with mental illnesses, the fellowships begin in September 2015. Fellows will not be required to leave their current employment.

"Informed journalists can have a significant impact on public understanding of mental health issues, as they shape debate and trends with the words and pictures they convey."

—Rosalynn Carter

For more information, see www.cartercenter.org

content for tablet users instead of conquer mobile.”

Bettinger thinks the workshop is unique. ASNE this year has held two two-day “Hacking News Leadership” workshops on technological innovations, for a larger group of attendees. Columbia Journalism School’s Punch Sulzberger Program brings fellows in to work on individual newsroom challenges, but the program runs over four one-week sessions over the course of a year, a time commitment that not every newsroom leader can make.

Bettinger described Stanford’s upcoming program as a pilot, but the fellowship program hopes to do it annually over the next three years, the length of the grant.

Students interested in new forms of storytelling can find support at The David and Helen Gurley Brown Institute for Media Innovation, established in 2012 by an endowment gift from the late Cosmopolitan magazine editor, in memory of her husband. A partnership of Stanford’s Engineering school and the Columbia Journalism School, the Institute says, “Our mission is simple: Sponsor thinking, building and speculating on how stories are discovered and told in a networked, digitized world.”

The key to the program, said Mark Hansen, the program’s East Coast director, is the Stanford-Columbia connection: “We have the possibility of wielding the very best of technology paired with the very best of content.” So-called Magic Grants are given once a year, typically supporting a small team of graduate or post-graduate



MARK HANSEN

students working on an engineering prototype or an innovative media project that might eventually continue as business ventures outside the universities. The Institute also awards annual academic fellowships for students who support the Institute while work on similar projects.

“We’re thinking of it as start-up money,” Hansen said. Recent funding went to, among others, a project that searches for newsworthy events using real-time geotagged social-media feeds; “Bushwig,” a documentary project about the Bushwick, Brooklyn, drag renaissance that is enlisting social media for the “identity curation” that takes place in the drag community; a 3D immersive video look at Iranian artists; and a project examining how ad-servers work.

“I’m personally as interested in a platform that takes off, say the next document cloud, as if we created a story that people are talking about years from now,” said Hansen, of the program’s wide scope.

The Institute opened a new physical home within Columbia’s Graduate School of Journalism in September, which, Hansen said, “totally changes everything. We’re in one place. We can feel like a community, we can bring in resources and people and hold office hours.”

In September the Institute co-hosted anthropologist and sociologist Bruno Latour for a public lecture to 500 attendees and seminars; he also oversaw three performances of his play “Gaia Global Circus,” about the inadequacy of language to express the magnitude of the impact of climate change.

“If that’s not the Brown Institute, I don’t know what is,” Hansen said. ■

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www.nihcm.org/awards

Losing a Voice for Children

The Journalism Center on Children & Families is Closing After 21 Years

By Julie Drizin



JULIE DRIZIN

This year, the Journalism Center on Children & Families turned 21: the age many consider the beginning of adulthood. Although the U.S. news media haven't outgrown their need for a group to advocate for, assist, reward and inspire excellent coverage of children and youth, JCCF won't be around to help make that happen. The center is closing by mid-December.

The Annie E. Casey Foundation, a leading philanthropy for disadvantaged children and families in the U.S., launched the center at the University of Maryland in 1993. The foundation recognized the critical role the media play in holding public officials accountable, shining a spotlight on ignored issues and communities and giving a voice to the voiceless.

Children don't vote. They don't spend much money. They have little or no clout as citizens or as consumers. But how adults vote and spend money has a profound impact on the lives of young people.

Adults decide how public resources are spent on education, which is what most of childhood is about. Adults decide whether young people who behave badly should be expelled from school, imprisoned for life or kept in solitary confinement. Adults determine whether children get the health care, nutrition or opportunities they need to become independent, productive adults. And news organizations decide whether any of this is news.

Over the past two decades, JCCF has pushed and pulled the media to cover the issues that affect kids and the grown-ups responsible for them. We trained reporters, connected journalists with experts, research and ideas, shared best practices and held up examples of excellence. We honored stellar coverage through our annual Casey Medal for Meritorious Journalism awards.

We did all of this in order to amplify the voices of children and families loud enough so that policymakers would hear, but also to remind news decision-makers that children are worthy of airtime, column inches and bandwidth.

When the center launched, it brought 30 journalists and an equal number of prominent national experts together for a national conference called "The American Family: A Tradition Under Siege." Attendees discussed the complex issues facing kids in this country and examined how their own newspapers, magazines, radio and TV stations covered children's issues, which in some news organizations was emerging as a beat.

Then-Attorney General Janet Reno spoke to the group and cautioned, "You have got to make your stories about children shorter ... There is a tendency of America not to read beyond the front page." Twenty years later, that attention span is reduced to 140 characters and most Americans no longer read the front page of anything.

In her report from that conference, center Director Cathy Trost recounted a story told by Sara Engram, the editorial page director of

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NPR'S STEVE INSKEEP, HOST OF THE JCCF-SPONSORED 2013 CASEY MEDALS FOR MERITORIOUS JOURNALISM, INTERVIEWS RADIO ROOKIES, FIRST-PLACE WINNERS IN THE YOUTH MEDIA CATEGORY.

Losing a Voice *continued from page 14*



BLINDED GUNSHOT SURVIVOR JORGE CARTAGENA (RIGHT) WITH CAMDEN, N.J., POLICE CHIEF J. SCOTT THOMSON AND HIS SON, TAKEN BY APRIL SAUL, WINNER OF 2012 AND 2013 CASEY MEDALS FOR MERITORIOUS PHOTOJOURNALISM.

the Baltimore Evening Sun (which closed in 1995). Engram recalled two stories her paper published on the same day: one about the family of a child beaten to death; the other a pet column about two abandoned kittens. “We had 80 calls about the cats and not a single call about the child’s family,” Engram recalled.

Twenty years later, cats still capture more public attention than kids, as anyone on Facebook can attest.

At this inaugural conference, journalists grappled with many of the same issues we tussle over today: the ethical challenges of interviewing children and families; sensationalized coverage of deaths in the child welfare system; the lack of reporting on programs that are working; the ongoing debate over single-parent-headed households; and the over-representation of female journalists covering family issues.

And those present debated the role of journalism in advocating for kids. Heath J. Meriwether, then executive editor of the Detroit Free Press, said, “We want to be part of a journalism that stands for something. We stand for children.” His paper launched a project that year called “Children First.” Associate Editor Jane Daugherty told the Center’s “Children’s Beat” newsletter, “We decided that what a newspaper is not supposed to do is sit there and watch kids die and do little stories on how their lives were wasted ... We can’t do that and pretend to be members of this community.”

Albert R. Hunt, then executive Washington editor of the Wall Street Journal, said that coverage of children’s and family issues are “incredibly important. It is going to affect what kind of society we have 20 years from now and it is every bit as important as writing about politics or current affairs or economics, and probably moreso.”

I wish I had confidence that editors of leading news institutions would say the same thing today and walk the talk.

Sure, much has changed since 1993. AIDS, crack, teenage pregnancy and welfare dependency are no longer the hot-button issues that they were then. LGBT youth are coming out in droves and LGBT parents are getting legally married. But traumatic violence in young lives has moved to the fore — whether we are talking about school bullying, school shootings, sex trafficking, sexual assault or

gun violence at the hands of peers or police.

When JCCF started as the Casey Journalism Center, the focus was always on disadvantaged children and families. Now, with the decline of the middle class, the population of the vulnerable has exploded.

These days, the key problem facing America’s families is the growing economic inequality. Billionaires thrive, while public schools can’t afford to fix a leaky ceiling, buy new books or retain talented teachers. Wealthy families collect homes and cars and Ivy League college degrees, while poor parents juggle low-wage jobs and struggle to feed their kids, gas up their cars and heat their home, if they have still have one. Healthy food, adequate housing, public transportation and college education are becoming inaccessible to a growing swath of Americans.

These are children’s issues. It’s not about the country our children will inherit. It’s about the country they are growing up in now. It takes bold journalism to expose these realities and tell the stories of what childhood and parenthood really look like in the U.S. today.

As JCCF closes its doors, due to lack of funding, we leave with heavy hearts, but tremendous hope. Thousands of journalists have attended our conferences and fellowships, entered our annual awards competition or relied on our website, journalismcenter.org, and weekly news summary for inspiration. Hundreds of these reporters, editors and producers are still working in newsrooms around the U.S. or are teaching in journalism schools. The legacy is theirs to carry on.

Our motto at JCCF has been “Stories Can Change Lives.” That is as true as ever. Journalism has been disrupted by the digital revolution. Not all institutions will survive. But I still believe that journalism has the power to inform and engage people in finding or fighting for solutions to many social problems and injustices. Indeed, that’s what the best journalism has always done. ■

Julie Drizin, a life-long public radio producer and editor, is director of the Journalism Center on Children & Families.

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Survey: The Top 25 Journalism Schools

NewsPro's Survey of J-Schools Reveals the Best in the U.S.

By Tom Gilbert

The University of Missouri at Columbia's School of Journalism was once again far and away the No. 1 choice as the top J-school in the country in the annual NewsPro-RTDNA Top Journalism Schools poll of news professionals.

Missouri handily claimed the top spot in the 2014 survey, trailed by second-place University of Georgia's Grady College of Journalism and third-place Northwestern University's Medill School of Journalism and Mass Communication.

A series of ties followed. Syracuse University's S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications and the Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism tied for fourth place, while the Walter Cronkite School of Journalism and Mass Communication at Arizona State University and the University of Oklahoma's Gaylord

College of Journalism and Mass Communication tied for fifth place. Tied for sixth were Troy University's Hall School of Journalism and Communication and Lyndon State College's Electronic Journalism Arts Department.

Rounding out the top 10 were Indiana University School of Journalism, in seventh place, Boston University College of Communication in eighth, New York University's Arthur L. Carter Journalism Institute in ninth and, in 10th place, the University of Florida's College of Journalism and Communications.

The survey was distributed on TVWeek.com and to members of the Radio Television Digital News Association, with 673 respondents participating. A total of 607 of those respondents answered the question about their professional status; of those, 260

(42.8%) said they were news professionals. Additionally, 169 (27.8%) answered non-news professionals, 104 (17.1%) identified as students, and 74 (12.2%) said they were educators.

The 106-year-old Missouri School of Journalism — the oldest J-school in the country, if not the world — is known for its "Missouri Method" that enables students to receive hands-on training in real news media, including the school-owned KOMU-TV, the NBC/CW affiliate for Columbia and nearby Jefferson City, Mo. UM also operates the local National Public Radio station, KBIA, and produces "Radio Adelante," a Spanish-language radio program.

Some of the approximately 2,250 Missouri School students also get practical experience at the school's Columbia Missourian publications, which include a website, a digital suite of apps, a print publication and e-books, and at Vox Magazine, which publishes a weekly iPad edition and a daily culture and entertainment blog called VoxTalk.

Asked why they selected a certain school as their top choice, responders were quite detailed in their answers. As can be expected, the Missouri School time and again won praise for its real-world approach. "The Missouri Method. You get real world, hands-

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NEWSPRO-RTDNA SURVEY 2014 J-SCHOOL RANKINGS

1. UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI AT COLUMBIA
Missouri School of Journalism
2. UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA
Grady College of Journalism and Mass Communication
3. NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY
Medill School of Journalism
4. SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY
S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communication
4. COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY
Graduate School of Journalism
5. ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY
Walter Cronkite School of Journalism and Mass Communications
5. UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA
Gaylord College of Journalism and Mass Communication
6. TROY UNIVERSITY
Hall School of Journalism and Communication
6. LYNDON STATE COLLEGE
Electronic Journalism Arts Department
7. INDIANA UNIVERSITY
School of Journalism
8. BOSTON UNIVERSITY
College of Communication
9. NEW YORK UNIVERSITY
Arthur L. Carter Journalism Institute
10. UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA
College of Journalism and Communications
- 11 TO 20 IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER
Ithaca College Roy H. Park School of Communications
Ohio University E.W. Scripps School of Journalism
Michigan State University School of Journalism
Pennsylvania State University College of Communication
Quinnipiac University School of Communications
Stanford University Graduate Program in Journalism
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill School of Journalism and Mass Communication
University of Southern California Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism
University of Texas at Austin College of Communication
Washington State University Edward R. Murrow School of Communication

Top J-Schools *continued from page 16*

on experience (and lots of it) before you even graduate,” wrote one of the many school’s supporters.

A University of Georgia advocate explained, “University of Georgia’s Grady College of Journalism and Mass Communication has well-trained professors who truly care about giving students experience in all areas of telecommunications. It shows with the wide range of Grady students involved in the journalism industry around the country.”

Several respondents put it more succinctly: “Columbia’s graduates have a proven track record of success,” and, from a University of Florida fan, “Gators succeed in all aspects of the industry. The hands-on training prepares future professionals.”

Many responders took great pains to boost Troy University in Alabama. “Troy University focuses on many aspects of journalism from print, broadcast, and new media. Troy does a good job of preparing all platform journalist to enter the workforce upon graduation. The curriculum at Troy is the best, with outstanding professors that give hands-on experience.”

A respondent who named University of Oklahoma the No. 1 school explained, “The University of Oklahoma is an often-overlooked leader in journalism education. The faculty set is a balanced mix of researchers and practitioners, giving students a healthy mix of cutting-edge research and on-the-job application. The Gaylord College



UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI

houses an integrated advertising agency within its halls as well as a state-of-the-art broadcasting facility. It’s a playground for future storytellers that should be commended on its rise in recent years.”

Arizona State was the top choice of a respondent who commented,

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LORENZO BEVILACQUA/ABC

TIME TO
TAKE ON
THE WORLD.

David Muir, Class of '95

The Ithaca College
Roy H. Park School of Communications
congratulates David Muir on his new
role as anchor of *ABC World News*.



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Grady Turns 100 With An Eye to the Future

More Alumni Contributions and Facility Renovation the Goal of Centennial

By Tom Gilbert

The University of Georgia's Henry W. Grady College of Journalism and Mass Communications turns 100 years old next September, and the venerable school is wasting no time celebrating.

Centennial festivities for the Athens, Ga.-based college launched in October with a Freedom Sings concert honoring the first amendment and a homecoming tailgate party that drew alumni, faculty and staff.

The celebration will culminate the weekend of April 16 to April 19, 2015, with events including a Centennial Symposium at the UGA Special Collections Libraries April 16 and 17, a 100th Birthday Field Party at nearby Smithonia Farm April 17, a Centennial Gala at the Classic Center convention facility in downtown Athens April 18, and a Centennial Brunch April 19 on the school's Grady Lawn. A series of receptions will also be held in cities around the country.

"It's all meant to give our alumni base a big opportunity to come together and celebrate this pretty seminal moment in the life of Grady College," said the school's Dean, Charles N. Davis. "You only do this once, so we really need to blow it out and give it the respect it deserves."

Grady consistently ranks near the top of the annual NewsPro/RTDNA Journalism School Survey, and counts among its star alumni retired Knight-Ridder executive Don Carter, Emmy and Peabody award-winning journalist Charlayne Hunter-Gault, former CNN President Tom Johnson, "Inside Edition" anchor Deborah Norville and "Good Morning America" news anchor Amy Robach, plus Delta Airlines Senior VP of Marketing Tim Mapes and Coca-Cola VP of Public Affairs and Communications Scott Williamson.



CHARLES N. DAVIS

"I cannot imagine how my career might have played out had I not been a student at the Henry W. Grady College of Journalism," Norville, a two-time Emmy winner and former "Today" show co-host, commented via e-mail. "The school's emphasis on internships was critical to my push to make sure I got the best hands-on experience while still a student at UGA."

"That training and emphasis on the need for actual real-

world experience pushed me to get internships at Georgia Public Television and then WAGA-TV5 in Atlanta," Norville explained. "I was employed as a news reporter for WAGA television before I was graduated from UGA. Within four months of graduation, I was the station's weekend news anchor. My rapid trajectory could not have

happened without my Grady School education and guidance."

The value of Grady's "hands-on" curriculum was also a frequent refrain among many of the inordinately passionate respondents to the NewsPro/RTDNA survey who listed the school as their top choice.

"One thing that distinguishes the University of Georgia and certainly Grady College is the excellence of the students, which sounds really trite, but the



DEBORAH NORVILLE

university's story is one of explosive growth in academic excellence," Davis said. "These are not typical students by any means. I often feel like I am lucky enough to be the dean of an honors college — the vast majority of our students qualify for the honors program. What that gives you is classrooms that are energized by the intellect of the students involved."

Despite the technological revolution in journalism that has shaken — and shrunked the staffs of — the mightiest of media titans, students remain willing to pursue the calling, Davis said. "Our applications actually inched upward last year, as did our admissions," he noted. "I wouldn't say we are in growth mode, because we have everybody we can deal with, but we are certainly turning away a lot of people. I don't anticipate that changing anytime soon."

Davis hopes the centennial festivities will act as a catalyst to bring alumni together — and ramp up their level of annual giving.

"Increasing the percentage of alumni giving to the college is certainly a major goal. Which, in turn, probably hits our goal of changing the look and feel of our facility. Hopefully we can

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The Route From Reporting and Teaching to Earning a Ph.D.

Journalist Amy Wu Upended Her Life at Age 37 to Enter Grad School

After 18 years of working in journalism and two years of teaching journalism in Hong Kong, Amy Wu decided to take the Ph.D. plunge. She forfeited her secure full-time job for a new adventure at the age of 37. And along the way she also got married.

Wu wrote the following essay, originally published by Poynter.org in August 2013, just before she entered the University of Maryland Philip Merrill College of Journalism's graduate program. An update from her vantage point today immediately follows.

By Amy Wu

In less than a month, after a 14-year career as a full-time reporter and nearly three years as a journalism lecturer, I will be a student again.

I never planned on moving from the newsroom to the classroom. I fell in love with newspapers in high school, where I became an avid contributor to my student paper. Starting in college, I interned at the Miami Herald, the Chicago Tribune and the San Francisco Chronicle, then worked at the Rochester Democrat & Chronicle and The Deal.

I loved daily deadlines, became a print junkie (I still prefer buying newspapers and magazines to getting news digitally) and believed that journalism was a profession that let you make a difference in the world. In 2003, I went for my masters' degree in journalism at Columbia, graduated and then immediately returned to the newsroom.

So why am I now about to start earning a doctorate, leaving behind work life for student life? Why take on what one friend who got a doctorate recalls as a "mental marathon?" Why walk away in the prime of my earning years for a course marked by clear risks but uncertain rewards?

The decision to go for a doctorate wasn't easy — I struggled with it for a couple of years, drawing up a list of pros and cons and interviewing those who had taken a similar journey.

Back when I first went into journalism at age 20, there was an unspoken rule: Once a journalist, always a journalist. Like many other young reporters, I vowed to never go to the "dark side" of public relations, much less consider some other career.

But then the arrival of Google, the explosion of social media and the lightning speed with which information arrived changed how we acquire, consumer and deliver news. The landscape of the newsroom

morphed from meeting one deadline to many, leaving reporters like me sometimes feeling like an octopus on roller skates. With the changes came layoffs and casualties in the newsroom.

While my love of news and journalism never diminished, I came to accept that the traditional journalist was slowly going extinct. I looked for other avenues to continue my passion for writing and reporting, transferring my newsroom skills to projects such as shaping a journalism curriculum and serving as a project manager for journalism conferences and events. In 2011, I fell into teaching when I applied for an adjunct-lecturer position as a last-minute replacement at Shue Yan University, a private university with a stellar journalism program in Hong Kong. I enjoyed it so much that I continued over the next two years.

Those years of searching and experimenting were when the seeds of pursuing a doctorate were planted. In Hong Kong — and much of Asia — a doctorate remains coveted, respected and a necessity for promotion from lecturer to professor.

With encouragement from my boss, last fall I enrolled in a part-time doctorate program at a local university in Hong Kong. A class on theory and the opportunity to examine news from a different angle whetted my appetite for more. I wanted to immerse myself fully in the program, and started counting the years. It would take me six or seven years to complete a doctorate as a part-time student. But what if I took the plunge and pursued my degree full-time?

In 2012, I took a small group of students from Shue Yan to observe and cover the 2012 U.S. presidential elections in Washington, D.C. I arranged meetings for the students with various media outlets and university journalism programs and connected with journalism departments to explore ways our schools might work together.

One of those schools was the University of Maryland's Philip Merrill College of Journalism. I was impressed with the people I met there, and noted that a number of faculty members had left behind careers as professional journalists to become educators. I was encouraged to look into Maryland's doctorate program and soon had the gut sense — intuition, if you will — that this was the place and now was the time.

I took the leap and applied. When I was accepted, I was happy — but I wrestled with the idea of leaving behind an excellent job and colleagues. They encouraged me to take on the challenge, though: With my doctorate, I might return someday and be able to contribute

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Earning a Ph.D. *continued from page 20*

even more to Shue Yan. It was a win-win situation, in other words.

While this is a big change, I'm far from alone. Over the past five years I've seen an uptick in journalists jumping on the newsroom-to-classroom bandwagon. Facebook has become a landscape of updated statuses: from reporter to lecturer, adjunct professor and professor. It's true that many of the newsroom-to-classroom crew are award-winning journalists in their sunset years, but some are younger journalists making the move in their prime, or seeking a second career.

For the first time, the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC) sponsored a Graduate Expo for journalists at its annual conference, with 22 colleges and universities participating. Paula Poindexter, AEJMC's incoming president, said the group hopes to target the growing number of journalists interested in graduate programs.



AMY WU

Via e-mail, Poindexter predicts that “more journalists will think about getting a Ph.D., which will lead to more journalists pursuing a Ph.D. degree. These doctoral students who are former journalists will become role models for those who’ve been thinking about getting a doctorate but weren’t sure how to proceed.”

My conversations with friends in academia convinced me that I don’t need a doctorate to teach. But those same friends noted that to be a professor at a big-name journalism

school without one, it would really help if you “wrote a book or won an award.” And at many universities outside of the U.S. a doctorate is a basic requirement for teaching. Overall, a doctorate opens doors to more teaching opportunities, and offers the hope of more freedom to think, write and produce — as well as a chance to get on the tenure track.

Kathleen McElroy was senior editor at the New York Times before seeking her doctorate at the University of Texas at Austin in 2011. She’s also a friend of mine, who’s served as a sounding board for me in reaching my decision. She shed some light on what inspired her own move: “I became more interested in researching why and how journalism works — theory, essentially — rather than just practicing journalism. And I really enjoyed working with The Times’ web producers — young, bright, eager. They inspired me to want to teach.”

That resonated with me — as did something Poindexter said.

“The reasons for leaving industry to pursue a Ph.D. vary widely,” she said. “While some journalists have viewed the academy as an

oasis with new opportunities, especially after the downsizing of newsrooms, others have wanted to have an impact on the restructuring of journalism education and training of future journalists.”

I won’t be in the newsroom, but my doctorate program is the perfect way to keep up with the industry and observe it through a critical lens. I’m excited about finding new and creative ways to teach and examine journalism during these changing times and I continue to be inspired by those who share the same background and have followed the same path.

“Getting a doctorate is harder than I thought — reading, writing papers, reading and more reading — but more rewarding than I could ever imagine,” McElroy told me.

Hearing that, and reflecting on my journey so far, I found myself smiling — and thinking that I can’t wait to go back to school.

Fast forward to November 2014.

I am in the Windy City presenting my research on alternative media in Hong Kong at the National Communication Association (NCA) annual conference.

I am surrounded by thousands of fellow scholars, many of them veteran professors with years of presentation and publication chops and others who are fledgling “young” scholars like myself. I am juggling the conference and final papers for the end-of-semester crunch.

I am only at the beginning of my journey, but in my nearly year and a half into the program, I feel like I am steadily getting there. I am immersed in a merry-go-round of classes, readings, papers and the weekly discussions with my awesome colleagues and professors.

At times I’ve half-jokingly told friends that perhaps I’m too old for this (I’m in my late 30s); if only I were another vintage. I am far from alone. I am lucky enough to be in a program that covets experienced working journalists.

At times I find myself going back to comparing my graduate school status with my former newsroom and working self. I should be more productive, I should be churning out articles, I should be tracking my hours, but not so on the Ph.D. Journey.

A professor recently reminded me in a thoughtful e-mail, “... the Ph.D. path should provide a totally different ‘learning by doing’ experience. Unlike a job, you are NOT expected to bring expertise to a Ph.D. position so you are — in effect — ‘learning on the job’ to acquire new skills. So please know that you WILL make other mistakes and hopefully learn from them in a meaningful way.” I am reminded now that what I’ve gained is priceless.

Do I miss the newsroom? Sometimes. At times I miss the thrill of being thrown new stories every day, the adrenaline rush of the tight deadlines. Do I miss it enough to return? No, not now, and not in the near future. I am focused on the here and now and committed to going the distance. For now I’m enjoying the luxury of being able to think, reflect and ask questions. I’m starting to understand the real value of ideas and learning.

It’s a leap of faith, but that’s the beauty of this journey. ■

Amy Wu entered at the University of Maryland in fall 2013 and is now in her second year in the program completing her coursework.

Top J-Schools *continued from page 18*

“Their program is comprehensive, interactive and ever-evolving to keep up with a continually changing field. From cutting-edge technologies, top-tier professors and opportunity for student innovation, the Cronkite school leads the nation in developing the communications professionals of the future.”

The Electronic Journalism Arts department at 1,400-student Lyndon State College in Lyndonville, Vt., had a strong showing for the second straight year — and, like the Missouri School, was favored for its in-the-trenches approach to teaching. One news professional explained, “Lyndon State College is a small school made up of a very few students in the Broadcast Journalism Department. The students turn out a nightly, live broadcast of local news in the Northeast Kingdom and surrounding towns of Vermont (and New Hampshire). Not only has this journalism program taken home Emmy awards, they consistently turn out an amazing 5:30 broadcast on the backs of only the students!”

Those in the midst of the learning process chimed in as well. An Indiana University student sang these praises: “I am a student at Indiana University Southeast, and I feel that the skills I have already gained there give me an edge on the competition. I stepped into this program having a strong grasp on writing, but knew little to nothing about journalistic writing or the myriad of storytelling tools available in the digital age. I now feel equipped to go cover any kind of story, with many, many tools in my arsenal, and I haven’t even graduated yet.”

Asked what the single most important course a J-school can offer, a great many respondents replied “ethics” and “social/digital media.” Other responses varied from “experience is by far the most important thing for a journalism student to gain in school” to “law and regulation,” “investigative reporting” and “how to straddle multiple delivery platforms in the Internet age.”

One respondent just called for a return to the fundamentals: “Basics of reporting, which would include writing and truly understanding developing sources and interviewing people.” Another advocated a focus on local journalism, offering, “Story development on a local level. So many news outlets go with the major, AP news and that’s it. Students need to understand how to connect BIG stories with local interests.”

The remaining J-schools in the top 20 choices of news professionals were, Ithaca College’s Roy H. Park School of Communications, Ohio University’s E.W. Scripps School of Journalism, Michigan State University’s School of Journalism, Pennsylvania State University’s College of Communication, Quinnipiac University’s School of Communications, Stanford University’s Graduate Program in Journalism, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill’s School of Journalism and Mass Communication, University of Southern California’s Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism, University of Texas at Austin’s College of Communication and Washington State University’s Edward R. Murrow School of Communication. ■

Grady *continued from page 19*

accomplish those things,” he said.

The objective is to create a more “digital-forward look” for the 50-year-old school facility, he said. To that end, Grady is starting a renovation of the student common area this month that will imbue it with plasma screens, news tickers and charging stations. “We just want to look much more modern and inviting,” Davis said.

Not that the school is lacking in new technology.

“I marvel when I return to UGA and see what’s going on at Grady,” Norville said. “But I caution the students, ‘Don’t get used to all this great equipment and technology you get to use here: It won’t be nearly as good out in the real world!’”

As for the Grady School’s future, Norville is confident. “I think the school is well positioned to continue to be a place where future professionals can learn the skills they’ll need in the changing media landscape,” she said. “Digitization has changed the way information is gathered, the tools used to do so, and the ways our audience consumes its information. What does not change is the need for accuracy, fairness and thoroughness in the face of crushing deadlines.”

Norville added, “The administration of the Grady School embraces the challenges of constantly upgrading its facilities to train today’s students for tomorrow’s digital landscape — but will always insist



HENRY W. GRADY COLLEGE OF JOURNALISM AND MASS COMMUNICATIONS

that the primary tenets of good journalism will be at the core of every student who comes out of the Grady School.” ■

More information about the Grady School’s centennial is available at Grady100.uga.edu.

The Need for More Substance in Reporting: Plain Speaking About TV News and Its Future

By Charles Lewis

I think we need many more enterprising journalists asking important, inconvenient questions about the uses and abuses of power and with the full support of courageous, independent station managers/news directors/owners — together serving the public interest.

For years, while leading the Center for Public Integrity, I tried to help inject more editorial substance into local TV news — in Radio and Television News Directors Foundation workshops nationwide with 200 reporters/producers and via closed-circuit “money and politics” training broadcasts, via collaborative newspaper/TV investigations about undue political influence in state legislatures in Indiana (1996), Illinois (1998) and throughout the nation (1999).

The latter case resulted in hard-hitting segments produced about state legislator conflicts of interest on nearly all of the local owned-and-operated NBC stations nationwide, potentially seen by tens of millions of viewers.

And today, there are approximately 100 nonprofit news organizations, many of them collaborating and co-publishing with local TV and radio stations throughout the U.S.

But honestly, we have all only just begun to scratch the surface of “the possible” when it comes to journalistic collaboration.

While that’s exciting and full of promise, the most popular traditional media news source in America is local TV. At the same time, only 20 to 30 percent of the population has access to a local all-news cable channel, according to a 2010 Federal Communication Commission study.

Viewers nationwide mostly get local traffic, crime, weather and sports news, while local investigative reporting about the powers

that be — and straight talk, facts and figures about the serious 21st century issues we all face — generally have become endangered species.

Indeed, it’s no secret that in recent years, local TV stations’ commitment to news and to public-service journalism has been on

the wane. Now, one-fourth of the local TV stations in the U.S. do not produce news content, according to the Radio Television and Digital News Association. And between 2000 and 2010, as the FCC and others have noted, broadcast membership in Investigative Reporters and Editors dropped from 874 in 2000 down to 648 in 2010.

Doing more and cheaper “quick and dirty” daily stories is one thing, but who would have imagined that scores of local stations would broadcast video news releases from the Pentagon and other federal agencies during the Iraq War without identifying the source of that material?

Equally alarming, although there is no comprehensive data, too many local TV stations are running stealth commercials masquerading as “news,” in which expert reviewers of various consumer products are quietly paid to plug those products, with

“minimal to nonexistent disclosure” to viewers and hardly any federal prosecution for such “plugola,” which is illegal.

According to the Washington Post’s Paul Farhi, one-fourth of local TV news executives acknowledged “a blurring of lines between advertising and news” in a 2010 Pew survey, and these sleazy “pay-to-play” arrangements prompted the Association of Health Care Journalists and the Society of Professional Journalists to issue a joint statement urging local broadcast stations to curtail such practices.

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But, of course, money talks. And that's also why only a small percentage of local stations actually even attempt to cover the various state and local campaigns, candidates or issues.

Too often, the only way a politician can become known to the public is to literally pay the piper who calls the tune with TV ad buys at election time, because these days, name recognition is unlikely to come from political news coverage by local TV stations.

A 2004 University of Southern California Lear Center study of local TV news coverage in 11 media markets found that “only 8 percent of the 4,233 broadcasts during the month before the election

Street, newspapers began eating their seed corn. And they started cutting the space for news, and then the staff that gathered the news.” Roberts called this strategy “a prescription for suicide ... we ended up giving the reader significantly less. And newspapers are becoming less relevant. And this is a tragedy for democracy.”

Meanwhile, another year has gone by with too many vital issues of our time again unaddressed. Profiles in political courage certainly do not abound in the current mercenary media milieu — it is much easier for politicians to foment fear and anger than to propose innovative new ideas and possible solutions and actually do the very difficult

work of forging consensus and governing. And it is much easier for TV stations to avoid public policy issues or serious, substantive news almost entirely, which saves money, and continue to reap the rising political advertising revenue, even in the non-election years. Gosh, every year seems to be an election year — funny how that works.

This has become an increasingly serious national problem; the candidates mostly remembered by voters are not necessarily the most serious, accomplished or brilliant — but only those able to raise astonishing sums of money from the wealthiest and most powerful interests, money then substantially spent on saturation political ads, commercial air time bought from the commercial TV and radio media companies.

As former president and Nobel laureate Jimmy Carter, whose Carter Center has monitored and overseen elections in 40 countries around the world, told me a few years ago, “I think our political system has been subverted in a very damaging way by the greed, primarily of the news media, television stations, who demand in this country, almost uniquely among great democracies, that candidates have to pay for their presentation of their own campaign platforms and promises through extremely expensive news media. And this is a basic fallacy of our system now.”

Not surprisingly, in recent years, presidents and congresses and the FCC have been afraid, unable or unwilling to even attempt to regulate the immensely powerful broadcasting and cable TV companies, which each year cumulatively spend millions on lobbying in Washington. But unlike all other special interests, they also control which politicians actually are seen on the air — and ensure that they actually pay for that privilege, even during public elections.

But of course, these issues don't get reported very much in the broadcast or cable media. ■

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Viewers nationwide mostly get local traffic, crime, weather and sports news, while local investigative reporting about the powers that be — and straight talk, facts and figures about the serious 21st century issues we all face — generally have become endangered species.

had stories that even mentioned local races.” Ten of the 11 markets were in states with U.S. Senate elections, “yet 94 percent of the broadcasts analyzed did not have a single story about a Senate race.”

In 1980, total broadcast TV ad revenues from political commercials were \$69.9 million; after the 2010 elections, it was nearly 30 times that number, over \$2 billion. In the 2014 elections, Americans were subjected to 3 million political commercials, at a cost of at least \$2.4 billion, according to Kantar Media and Wesleyan Media Project data. And between 1998 and 2010, political advertising as a percentage of overall annual broadcast TV revenue quadrupled, from 2.2 percent to 9.9 percent. All of these numbers continue to skyrocket.

Increasingly for local TV stations, there is a very real financial incentive not to cover politics or public issues too extensively, not to give invaluable “free media” exposure to candidates.

Is this abdication of TV broadcasters’ news coverage obligation to the public at all related to the precipitous decline in the local TV station viewership and revenues since 2000? This probably needs more study, but how could it not be related?

Meanwhile, this shortsighted, “dumb and dumber” approach also has not exactly worked very well for network TV news or for newspapers in recent years. As Gene Roberts, the iconic former executive editor of the Philadelphia Inquirer and Pulitzer Prize-winning author, told me: “To keep the profits up and please Wall