

# Jayhawk Journalist

Summer 2019 | Alumni Magazine

The William Allen White School of Journalism & Mass Communications at the University of Kansas



## PRIORITY: PLANET EARTH

Alumni find inspiration everywhere  
in advocating for the environment

**INSIDE:** PROFESSOR RETIREMENTS & STAUFFER-FLINT RENOVATION PROJECT

Summer 2019

## Dean

Ann M. Brill, Ph.D.

## Editor

Julie Adam

## Photography & Design

Julie Adam

Angel Tran

## Writers

Angel Tran

Julie Adam

## Printer

Modern Litho

## Online

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## Cover Photo

Craig Welch (j'89), senior staff writer at National Geographic, takes notes at dawn at 12,000 feet in the Ethiopian Highlands where he was reporting a story about gelada monkeys. The cliff looks out over northern Africa's Great Rift Valley. (Photo courtesy of Jeff Kerby, National Geographic)

William Allen White  
School of Journalism &  
Mass Communications

Stauffer-Flint Hall  
1435 Jayhawk Boulevard  
Lawrence, KS 66045  
[journalism.ku.edu](http://journalism.ku.edu)  
[jschool@ku.edu](mailto:jschool@ku.edu)  
785-864-4755





Spreading the message  
**TO SAVE THE PLANET**

**T**he clock is ticking. Temperatures are increasing. Species are dwindling. Even though the clarion call for action has been deafening, the Earth faces a dire diagnosis and critical consequences sooner than we would like to admit. Several J-School alumni are using their training, talent and toughness to bring attention to the climate crisis that has put our planet and ourselves on the endangered list.

**Stories begin on page 20**

A crabeater seal rests on an iceberg off Cuverville Island along the western Antarctic Peninsula. (Photo by Craig Welch)



This architect's drawing shows the remodeled first floor of Stauffer-Flint Hall, with work spaces for student media organizations, a news ticker and TV screens. The renovations are scheduled to be completed for the spring 2020 semester.

## LETTER FROM THE DEAN

**P**ardon our mess! The renovations to Stauffer-Flint Hall have begun, and we could not be more excited about the changes. In case you've not heard what we're doing, we are repairing some areas and updating others. It is time.



Dean Ann Brill

KU built this beautiful, iconic building in 1898 at a cost of \$21,000. Originally named Fowler Hall, it housed the University shops. The stone for the then two-story building was quarried

on Mount Oread. Although the use would be "commonplace," according to a history of KU architecture, it was also meant to honor the donor's father, so KU wanted an "attractive building." Mr. Fowler's original gift was \$18,000, but when the cost went up, so did his contribution. Fire destroyed the east end of the building in 1918. At the time, some thought the blaze was the work of a German spy!

In 1982, the building underwent extensive renovation thanks to the generosity of Oscar Stauffer. It cost a bit more — \$1 million — for the renovations than the original. The building became Stauffer-Flint Hall in honor of Mr. Stauffer and former dean Leon Flint.

So, it's been nearly 40 years since the building has significantly changed. Certainly, there's been work on classrooms to bring them up to date. But the infrastructure was wearing out and visitors, especially potential new students, were telling us it was time to make some other changes. Now, thanks to generous donors, we can make changes.

More than a year ago, we began the process of studying how we were using every space in the building. The results were expected — we don't need more space, just better use of the space we have.

Students work differently than they did 40 years ago. Classroom instruction is much more hands-on rather than lectures, and video permeates all forms of media. We also worked with industry experts to see what they were doing to change their workplaces. After all that research, we concluded that we needed collaborative and flexible spaces. Students told us they needed three things to get their work done: high speed Wi-Fi, power to charge their portable devices, and beverages to keep them caffeinated! They added that they wanted to "experience" what it was like to be immersed in a professional work environment.

Despite a year in which we had a 6 percent budget cut, we knew we had to move forward. In recent years, the elevator broke

down repeatedly, and the HVAC system was so noisy we had to cancel or move classes.

And we wanted to bring this time-honored building into a new era with a front door facing Jayhawk Boulevard. Through the new door will be an experience of being in a dynamic, creative space. We want everyone who enters to feel as if they are part of the School, to feel the energy that our students create. While the door will be new, we've worked closely to maintain the historic nature as part of KU's historic district.

What also will be maintained are our iconic values. Our skills, passion and integrity emanate from Mount Oread.

Please let me know if you have any questions, comments or concerns about this project. If you are able, we also hope you contribute financially to ensure that this building hosts Jayhawk Journalists for another 120 years.

Rock Chalk, Jayhawk!

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Ann M. Brill".

Ann M. Brill  
Dean

# Jayhawk Journalist

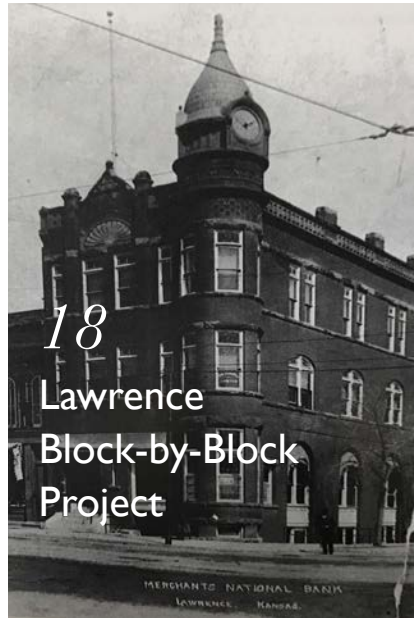
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## GREETINGS FROM THE EDITOR

Milestones allow us to reflect on goals accomplished and memories made. Sometimes, we just feel the need to pay homage to the passage of time and years. We've celebrated some big milestones recently in the J-School. Last year, we commemorated the 150th birthyear of William Allen White. This year is the 75th anniversary of the naming of the school after White.

We'll remember 2018 and 2019 as pivotal years in the history of the school. We paused to celebrate the careers of several professors who were committed to building the reputation of this institution and helping students find a path to success. With the retirements of Max Utsler, John Broholm, Jimmy Gentry and Barbara Barnett this spring and Susanne Shaw last year, we lose a century of knowledge and experience. (Pages 6-17)

Yet, we continue to look forward. As you read this, another milestone is underway: renovations that will transform historic Stauffer-Flint Hall yet again.

Next academic year will mark the 50th anniversary of the first edition of the Jayhawk Journalist, and although I am still formulating ideas for that commemorative edition, I invite alumni to send me ideas. Perhaps you'd even like to write a story.

You are part of these stories of the J-School. If you haven't been back for a while, or even if you have, next year will be a great time to return and see the new chapters taking shape.

Julie Adam, Editor  
Jayhawk Journalist

# All for the students

Susanne Shaw retires after almost five decades devoted to being a teacher, mentor, adviser and friend

Over four decades at the William Allen White School of Journalism and Mass Communications, deans and faculty have come and gone, curriculum has evolved, Stauffer-Flint has been remodeled, and thousands of students have graduated. But one thing remained constant: Susanne Shaw.

Former students returning to the school were always comforted to see Shaw sitting at her desk in her first-floor office, advising a student or on the phone, probably working on an internship or job for a current student or checking up on a former student.

Shaw's office is unrecognizable now, the walls torn down for the Stauffer-Flint renovation. Shaw retired last spring, but her legacy will always loom large inside the J-School, and it extends far around the world with the army of students Shaw taught, mentored and dispatched to make their mark in the field of journalism.

Shaw officially retired from the school after the 2018 spring semester but remained on as director of the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications, a title she had held since 1986 until July 1, 2018. Her retirement ended a nearly 50-year career, most of it at the J-School.

Shaw was born into a newspaper family. Her father was an editor at the Wellington (Kansas) Daily News, and while in high school Shaw worked summers at the newspaper. Girls couldn't have a paper route, so she did a little of everything else that was needed: tending to the mail, waiting on customers, proofreading or doing sports or obits.

She decided to study elementary education and came to KU, attracted in part, she said because KU had a good basketball team, and Shaw, who played basketball in high school, has always been an avid sports fan. She received her bachelor's degree in 1961 and taught English and journalism at Wichita Heights High School. She returned to KU



Susanne Shaw spent almost all of her career at the J-School. She left twice for newspaper jobs but returned each time because she said she missed working with students.

and earned her master's degree in journalism in 1967, then went back to Wichita to be the publications adviser while teaching journalism at Wichita South High School. In 1970, she came back to KU to become managing editor at Kansas Alumni magazine. After a year, she was convinced to join the faculty of the J-School, becoming an assistant professor in 1971.

Shaw was one of few women professors at

the J-School and taught alongside some KU J-School journalism legends.

"I was forever grateful that I had John Bremner, Calder Pickett and Del Brinkman as my mentors," Shaw said. "They taught me the right values."

Shaw worked with colleague Dana Leibengood to start the Kansas Scholastic Press Association for high school journalists and drew on her experience as a high school teacher

*“From the very first day that you walk into the journalism school, you know that you need to know Susanne Shaw.”*

to help recruit students to the J-School. She made sure that once those students got here, they had a contact and someone to offer advice and a place to go to ask questions during their first two years before they were allowed to get into the school.

Stephen Wade (j'90), publisher of the Topeka Capital-Journal, said he had a rough transition from high school to KU and was floundering and disillusioned as a freshman. Shaw was his J-School adviser.

“Susanne convinced me to stay, convinced me that there were opportunities and that I could do this,” Wade said. “I’ll never forget it, and throughout the rest of my tenure here, the number of discussions that Susanne and I had were countless. She’s somebody whom I have bragged about for years and years and years.”

Shaw was news adviser for the University Daily Kansan from 1972 until 1975, and when Brinkman became dean, he asked Shaw to become associate dean, a position she held from 1976 until 1982, and it was a job that she loved.

“Being Del Brinkman’s associate dean and working with Dana (Leibengood) was the best job I ever had,” Shaw said.

Her KU career was interrupted twice, for a one-year stint as associate editor at the Tallahassee Democrat in Florida, and for two-and-a-half years when she left to become editor and publisher at the Coffeyville Journal in Kansas. Each time, she returned to the J-School because she missed the students.

“Students give me rewards that money can’t buy,” Shaw said. “I love the students.”

And the students felt the same way, eventually. Most students, when they met Shaw, admitted that they were scared. Former students lovingly described her as tenacious, imposing, demanding, tough and intimidating. She was gruff and brutally honest in assessing their skill level or work ethic. But they quickly learned that was her way to push them to

realize their potential and not waste the talent that she saw in them. She knew what the job of a journalist required, and she did her best to prepare them and set them up for success.

Colleen McCain Nelson (j'97), vice president and editorial page editor at the Kansas City Star and opinion editor for McClatchy, recalls how it felt to walk by Shaw’s office.

“From the very first day that you walk into the journalism school, you know that you need to know Susanne Shaw,” Nelson said. “You’d walk by her office, and she kind of scares you, but also more than anything you want her approval, and you want her help, and you want her guidance. And so I remember walking by her office on my way to the Kansas newsroom and I wanted to talk to her, but I also was scared to talk to her.”

Jerry Seib (j'78), executive Washington editor at The Wall Street Journal, admitted that Shaw terrified him when she tested him as a transfer student so he could pass from Reporting I to Reporting II.

“I passed, but the first thing I learned was that she was tough as nails,” Seib said. “It took a bit longer to learn the rest of Susanne Shaw: She cared deeply about her students, understood the real world of journalism and what it required better than anybody, and she was a lot of fun. She was my mentor, my adviser and my friend, all in equal measure, and I’m proud and thrilled to say the friend part lives on, after all these years.”

Shaw knew what students thought about her, but she also knew her tough love approach worked. The students she advised and mentored won prestigious national awards while at the J-School and went on to work at the top news organizations in the world.

“I was always told I was intimidating, but they came around after the fact, years later, and said ‘Geez, we learned a lot, but you were intimidating,’” Shaw said.

Traci Carl (j'95), director of partnerships, commercial and digital markets at The As-



## CAREER HIGHLIGHTS

### EDUCATION

B.S., education, University of Kansas

M.S., journalism, University of Kansas

### HONORS

Presidential Award, Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communications

Al Neuharth Teaching Professorship

Del Brinkman Teaching Professorship

Lifetime Achievement Award, The Freedom Forum

H.O.P.E. Award nominee

H. Bernerd Fink Award for Distinguished Classroom Teaching

### AT KU

Shaw served as news adviser and general manager of the University Daily Kansan, as the J-School’s graduate director, and twice as associate dean of the school. She was managing editor of the Kansas Alumni magazine, 1970-71. She also was the inaugural recipient of the Bengtson Faculty Mentoring Award.



Mentoring students was Susanne Shaw's favorite part of her long teaching career at the J-School.

sociated Press, said she appreciated Shaw's "straightforward, no-bull form of teaching."

"She always broke down your strengths in honest, authentic ways," Carl said. "A compliment from Susanne was real and well-earned. But she never let me sit back and settle. As soon as I reached a goal, she set another and coached me on how to achieve it."

"She saw potential in me that I didn't see in myself," Carl said. "She expressed it in a way that made me believe I could achieve goals I hadn't even dreamed of previously."

DeNeen Brown, a reporter for The Washington Post, said she was a shy student when she arrived at KU in 1982. She planned to go to law school, but after she took a writing class in the J-School, she met Shaw, who became her adviser. Shaw convinced her to pursue a career in journalism, and when Shaw left to become editor and publisher at the Coffeyville Journal, she hired Brown for a summer internship.

"When my mother expressed concern about me leaving home for the summer, Susanne personally called my mom to assure her I would be well taken care of," Brown said. "Then Susanne found a family in Coffeyville with whom I could live for that summer."

When Brown graduated in 1986, she got an internship at The Washington Post.

"At the end of that summer internship, Post Executive Editor Ben Bradlee hired me to work full time. I have worked as a report-

*"Students give me  
rewards that money  
can't buy.  
I love the students."*

er for The Washington Post for more than 32 years. Along the way, Susanne has been there at every twist and turn, still giving me advice about life and journalism," Brown said.

Shaw was a master of networking long before that word even came into common vernacular in the 1980s.

Because of the connections she made inside the school and with the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications (ACEJMC) and the relationships she kept with the successful journalists she sent out into the world, she became a one-person ad hoc journalism career center at KU. Editors would call Shaw and tell her they needed a reporter or an editor, and Shaw would look for the right fit for the paper and the student. Former students now in the workforce sought recommendations from Shaw, and her connections grew exponentially each year.

She kept close track of her students' careers and lives and had an uncanny ability to remember what seemed like all of them,

almost as if she had a Rolodex in her brain.

"Her memory of students and her interest in where they are and what they are doing — I've never seen anything like it," recalls John Egan (j'86), a freelance writer and editor. "She has been so committed to this journalism school. It's like when Bremner retired and when Calder Pickett retired, it's like, how are things going to go on without them?"

Shaw's connection with students continued long after they walked down the hill. As ACEJMC director, Shaw would find her students everywhere in her frequent travels all over the world.

"Throughout my career, as she traveled the world for work, she always looked me up to chat," Carl said. "In Mexico City, we would meet near my office, and she would give me advice as a young reporter and then manager. She watched me get married and have two children. In addition to being a mentor, she also became a close family friend."

After she started as ACEJMC director in 1986, Shaw had to stop teaching because her new position required her to travel so much. When she took the job, there were no international journalism programs accredited, but now there are eight. Even though she stopped teaching classes, she was still advising students up until she cleaned out her office last spring, helping them get internships and jobs.

Her role at the ACEJMC made her an experienced world traveler, jetting off to all parts of the globe dozens of times a year. She never minded long flights to Dubai or China, so she still travels frequently in retirement. She volunteers on several boards and has more time to devote to those pursuits. She said she "plans to go where I want to go, when I want to go, and that's probably what I'll do."

Students and alumni lament that her retirement is an enormous loss for the J-School.

"Susanne Shaw has shaped so many journalists who have come out of the William Allen White School of Journalism," Nelson said, "and so we are all better for having known Susanne Shaw."

— Julie Adam





Jimmy Gentry taught many journalism students how to decipher financial statements and extract the stories behind the numbers.

# The J-School change agent

As dean, Jimmy Gentry rallied the faculty to institute major curriculum change to address the evolving media industry

If there is one word to sum up Professor Jimmy Gentry's career, it's "change." He has studied it, taught it, managed it and embraced it.

Over the course of his career, including 22 years at the J-School, Gentry's message has been that change is inevitable, and students need to be prepared to navigate the ever-changing world of media.

Gentry, who retired at the end of the spring semester, was the Clyde M. Reed Teaching Professor and dean of the William Allen White School of Journalism and Mass Communica-

tions from 1997-2004. He taught classes at the graduate and undergraduate level in Lawrence, at the KU Edwards Campus in Overland Park, Kansas, and with different off-site programs. He is nationally known for teaching thousands of communicators, journalists and students how to turn complicated financial and accounting information into understandable language.

Gentry's career at KU started in 1997. The school sought a dean who could lead the effort to modernize the curriculum and shift the instruction to digital communications in a

time of adjustment and uncertainty in the field of journalism.

Gentry, who at the time was dean at the School of Journalism at the University of Nevada, Reno, was recruited by Professor Susanne Shaw.

"Part of my gospel was that we needed to change and that our students needed to be able to work cross platform," Gentry said.

Having done his dissertation on change and leadership, he understood and enjoyed the process of preparing an organization for challenges of the future, and he was excited to

## Inside the School

embark on that process as dean of the School of Journalism at KU.

Preaching media convergence, Gentry brought in instructors and sought buy-in from faculty to teach students skills that would translate to a wide range of careers in the digital multimedia world.

“Advertising and PR students needed to understand marketing and needed to be able to work together; they needed to use research in ways never before,” Gentry said. “Reporters needed skills in print and video and audio and digital media as well, so we were among the first schools to make that real commitment to changing the curriculum. And when you’re first, there are some traditionalists who were appalled by that very notion. It turned out later on that we were right.”

One of the faculty members who was on board with Gentry’s ideas was Professor Rick Musser, who said Gentry’s vision was to emphasize skill sets, not media-centric silos.

“I don’t think anyone in the ’90s really foresaw the digital disruption that was coming to the newspaper world,” Musser said. “I think what Jimmy did understand was that the future of newspapers was already on unsteady ground and that we had a program built around being a top newspaper school. Yes, we were very good at what we did and at what we taught, and our students had been very successful reporters and editors and photographers, but it was a dangerous strategy to ride that print-product brand into the university’s future.”

Musser led about 15 faculty members from various career sequences and media types in a process of discussion and action that was not easy or painless, starting from working on designing one introductory course with a single syllabus that would prepare every student for the more advanced courses in different sequences.

“The task meant getting students out of their silos and restructuring the school’s curriculum leading to news editorial, public relations, broadcast journalism (TV and radio) and advertising degrees,” Musser said. “And then ... get the entire faculty to vote the change into existence. All with about a one-year deadline.”



Jimmy Gentry was dean of the J-School from 1997 to 2004.

And they did it, and Musser said that in the end, the change benefited the students and the faculty.

The school also instituted tracks — news and information and strategic communication — and adjusted the ratio of faculty to reflect the increasing numbers of students choosing the strategic communication path.

“The great thing was that we all had to do a lot of reading and research about where the future of communication was going,” Gentry said. “And again, the digital world created these environments that no one knew. And so we used to talk about that we were preparing students for jobs that don’t exist — jobs we don’t even have a clue about what they are. Of course, that’s the same today.”

During Gentry’s tenure, he also led the charge to revise the mission and values statement to be more student-centered, and the wording remains the same today.

Even though the dean’s job was rewarding, Gentry was not interested in a long-term commitment. As a believer in the idea and power of change, he went back to teaching after he had accomplished his goals in the dean’s office.

“To make all those changes we did was a herculean effort by a whole lot of people, many of whom had to totally change their syllabi and what they taught,” Gentry said.

In 2004, he moved out of the dean’s office and returned to his roots as a “business journalism guy.” At the University of Missouri in the 1980s, he had been the director of the business journalism program and enjoyed teaching students and professionals financial literacy, innovation, entrepreneurship and marketing. He liked the challenge of taking what many people would consider a boring, dry subject and making it interesting. When looking at financial statements and sheets of

numbers, he made sure students understood they weren't in a math class — he wanted them to think critically to find the story the numbers were telling.

Jeff Akin (j'11), president of Westwork Content + Design who earned a master's degree through the J-School's Integrated Marketing Communications program at the KU Edwards Campus, at first was dubious about taking Gentry's Financial Fundamentals for Communicators class.

"With remarkable patience, perseverance and humor, Jimmy soon had me eagerly poring through 10-Ks and corporate balance sheets," Akin said. "It's one of the most important courses I've ever taken and essential in giving me the knowledge and perspective needed to start my own agency."

Gentry created that program's capstone course in marketing and communications and ran a program for the Reynolds Center for Business Journalism at Arizona State University that immersed working professionals in a week of research analysis and sorting out financial statements. Most recently, he taught a class that on Fridays met in a co-working space in Kansas City, which brought together students and local entrepreneurs to learn and work together.

Katie Kutsko (j'16), who is partner development manager, metrics for news, at the American Press Institute, took three classes from Gentry because she said the topics he taught were relevant to real life and he challenged, supported, critiqued and inspired students. She praised the Friday co-working class as the best course she took at the J-School.

"We learned lean startup principles, met dozens of founders, several entrepreneurial communicators, journalists who cover entrepreneurs, learned about intrapreneurship, and immersed ourselves in the lingo, environment and culture," Kutsko said. "This course, coupled with many conversations with Professor Gentry

along the way, allowed me to realize I didn't want to work at a traditional business immediately after graduating. I do not think I would have come to this conclusion about myself and my goals without Gentry's mentorship."

Former students recall that Gentry's influence went beyond what they learned from him in the classroom. He became a mentor, adviser and friend.

Shortly after Nick Boehm graduated in 2012, he was offered a full-time position and needed some advice.

"I barely knew what a 401k was, let alone how to negotiate a salary, so who did I ask for guidance? You guessed it — Jimmy Gentry," said Boehm, who is a business intelligence specialist at the University of Kansas Health System. "Intangible things like character and integrity can be hard to define, but the kind of person who will spend time helping a former student when they have no obligation to do so is the kind of person who is full of both character and integrity."

Gentry has enjoyed his career being a teacher and an administrator, but as he has always been, he is ready for a change. He's retired from KU, but he still plans to teach an online class in financial fundamentals for the University of Iowa. He plans to volunteer more with his church and with his wife's nonprofit organization, Young Women on the Move. He will do consulting work on curriculum change and plans to do some learning as well — he wants to learn more about artificial intelligence and machine learning and wants to play the guitar better. With all of that on his plate for retirement, he'll be taking his own advice that he has shared with his students: "Given the way things change so rapidly these days, you've always got to be thinking about how you will be refocusing yourself," he said.

— Julie Adam

*"Part of my gospel was that we needed to change and that our students needed to be able to work cross platform."*



## CAREER HIGHLIGHTS

### EDUCATION

B.A., history, Millsaps College, Jackson, Mississippi

M.A., journalism, University of Missouri

Ph.D., journalism, University of Missouri

### NATIONAL HONORS

Barry Sherman Teaching Award, Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, 2008

Distinguished Achievement Award, Society of American Business Editors and Writers, 2002

# The J-School's news handyman

John Broholm taught just about every news course during his career and focused on the importance of good writing

Early in Associate Professor John Broholm's career, becoming a professor wasn't necessarily on his radar. As a news producer in broadcast television, one day he came to the realization that he was spending a lot of time teaching his staff to write better stories.

"I was hiring producers and writers," Broholm said, "and the writing was driving me mashoogy."

That moment set in motion a 35-year career of teaching journalism at the William Allen White School of Journalism and Mass Communications, which came to a close in May when Broholm retired at the end of the spring semester.

His interest in journalism started early in high school with stints as co-editor and editor of his school paper and an internship at a television station in St. Louis.

"Essentially it was a month of a high school internship at the NBC station, which planted a seed that wouldn't go away," Broholm said.

He was accepted to Stanford and got involved in radio working at KZSU, which had a high profile on campus because it covered the demonstrations against the Vietnam War, he said.

"We were in the thick of things from a community-needed-to-know-this perspective, and that kind of stayed with me," Broholm said. "I wasn't a newscaster per se. I wasn't doing the newscasts, I wasn't following the Palo Alto City Council or anything like that, but that stayed with me."

After graduating in 1973 with a bachelor's degree in communications, broadcast and film, he moved to Denver and managed record stores and worked at the Denver University radio station doing a weekly blues program. But the itch to cover the news wouldn't go away, and he started graduate school in 1978 at the University of Missouri. One instructor who had a great influence on Broholm was



John Broholm retired after the spring semester, ending a 35-year career at the School of Journalism.

*“John’s instruction, guidance and passion for story have served as my indestructible foundation.”*

Professor Dave Dugan, “a powerful force of personality” who had worked with news legend Walter Cronkite.

“He instilled a sense of purpose and professionalism that I really needed badly,” Broholm said.

After two years of honing his craft in TV news and earning his master’s degree at the University of Missouri, Broholm worked as a news producer at TV stations in Dayton, Ohio, Salt Lake City, Utah, and Denver, Colorado.

It always was in the back of his mind that since he had a master’s degree he could teach, and ultimately his desire to create better writers led him to switch careers. One of his former instructors at Missouri, Max Utsler, took a job at the J-School at KU, and the school was looking to hire another instructor to teach broadcast news classes.

“Teaching writing was harder than doing the newscast,” Broholm said, “and what was appealing here was well, let’s give this a shot and maybe I’ll learn something about teaching writing.”

Broholm taught broadcast news classes and was encouraged to earn his doctorate by the guy who hired him, Dean Del Brinkman. Even though he said that was the furthest thing from his mind at the time, Brinkman helped make it happen and by arranging his schedule so he could continue to teach.

“If all administrators were that good, things would run a lot better,” Broholm said. “That was Del. He was just one of those people that things worked, things happened.”

Broholm became the “handyman” of the news courses, teaching writing, editing and ethics. He also had a stint as the school’s graduate director. Through all of that, he focused on what made him want to teach in the first place.

“What I’m proudest of is my continued focus on teaching writing, which is difficult and it’s also a hell of a lot of work, a lot of grind,” Broholm said. “And that I’ve been adaptable to different media on that.”

One of Broholm’s former students, Tami Hale Frymark (c’93), who is a senior producer for the “Dr. Phil” show, said Broholm taught her “the art of storytelling well beyond the lead and the sound bite.”

“Over nearly 30 years, my career has been exciting and rewarding,” Frymark said. “From producing newscasts in markets small and large, to producing stories that have taken me around the world, and finally producing a departure from news and into daytime talk – John’s instruction, guidance and passion for story has served as my indestructible foundation.”

Taiju Takahashi (j’91), news director at WJTV News in Jackson, Mississippi, called Broholm “a true mentor” who even after students graduated would take the time to respond if students needed advice.

“Dr. Broholm has a unique way of relating to students,” Takahashi said. “He has a quirky sense of humor; he’s not overbearing or condescending. He did everything he could to make sure you succeeded in class and in the real world as well.”

Broholm attributes his success to his own mentors, including Professor Roger Gafke, who was “pretty damned uncompromising” in terms of quality in teaching TV news classes at the University of Missouri, and Utsler, with whom he was a co-instructor his first semester at the J-School.

“We don’t teach alike, we really don’t,” Broholm said of Utsler, “but his approach has always been an influence on me.”

Broholm hoped that he instilled on his students the importance of working hard on accuracy and relevancy of information because it’s very easy to get things wrong. He also said he tried to challenge his students, and based on their careers, he’s been successful.

“What’s inspired me most is the degree that students I’ve had have gone on to do amazingly much more than I ever did,” he said.

– Julie Adam



## CAREER HIGHLIGHTS

### EDUCATION

B.A., communications, broadcast and film, Stanford University

M.A., journalism, University of Missouri

Ph.D., education, University of Kansas

### HONORS

H.O.P.E. Award finalist, 2000  
School of Journalism awards for instructional innovation, 1991, 1990

# Learning in the course of teaching

Barbara Barnett found inspiration in different perspectives of students, women, underrepresented groups and military

Sometimes, the path of a person's life turns on the most innocuous of conversations. For Professor Barbara Barnett, it was one of those moments — an offhanded comment she doesn't even remember — that led to her becoming a professor and teaching at KU.

Barnett, who started at the William Allen White School of Journalism and Mass Communications in 2003, retired at the end of this school year. How she got here hinged on a remark she made while she was director of communications for the North Carolina Hospital Association. While working on a partnership for a grant with the University of North Carolina journalism school, she offhandedly mentioned that she might like to teach someday. The next week, she got a phone call: someone at UNC was going on academic leave, and the school was looking for a fill-in. She agreed and was hooked and still remembers her first class: "It was so much fun because those students were so eager and so enthusiastic, and it was really interesting to see the world through their eyes."

She taught a couple of classes and then after a 25-year career in which she worked as a newspaper reporter and a public relations professional, she decided to quit her job, and she earned her Ph.D. at North Carolina. At the time, the KU J-School was looking for someone to teach an introduction to mass communications class, which Barnett taught at North Carolina. A friend of hers who had worked at the Wichita Eagle told Barnett that Lawrence was a lot like Chapel Hill and she would like it. However, having lived her entire life in North Carolina in close proximity to the ocean, Barnett wasn't sure she could live landlocked in the middle of the country.

After her visit to Lawrence, interview at the J-School, and dinner with students, she decided KU was going to be a good fit.

"I felt that this is a place where everyone



Barbara Barnett retired in May after a 16-year career at the School of Journalism.

will work to help me, and that turned out to be true," Barnett said.

Since she had worked in both news and strategic communication fields, she was a good match for the new curriculum that was instituted by Dean Jimmy Gentry.

"I understood how news helped PR, and I understood how PR helped news, and so I think that was an advantage coming in as a teacher," Barnett said. "I think my skill set matched what KU needed at the time, which was somebody who could teach a lot of different courses, who could teach on both sides of the curriculum."

That varied professional experience helped students learn all facets of the communications world. Lauren Erickson, director of marketing communications at KU, said Barnett set her up for continued success in journalism classes, internships and her career.

"She really challenged me, pushed me, to think critically, pay attention to the world around me, and to write well," Erickson said.

Barnett said one of the most gratifying parts of her career is that she also learned something new every day from the students.

"I remember this quote from when I first started to teach, about somebody saying that a teacher is the giver of eyes, that you help students learn to see," Barnett said. "Well, they helped me learn to see because they have totally different life experiences, totally different perspectives."

It was that relatability that created a bond between Barnett and Jess Skinner.

Skinner, senior director of special events at KU Endowment, didn't know anyone when she moved from North Carolina to the J-School for graduate school. Wandering the halls one day, she stopped in Barnett's office



## CAREER HIGHLIGHTS

### EDUCATION

B.A., English, Pembroke State University

M.A., liberal studies, Duke University

Ph.D., journalism and mass communications, UNC-Chapel Hill

### AWARDS

Mary Ann Yodelis Smith Award for Feminist Scholarship, AEJMC

Katich Creativity Award, William Allen White School of Journalism and Mass Communications

### BOOKS

“Motherhood in the Media: Infanticide, Journalism and the Digital Age” (2016)

to ask a question. She noticed that Barnett also was from North Carolina, and that made her feel a little less alone.

“I didn’t know at the time, but she would go on to be one of my professors and the chair of my graduate dissertation committee,” Skinner said. “She really became a mentor to me and then a friend.”

Barnett also was on the thesis committee for Rhonda LeValdo, who received her master’s degree from the J-School in 2009 and is now a professor of media communications at Haskell Indian Nations University.

“Professor Barnett comes across as a genuine person who really wants students to succeed,” LeValdo said. “She is so kind, and I really felt comfortable in her classes. She always did wonderful constructive criticisms on our work as well, so it didn’t feel too harsh but again, wanting to make sure our stories and projects were going to be good.”

LeValdo also praised Barnett’s research on diversity and women in journalism — how underrepresented groups are stereotyped by the media, and the inequities that women and minorities face.

“So many students aren’t aware of the issues different groups face, whether that is race, culture, religion or sexual orientation,” LeValdo said. “Those things are what I teach other journalists about, the stereotypes of Native Americans in media.”

Another legacy Barnett leaves is her work with the military. She was brought on board when KU received a grant from the McCormick Foundation to develop a media and the military program. The school developed a program to hold joint classes with Fort Leavenworth to help military officers become better communicators.

“Military people and journalists both love the First Amendment but in very different ways,” Barnett said. “The military are fighting for you to have it, and journalists are fighting to practice it.”

Through her work with the military, she attended a national conference on research about post-traumatic stress disorder, and she started researching PTSD in journalists. That’s when she realized that journalists had no resources available to assist them with the experiences they had been through while covering war, violence and conflict.

“I am proud of some of the research I’ve done, I’m proud of the media and the military program because that was crafted out of nothing, and it turned into something that I think was helpful,” Barnett said.

Barnett is also grateful to have been a part of so many students’ lives, and she’ll miss the daily interaction with them. She’ll also miss being a part of the KU community.

“I’ll miss the Jayhawk camaraderie, being part of this big institution where you can go anywhere in the world and see somebody with a

Jayhawk and say, ‘Oh yeah, me too!’” Barnett said.

While there are some things she wished she could have done in her career, she is ready to relax and enjoy retirement. The first order of business is to move near a beach. She also would like to travel, teach adults to read, do some freelance writing, and work with international students in some way. And even though that will keep her still quite busy, she’s looking forward not having a schedule.

“I’ve been really excited about retiring, and I just started thinking, ‘Oh my gosh, I’m not going to have a schedule, and what will I do all day? Every minute has wrapped around work. And I said something to a friend about how I don’t know what I’ll do, and he said, ‘Well, you can spend time now with the people who love you,’ and I thought, that is so true. So one of the things I’ll be doing is spending more time with the people I love and the people who love me, so I’m looking forward to that.”

– Julie Adam

*“She really challenged me, pushed me, to think critically, pay attention to the world around me, and to write well.”*

# Sports journalism to the Max

Max Utsler's love of sports and expertise in broadcasting has helped thousands of students find their own niches

When Associate Professor Max Utsler accepted a teaching job at the William Allen White School of Journalism and Mass Communications in 1984, he wasn't planning to stick around for very long.

He told his new boss, Dean Del Brinkman: "I'll be staying here about five years and moving on." Thirty-five years later, he's now moving on. Last month, Utsler ended his teaching career at the J-School in which he taught, by his estimate, close to 5,000 students everything from writing, TV broadcasting and all facets of sports media.

The sports part has been a central theme throughout Utsler's life. Had it not been for sports, Utsler wonders if he would have even gone to college at all.

Growing up on a farm in central Illinois, everyone was either a farmer or a factory worker, Utsler said, and he was a "duck out of water" in that environment because he didn't like the dirt or the isolation. What did interest him, though, was sports, and he played as many as he could: football, basketball and baseball.

In his senior year at Knoxville High School, Utsler had initially turned down an offer to play basketball at nearby Knox College in favor of prestigious Dartmouth College, a place that seemed like a world away from his small town and he had never even visited. A couple of months before he was to move away, a bad stomachache turned out to be an appendicitis. In the hospital, the Knox College basketball coach visited Utsler and offered Knox College's training facilities for him to use before he headed east.

"My mom and I said, 'I don't know why I'm looking at going halfway across the country to college when a guy like that is right here,'" Utsler said, noting that his coach turned out to be one of the biggest influences in his life.

After earning his bachelor's degree in American Studies at Knox, he taught seventh grade English in suburban Minneapolis and was a



Associate Professor Max Utsler's office was filled with years worth of sports memorabilia he's collected during his career. He retired in May after teaching for 35 years at the J-School.

volunteer baseball coach at the University of Minnesota. He wanted a paying coaching job, though, which meant he'd need a master's degree, so he went off to the University of Missouri to study journalism, where he was offered a volunteer assistant coach position there.

The summer before he was to finish his master's degree, a teaching opportunity opened, which led to Utsler "hanging around" MU for about 10 years, teaching and coaching. Under the advice of his mentor Dave Dugan, Utsler beefed up his professional experience by working during semester breaks at TV stations in Kansas City.

"Then my mentor said, well, if you're going to stick with this teaching thing, you probably

ought to get a Ph.D., and I couldn't turn him down," Utsler said, especially when his adviser pointed out that "'Look, we have Ph.D.s that are driving in from Kirksville and St. Joe. All you have to do is walk across the quad.'"

After getting his doctorate and tenure, he decided to leave MU to work in television in St. Louis, largely for financial reasons. He loved St. Louis and thought he would stay, but after a year, he was contacted by Brinkman, who offered him a teaching position at KU.

Despite his assertion that it would be a short-term career move, he loved the connections he made with his students.

"I've always made it a point to remind myself that I teach students — not news, not sports, not video," Utsler said.



*“He understands that students are just that — people who are here to learn and hone a craft.”*

Alana Flinn (j'18), account manager for AmericanEagle.com in Chicago, appreciated the kind and nurturing way that Utsler taught.

“He understands that students are just that — people who are here to learn and hone a craft,” Flinn said. “He was never judgmental or harsh, as some in this field become. If you struggled in one area, he’d be happy to work with you and find your niche in another.”

Lara Moritz (j'92), news anchor for KMBC 9 News in Kansas City who also graduated from Knox College, said Utsler has been “one of the great people I’ve met in my life.”

When Moritz was looking at options for graduate school, one of her advisers suggested that she talk to Utsler.

“Max talked to me for a long time on the phone, overnighted an application to me, and in a matter of weeks I was going to KU for an M.S. in journalism,” Moritz said.

“He has been a mentor to me, a cheerleader for me and most importantly a dear friend over the decades to me,” she said.

Because of his professional experience and connections in broadcasting and sports, Utsler helped countless students learn the skills and gain the experience to work in television and sports.

Utsler created the “Sports, Media and Society” class to teach students all aspects of the business of sports, and each year, the enrollment was pretty evenly split between news and strategic communication students, he said.

“We finally woke up and realized that it’s a big business and that there are some special skills that you need to have to work in that business,” he said.

Chris Bacon, assistant professor at the School of Journalism at Middle Tennessee State University, met Utsler while working on his doctorate at the J-School. Bacon worked closely with Utsler while Bacon was executive producer at the student-run KUJH-TV.

“During my time at KU, he helped open

doors for me in the academic world,” Bacon said. “For example, he has a long-lasting relationship with the Broadcast Education Association. During my first national conference in Las Vegas, he introduced me to everyone he could. This included faculty members in my field, division leaders, and even national leadership.”

Utsler will miss the day-to-day contact with students, but he will continue to mentor young people.

In the last couple of years, Utsler has become involved as curriculum coordinator for C You in the Major Leagues Foundation, a nonprofit organization founded by Kansas City Royals General Manager Dayton Moore. The group’s mission is to support youth baseball, education, faith-based organizations, and families in crisis, and Utsler mentors 11 high schoolers from underserved areas of Kansas City.

Now that he’s retired, he’ll also have more time for sports. He plays baseball two nights a week and plays hockey as well.

As anyone who knows Utsler is aware, he is fiercely loyal St. Louis Cardinals fan, so he’ll have more time to travel across the state to catch a few more of those games. And even though he’s attended or covered plenty of memorable professional sports games, Utsler enjoys watching kids’ games, too, or high school or college sports.

“I love the fact that pretty much every time I watch a game or play in a game,” he said, “I’m going to see something I’ve never, never seen before.”

He’ll also keep working as an official scorekeeper for the Kansas City Royals, which he has been doing for past seven years. For Utsler, it’s not work; it’s just being a part of what he has enjoyed doing since his childhood.

“I love the atmosphere of a game,” Utsler said. “Some people like to visit art museums. I like a gym.”

— Julie Adam



## CAREER HIGHLIGHTS

### EDUCATION

B.A., American Studies, Knox College

M.A., journalism, University of Missouri

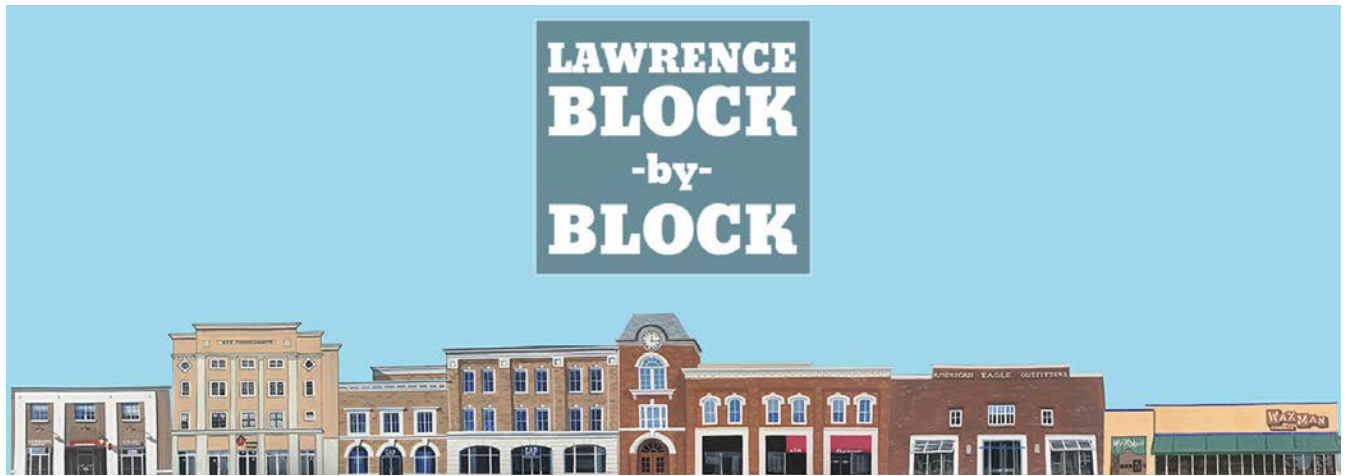
Ph.D, education, University of Missouri

### HONORS

Bengtson Faculty Mentoring Award, 2019

Katich Award for Creativity in Teaching, 2017

H.O.P.E. Award finalist, 2003



Block-by-Block is featured on the Unmistakably Lawrence website and displays timelines for buildings that students have researched. View the project at [rockcha.lk/blockbyblock](http://rockcha.lk/blockbyblock). (Image courtesy of Unmistakably Lawrence)

# Learning Lawrence's history, block by block

In JOUR 302: Infomania, students used effective research strategies to uncover and share the deep and unique history of buildings in downtown Lawrence

On the corner of Massachusetts and Eighth streets is Merchants Pub & Plate, a beloved restaurant that has become a staple of downtown Lawrence. However, back in the 1930s, this same location used to be a bank that was robbed by Clyde Barrow from “Bonnie and Clyde.” Farther down Mass. Street is a clothing store: Urban Outfitters. In 1870, that store was a residential building for a family physician, John Medicott. There was a huge case involving Medicott for committing a double homicide with morphine poisoning. He was found guilty and sentenced to hang, but his conviction was overturned.

Not a lot of people living in or visiting Lawrence may know these historical facts. At least not until the Block-by-Block project came along.

The project was created by Associate Professor Peter Bobkowski in the spring of 2017 for his class JOUR 302: Infomania. In Infomania, students learn how to find out information, use different sources, and evaluate

whether the information is credible. Bobkowski was inspired by the One Block feature in New York Magazine and decided to recreate a version of that for his class. The project has been assigned every semester since then.

“A building will have a lot of records related to it — property records, business records, information about companies and individuals,” Bobkowski said. “Taking a building was a really good way to bring a lot of these pieces of information together and have students research them.”

Students are split up into groups and assigned to do research on a building in downtown Lawrence. Students do about half of the research online, and then they have to go out in the field to complete the rest. Bobkowski said that some resources such as city directories, phone books and newspaper clippings are only available as physical records, not online.

“We go to the Spencer Research Library, the Watkins Museum, the public library, and



Merchants Bank first formed in 1877 and became a national bank in 1886. In 1930, it became the First National Bank of Lawrence. (Photo courtesy of Spencer Research Library, Pictorial History of Lawrence, Douglas County, Kansas. Taken about 1915.)

so it gets students out and researching in other places and talking to people who are interested in this type of research,” Bobkowski said.

His students said the class introduced them to a new method of doing research.

“I’m so used to doing all of my research online, so I never realized how valuable it is to go to a library and sift through old newspapers,” said Jordan Arnold, a senior from Lake Quivira, Kansas. “It really helps to paint



Students from JOUR 302 were presented with the Travel Industry Association of Kansas Marketing award. From left: Andrea Johnson (director of marketing and communications, Unmistakably Lawrence), Grant Heiman, Jordan Arnold, Brock Sauvage, Grace Woods and Associate Professor Peter Bobkowski

*“Taking a building was a really good way to bring a lot of these pieces of information together and have students research them.”*

a picture of what life was like then.”

When Bobkowski started the project, he wanted to find an organization that could provide a public platform for his students’ work. He reached out to Unmistakably Lawrence, the city’s visitor bureau that handles travel and tourism. The organization was interested because it wanted to promote historical tourism in Lawrence. A partnership was born.

Unmistakably Lawrence uses the students’ research on its website, and students get their work and names published on the website. Students also leave Infomania with useful skills that they take into their upper-level classes and professional careers.

Grant Heiman, a junior from Wichita, Kansas, took the class with Bobkowski and was his student assistant. Heiman edited and put

together timelines from past students’ projects to be displayed on the Unmistakably Lawrence website.

“Going from having no experience with research to now spending my fourth semester on the project, I’ve gained practical knowledge vital to being a professional journalist,” Heiman said. “It lays the groundwork for research tools that are key for any professional communicator.”

The project was also submitted for a Travel Industry Association of Kansas Marketing award in the “Integrated Campaign” category. Not only did it win first place for Integrated

Campaign among “large budget” destinations in Kansas, but it also won “Best in Show” out of all the marketing award entries.

Bobkowski plans on continuing the Block-by-Block project and partnership with Unmistakably Lawrence in his classes. Looking back on it all, Bobkowski is amazed at how far it’s come. “I knew it was a good idea, and I was really excited. I couldn’t predict that it would go in this direction, but I’m glad that it has.”

– Angel Tran is a May 2019 graduate from Wichita, Kansas



The Granada was a theater that showed films from the 1930s until the late 1990s. Now, it is a live venue for shows and concerts. (Photo credit: Hannah Cruise and Farm Security Administration — Office of War Information Photograph Collection from Library of Congress)

# Spanning the globe to put spotlight on the climate crisis

A reporting class set National Geographic writer Craig Welch on the course of a job of a lifetime



Craig Welch prepares to interview scientists at the edge of the frozen Arctic Ocean outside Barrow, Alaska. (Photo by Steve Ringman, The Seattle Times)

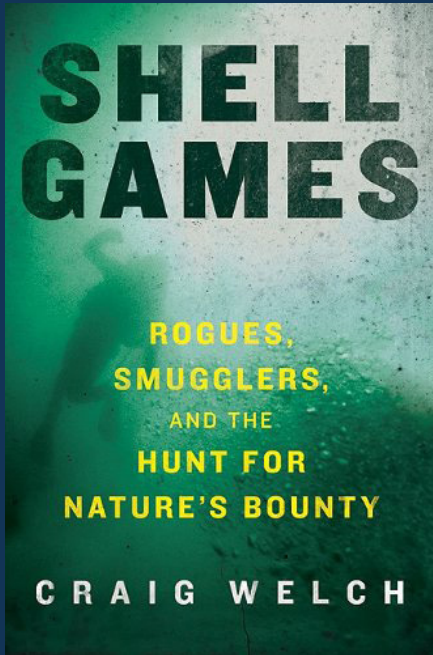
**S**tanding on the edge of a speeding boat in the Persian Gulf off Abu Dhabi, Craig Welch mentally and physically prepared himself for what he was about to participate in: a sea turtle rodeo.

In a wetsuit to protect himself from barnacles on the turtles, Welch waited for the perfect moment as dark figures darted by underwater. When the timing seemed right, Welch launched himself off the boat and into the water in an attempt to wrangle and catch a sea turtle. He caught a couple but missed a lot more and had the bruises to show how challenging this feat was.

When Welch took an assignment in the

Middle East to report on sea turtles, he followed a team of research scientists who were researching these creatures. A “rodeo” was the safest way to catch the turtles and observe their health. Since there were limited spaces on the boat, the deal was that Welch could come along and report on their work only if he helped catch sea turtles.

While a sea turtle rodeo is anything but ordinary, it was just another day at work for him.



## SHELL GAMES

In 2010, Craig Welch published his first book, “Shell Games: Rogues, Smugglers, and the Hunt for Nature’s Bounty,” after learning about a huge investigation involving shellfish smugglers, the black-market wildlife trade, and undercover cops and federal agents. “Shell Games” received praise for being a thoroughly reported, well-written and compelling true-crime adventure.

Welch said the smugglers were like a small international mafia and underworld that people didn’t know existed. Not only is it a great detective story, but “Shell Games” also provides perspective on how technology has changed how we buy and sell the planet’s natural parts around the world.

### Book honors:

- Winner, 2011 Rachel Carson Environment Book Award, Society of Environmental Journalists
- Finalist, 2011 Best Nonfiction Book Pacific Northwest Booksellers Award
- Finalist, 2011 Nonfiction Book of the Year, Washington State Book Award

Welch, who graduated from the William Allen White School of Journalism and Mass Communications in 1989, has worked at National Geographic for almost five years. Initially, he was hired on as a contributing writer and moved up to senior staff writer in September 2018.

“I just happened to be at the right place at the right time,” Welch said. “I thought ‘Well, who wouldn’t want to work for National Geographic?’ So, I applied and got lucky.”

Perhaps it was more than just luck, though. Before National Geographic, Welch was an environmental reporter for the Seattle Times for more than 14 years. During that time, he and his colleagues won the 2015 Pulitzer Prize for coverage of the deadliest landslide in U.S. history. Welch has also earned several other journalism awards, particularly for environmental reporting.

Welch has now solidified himself as an esteemed environmental reporter in the industry, but during his time at KU, Welch didn’t know what he wanted to do and said he chose journalism after taking a reporting class. “It was really the first thing in college I took to,” Welch said. “I wasn’t particularly good at it, but I enjoyed it.”

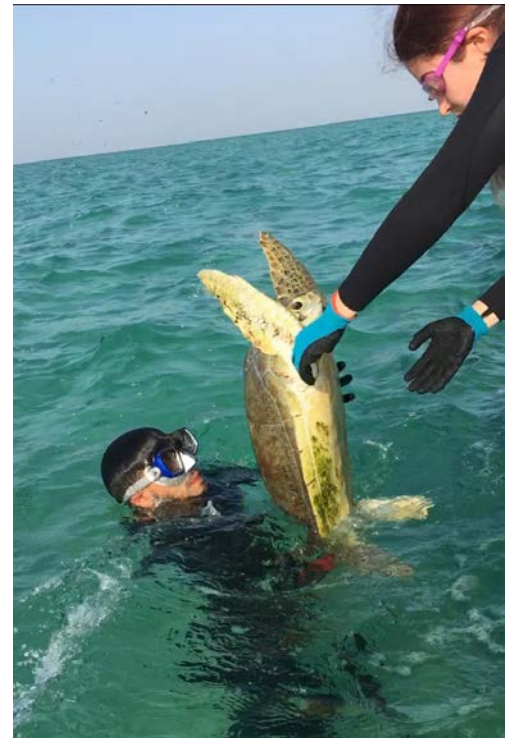
After college, he took a job at a small newspaper in Wyoming where he eventually did environmental reporting. From that point on, he immediately knew that was all he ever wanted to do. It was also the perfect excuse for Welch to be outdoors. His reporting included grizzly bears, forest fires, and oil and gas drilling on public lands — all issues a Middle America guy growing up in the suburbs hadn’t thought much about.

“It’s a completely different world and made me realize how much I didn’t know,” he said.

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So much stands out about Welch’s career that it’s difficult to know where to begin. He’s traveled seemingly everywhere, reporting from all seven continents multiple times.

He’s caught a sea turtle with his bare hands. He’s spent a night inside a tent on an island in the Arctic Ocean. He and a photographer both had shotguns next to their sleeping bags because there had been a polar bear nearby. Needless to say, they were a little terrified.



Hamad Al Jailani, with the Environment Agency of Abu Dhabi in the United Arab Emirates, hands a green sea turtle to Mona Möller of the Emirates Wildlife Society—World Wildlife Fund, during a research trip. Welch was in the Middle East reporting on a story about the global state of sea turtles that is scheduled to appear in the October 2019 issue of National Geographic magazine. (Photo by Craig Welch)

Welch has also interviewed former President Obama on Midway Island. And he’s floated down a river in the Arctic for eight days.

In his recent trip to South America, Welch and his team camped for 10 days and were up against harsh weather conditions, with winds reaching 85 mph one night and knocking them off their feet.

Even after traveling to numerous countries throughout his career, Welch said he feels like a visitor in the larger world and everything still surprises him. He finds every place captivating. It’s a job where he never stops learning.

“I like getting a chance to see parts of the world that I would have never had any reason to go,” he said. “I love meeting people from cultures that are completely unlike my own.”

When Welch first started working as an environmental journalist, he was interested in how nature works and how ecological systems fit together. But now the clock is ticking. As climate change has become a bigger part of

# CAREER HIGHLIGHTS

Before joining National Geographic, Craig Welch worked at The Seattle Times for more than 14 years, where he and his colleagues won a Pulitzer Prize for Breaking News in 2015. His work also has been featured in Newsweek, The Washington Post and Smithsonian magazine. In 2006, Welch was a fellow at the Nieman Foundation for Journalism at Harvard University. Other honors include:

- Outstanding Beat Reporting, Society of Environmental Journalists, 2017
- Finalist, National Academy of Sciences' Keck Futures Award for Science Communication, 2017
- Alfred I. duPont Columbia University Award, 2014
- Knight-Risser Prize for Western Environmental Journalism, 2014
- National Academy of Sciences' Keck Futures Award for Science Communication, 2014
- Associated Press Media Editors' International Perspectives Award, 2014
- Finalist, National Emmy Award for News and Documentary Coverage, 2014
- Online News Association Award for Explanatory Reporting, 2014
- Society of Environmental Journalists' Kevin Carmody Award for In-Depth Reporting, 2014
- Edward J. Meeman Award for Environmental Reporting, 2014
- Hillman Prize for Web Journalism, 2014
- Honorable Mention, White House Correspondents Association's Edward A. Poe Award, 2014
- Finalist, James Beard Foundation Award for Coverage of Food Politics and Environmental Policy, 2014
- Overseas Press Club Whitman Basso Award for International Environmental Reporting, 2014
- Outstanding Beat Reporting, Large Market, Society of Environmental Journalists, 2010 and 2005

what he does, Welch said it now feels less like a fascinating new problem and more like an emergency. He feels more of an urgency to tell people how fast the world is changing.

A large focus of his environmental reporting is on climate change, which he emphasized is affecting every single thing on the planet in dramatic and subtle ways. Many ecological systems have been fundamentally altered, and Welch said there's no going back.

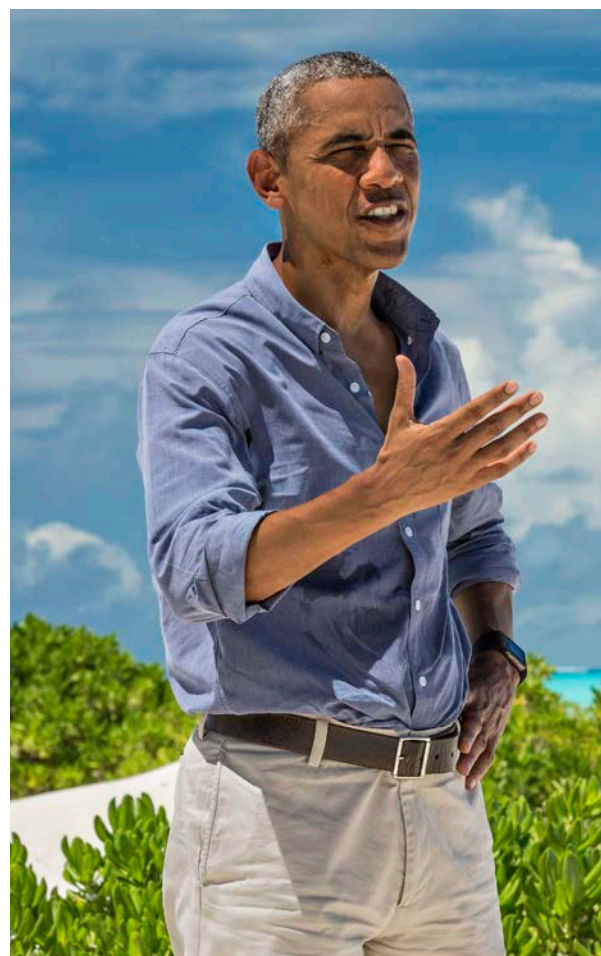
When it comes to helping the environment, Welch's main philosophy is that real science matters. The truth matters. And with that, decisions should be made based on science.

He said it's important for people to do research and learn about these issues from experts and reputable news outlets and not to fall for fake news and outlets that are "manufacturing BS." But it doesn't just stop there. Welch said that after educating yourself, you must use that knowledge to vote wisely.

Interestingly enough, Welch does not consider himself an activist, but a factualist. He said his job is to simply find information and present it in a way that keeps people engaged, so they can make good choices themselves.

"We have to figure out a way to do things that put people first. We can't be trying to make sure that one country is better off than others," Welch said.

For all the adventures he's been on, sights he's seen and turtles he's wrangled, Welch is also a simple man. He loves his family and



Welch interviewed Barack Obama on Midway Island in September 2016 shortly after the president expanded an existing marine reserve in the Pacific Ocean. (Photo by Brian Skerry, National Geographic)



Villagers outside a church explain to Welch how they've managed to protect the rich grasslands in their community of 45,000 in the highlands of Ethiopia — a place where most meadows, thickets, moors and swamps are in steep decay. (Photo by Jeff Kerby, National Geographic)



Ferocious winds bend trees into a snarl amid the world's southernmost forest on Cape Horn Island, off the coast of South America. (Photo by Craig Welch)

## AROUND THE WORLD

Craig Welch's job has taken him all over the globe, and he has reported from all seven continents. Here's all the places he's been:

- The Arctic
- Alaska, United States
- Dutch Harbor (Aleutian Islands)
- Antarctica
- The Antarctic peninsula
- Dominica in the Caribbean
- Costa Rica
- Puerto Williams, Chile
- Isla Hornos, Chile
- Paris, France
- Mediterranean Sea
- Ethiopia and the Highlands, Africa
- Cape Town, South Africa
- Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates
- Chersky, Russia
- Thailand
- Sulawesi Region Indonesia
- Islands near Papua New Guinea
- Midway Island in the Pacific

*“What kind of planet we leave for our kids has an awful lot to do with how we spend the next 10 years.”*

hates being away for so long, especially when it means missing his daughter's soccer games. He enjoys being outdoors and will go hiking, trail running or fly fishing any chance he gets.

For Welch, working at National Geographic is no easy feat. But he loves his job, has a great team and does life-changing work. One could even say that working for National Geographic is the pinnacle of environmental reporting.

When asked about his goals, Welch mentioned spending more time with his family and lowering his running times. But one stood

out the most: “I'd like to do some stories that help make things better.”

Welch explained that his current stories do help but specified that he wanted to produce something that was clearly and undoubtedly helping people make good decisions.

“I would love to write a story and have people hold it up and say ‘Did you see this? This is why we need to get moving and get our congressional representatives to do something about climate change’ and have that actually help change things,” Welch said.

It seems like he wants what every good reporter should want — to change the world.

“What kind of planet we leave for our kids has an awful lot to do with how we spend the next 10 years,” Welch said. “We need to not waste time.”

— Angel Tran is a May 2019 graduate from Wichita, Kansas

See more photos from Welch's travels at [jayhawkjournalist.com](http://jayhawkjournalist.com)



Forrest MacDonald's artwork shows that "we're not using our precious resources to the best of our abilities. We're not protecting the climate."

# Highlighting humanity's role in destroying the environment

Forrest MacDonald hopes his artwork inspires people to reflect on how they can create change

Three decades ago, Forrest MacDonald (j'89) was a new graduate from the William Allen White School of Journalism and Mass Communications. He knew that he wanted to pursue photography for his career. After all, he was a photojournalism major and worked with the University Daily Kansan as a staff photographer and photo editor.

Initially a photojournalist, MacDonald worked with a local newspaper in Florida and flew to Jerusalem to take photographs during

the Gulf War. Afterward, he realized he didn't want to pursue that career route and turned to commercial photography. But his interest for that also faded, and he eventually found himself in the fine arts. MacDonald enjoyed the creative control and found a reason to do this type of work.

Now, he uses his photography and artistic abilities to express his thoughts, especially when it comes to the environment.

"My job, as an artist, is to hold the mirror

up to society for good or bad," he said. "The mirror I'm holding up is showing that we're not using our precious resources to the best of our abilities. We're not protecting the climate."

MacDonald said he has always been interested in preserving the environment. Back in the '80s, he found the idea of polluting nature and wasting resources disturbing. "I still feel that way, and now it's morphed into other concerns like global warming and endangered





Homage is part of a series titled "Homage," 2010

species," MacDonald said.

In his three latest environmental projects, MacDonald takes a closer look at how humanity plays a role in both the creation and destruction of the environment.

**Homage (2010)**

*"Homage is a series of photographs about interdependence and the complexity of relationships between mutually dependent life forms, such as flora and fauna, humans and the environment, all the way down to single-cell bacteria."*  
— Homage artist statement

In this earlier mixed-media work, MacDon-

ald photographed flowers, added other elements and painted over the backgrounds to demonstrate the above and below ground perspective — what is seen and unseen by the human eye.

In some pieces, MacDonald used roots and strings to symbolize the life forms' interconnectedness while cardboard or glass suggests their separation. The whole series represents their dependence on each other and the complex nature of coexisting.

MacDonald said that each photo in Homage has a story, but it's not important for the viewers to know every one. Instead, he wants people to understand the big picture: the fragile balance between two desirable beings and

*"My job, as an artist, is to hold the mirror up to society for good or bad."*

how it can cause the failure of these systems.

The last line of Homage's artist statement drives the point home. "Growth and life — however coerced and deceptive they may be — struggle to survive despite degradation and corruption."

**Recipes for Disaster (2012)**

*"I constructed and photographed miniaturized landscapes of domestic environments exploding that reflect our insatiable appetite for sensationalized images of violence and destruction."* — Recipes for Disaster artist statement

The Mayans predicted that the world would end in 2012. With so much focus on chaos and destruction, MacDonald wanted to create huge cinematic pieces on what he thought the end of the world could look like. The end result was "deconstructed landscapes [that] display the fragile and transitory nature of existence."

Not only does Recipes for Disaster show how terrifying and tumultuous destruction can be, the series makes the point of how humans view it as a grand spectacle of disaster, MacDonald said. Advancements in telecommunications have made it possible for people to watch the tragedies of others around the world right "in the comfort of [their] own homes."

By using various photographic techniques and Photoshop, MacDonald's goal was to create natural and manmade disasters that were frightening and fascinating, yet also artificial with a sense of realism.

"Although these created sets are from my imagination, the nightmare these photographs represent is not far from the images I see on



EF5 is part of a series titled "Recipes for Disaster," 2012.

the nightly news or in the movies," MacDonal said in his artist statement.

**Wired Up (2016)**

*"Seven figurative sculptural characters created using fragments taken from deconstructing broken obsolete technologies and various types of wiring."*  
 –Wired Up artist statement

MacDonald's most recent work stands in stark contrast to his previous two.

Wired Up is a series of seven distinct and quirky characters that seem to have animated personalities of their own. The irony is that MacDonald used broken and wasted pieces of technology, like laptops and phones, to give them new life. Each sculpture even has its own name because MacDonald believed it would give them a human element and "solidify traits they might have."

"I took [items] apart and I kept seeing different components that would make sense to use as a robot," MacDonald said. "I found inspiration in the fragments of those pieces."

One of the messages of this series is that technology has become easier to replace. MacDonald said people are constantly updating their items and want — but don't need — the latest models. Technology is quickly changing; new versions are created while the previous items are thrown out and already forgotten. Although that is the reality of the

industry, MacDonald saw the opportunity to create and celebrate life rather than focus on waste and destruction.

What also made Wired Up unique was the viewer engagement that MacDonald received from it. The series was featured in an outdoor exhibition in Orlando called "Art in Odd Places." He had to create art that could be displayed on a sidewalk but would not block it. He solved the problem by elevating the sculptures on PVC pipes.

To make it look more visually interesting, MacDonald printed off graphic illustrations to cover up the pipes, and provided markers and colored pencils. People passing by were encouraged to color in the illustrations and finish the work that MacDonald started. With Wired Up, the boundary between the artist and the viewer disappeared.

"Sometimes we only show work in the museum and galleries. You lose touch of the everyday person," he said. "I was really happy how many people would actually stop and color or look and comment about the work."

Currently, MacDonald works at the University of South Florida where he teaches subjects such as photography, design and drawing. He would eventually like to become a full-time artist.

MacDonald said that even though his older works were centered on despair, chaos and

destruction, his newest work is more about hope.

Trying to solve huge issues like global warming is going to seem overwhelming and especially daunting at a time when science is being questioned, actions are delayed and corporations have too much control, MacDonald said. He suggests focusing on smaller, plausible actions that can be done.

"If you think about what you could do in your area to help with any environmental situation, any aspect of it — collectively, we could do better," MacDonald said.

*"Collectively, we could do better."*

Just like the last 30 years of his life, MacDonald said he does not have the next 30 years figured out. However, he has enjoyed the freedom and ever-changing nature of creative art, and he hopes to continue it. MacDonald plans on revisiting some of his older environmental pieces and creating new art based on them. As shown in his previous works, MacDonald said his style of art is always evolving and changing based on what he's trying to do.

"Part of me can't 100% know my artwork because I get bored with it," he said. "I have to have this undiscoverable element to it for me



**Above:** LINDA, reclaimed wire sculpture, is one of seven characters in a series titled "Wired Up," 2016. **Right:** SURI, reclaimed material from failed technology sculpture, is from "Wired Up," 2016.

to stay in it."

Through his work, MacDonald said he wanted to make a point about the delicate nature of the environment and how humanity competes for resources, yet also wastes them. MacDonald consciously tries to lessen his impact and encourages others to do the same.

"If people just woke up and started thinking about little changes they could make, that would have a huge impact," MacDonald said. "I'm trying to start the ripple."

—Angel Tran is a May 2019 graduate from  
Wichita, Kansas

See more of MacDonald's artwork at  
[forrestmacdonald.com](http://forrestmacdonald.com)

**Right:** "Wired Up/Colored By Strangers" was part of an exhibition called Art in Odd Places, produced by the Downtown Arts District of Orlando in 2016.



# A story to save the tigers

Katy Yocom raises awareness about decline of tigers with a touching story about family, love and the fragility of life



A subadult tiger at Kanha National Park. The photo was taken from the back of an elephant during Yocom's research trip to India. (Photo by Katy Yocom)

“I can’t write a novel about tigers. For whatever reason, I just thought that’s ridiculous. Who would write novels about tigers?”

These were Katy (Monk) Yocom’s (j’89) thoughts when she was deciding what to write about for her debut novel.

As a Kansas native, she grew up surrounded by animals, including plenty of cats. At the same time, Yocom’s love of writing grew from her love of reading. Before picking a career path, she thought about becoming a zookeeper, veterinarian or marine biologist. In the end, she came back to her true passion, writing,

and pursued journalism at KU.

Later on, Yocom also earned her Master of Fine Arts in Writing degree through Spalding University in Louisville, Kentucky.

Yocom thought her fascination with cats was long gone until a tiger at her local zoo had a litter of cubs. She kept visiting them over the months and witnessed them growing up. They were hilarious, adorable and quirky — she instantly fell in love. This led Yocom to research tigers and she discovered some shocking facts.

“I quickly realized that the story of tigers wasn’t just how amazing and magnificent they are; it was also about how endangered they

are,” Yocom said.

In her research, she found that tigers were an endangered species, with only an estimated 3,900 wild tigers alive today compared with about 100,000 a century ago. Yocom said the reasons for the decline in the tiger population were mostly because of human interactions. Some major issues were encroachment on wild land, poaching tigers for their body parts, and habitat loss.

Yocom knew she had to write a novel and raise awareness for tigers. However, about 50 pages into the book, she didn’t have enough information to continue writing. How could



Yocom with an elephant at Kanha National Park during her research trip to India.

she properly write a novel based in India with tigers when she had never experienced that environment herself?

So she applied for a grant through the Elizabeth George Foundation and was able to spend three weeks in India at three different national parks, which she said was a lifetime highlight.

"I spent time in the backs of Jeeps and on the back of an elephant riding around looking for tigers in the wild, and that was an incredible experience. I was seeing tigers almost every day," Yocom said.

That trip was more than enough fuel for her imagination and after some writing retreats, she was able to complete the manuscript for "Three Ways to Disappear." During this time, Yocom also worked as a full-time staff member in Spalding's MFA in Writing program, where she received support in writing her novel.

Upon completion, Yocom entered her unpublished manuscript in a contest, and it won the Siskiyou Prize for New Environmental Literature. In winning that prize, Yocom also received publication for her book through Ashland Creek Press, which hosted the com-

petition. Ashland Creek is an independent press that emphasizes the environment, ecology and wildlife. Although she went with an untraditional route of publication, Yocom said she was glad to be working with Ashland Creek Press because its mission aligns with her book.

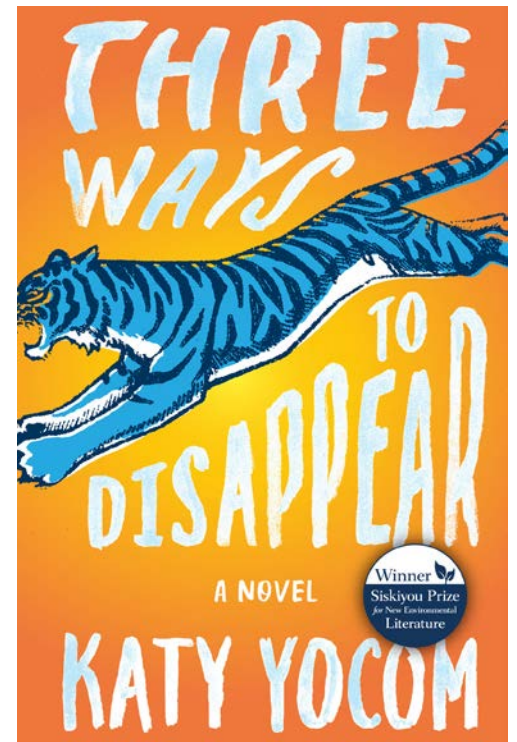
Aside from tigers, her book is also about a family who must overcome a tragedy, a forbidden love affair, and what it's like to live in rural India. Yocom used her experiences in the J-School to bring life to her main character, Sarah, who is a journalist.

In the end, Yocom's goal was to shine light on tigers and their risk of extinction. She wanted to make people care about tigers while simultaneously tell a good story.

"With creative writing, you can't only be aiming to make a point or convince someone of something," Yocom said. "You also have to have a great story. A story that people will want to read and take into their hearts."

"Three Ways to Disappear" is scheduled to be published this summer.

— Angel Tran is a May 2019 graduate from Wichita, Kansas



"Three Ways to Disappear" is available at Amazon and Barnes & Noble.

# Always digging for answers

As a watchdog for USA Today, Alison Young's investigative reporting uncovered dangerous environmental issues



As an investigative reporter for USA Today, Alison Young spent weeks on the road testing soil with a handheld X-ray device in neighborhoods around long-closed lead smelters as part of her Ghost Factories investigation. (Photo courtesy of USA Today)

In the late 1980s, the William Allen White School of Journalism and Mass Communications offered a science writing class every semester. Alison Young (j'88) was one of the few people who signed up for it. According to her, it would usually end up getting canceled. Despite that, Young always knew she would work in that field.

"I love the science of it and it's such an important area to cover — to explain things that impact real peoples' lives," Young said.

More than 30 years later, Young is still doing what she loves. As an investigative reporter for USA Today, her reporting mainly covered

health, environment and consumer issues.

As a watchdog, Young found inspiration for stories in a variety of places. She said that it often comes from reading all sorts of things. Although Young read articles from different news organizations, she also pored over a lot of "what some people might consider to be boring reports." She sorted through inspector general reports from federal agencies or Government Accountability Office reports about the Environmental Protection Agency, and is subscribed to announcements on scientific studies.

Young then took that information and used

journalistic methods to go further or reveal something that's not already known.

In her nine years with USA Today, Young said that her biggest investigative projects on environmental issues are "Ghost Factories" and "Beyond Flint."

"Ghost Factories" was an investigation that examined old lead factories that operated before the EPA and state environmental laws existed. The objective was to determine whether there was still lead contamination in these areas.

Young was required to spend a tremendous amount of time in the field, going to neighbor-



Alison Young  
(Photo courtesy of USA Today)

hoods in several states with an expensive X-ray analyzer to test soil and find out if there was still lead contamination embedded in the sites of former lead smelters. As a result of her team's reporting, several neighborhoods underwent state and federal cleanups.

"Beyond Flint" was an investigation that stemmed from the lead water crisis in Flint, Michigan. Young and her team wanted to figure out if other cities had contaminated water similar to Flint.

Young said there is an outpouring of interest in environmental health investigations. The positive feedback comes from different levels: people who are affected by the issues, elected officials and regulatory agencies who will take action, and everyday people who are just simply interested in the work being done.

"They're grateful to have journalists out there watchdogging and revealing these issues," she said.

However, Young has also received negative feedback from individuals who are not happy about what she exposed, usually from people who are the subjects of the investigations. So, she strived to be fair and accurate in the reporting and made sure that people knew exactly what she was doing.

When it comes to reporting in general, the two most important things for Young are understanding the science and facts and making the information accessible to real people. That's crucial because some of the most vul-

nerable people in the country are subjected to some of the worst environmental health risks, Young said.

Young has worked in the journalism industry for most of her career and after nearly a decade, she no longer works at USA Today. Young recently became the Curtis B. Hurley Chair in Public Affairs Reporting for the Missouri School of Journalism. She will begin her new role on Aug. 1. She was also previously the president of Investigative Reporters and Editors, a nonprofit training organization focused on quality investigative reporting. She is still actively involved with IRE.

Since she left KU, Young said the biggest change in how she does investigative journalism is technology. It has given journalists the ability to find and research any information from their desktop. The digital age of journalism also has allowed anyone working for a large or small news organization to publish information that reaches people around the world.

However, Young said that it has become increasingly challenging to gain access to what should be public information. The federal Freedom of Information Act has become flawed and broken, she said, because of how long it can take to get information from federal agencies.

"Now more than ever, information is important," Young said. For journalists, she said, "it is absolutely imperative that we take the extra care to understand the science and that we break through the noise around environmental issues and report factual information."

Young advises the public to learn about the problems and solutions by reading credible information from reputable news organizations and scientific institutions.

While her job had its ups and downs, Young said that she loved being paid to learn new things every single day. But the best part? She said it was doing something that makes the world a little bit better in some way, whether for an individual or for an entire community.

"That's the highest calling of what we do as journalists," Young said.

— Angel Tran is a May 2019 graduate from Wichita, Kansas

## NEW CAREER PLACES FOCUS ON STUDENTS

Alison Young has always loved teaching and sharing her passion for journalism, so when she was approached with a position to directly influence the next generation of journalists, it was too good to pass up.

Initially, Young had no intention to change jobs, and she had to ask herself early on if she was ready to leave full-time reporting. However, the more she learned about the position, the more excited she became.

The Curtis B. Hurley Chair in Public Affairs Reporting is an endowed chair at the Missouri School of Journalism. In that role, Young will manage the school's Washington, D.C., program. She will organize educational seminars for professional journalists and work with students by teaching, mentoring and developing internship opportunities. She also will organize the annual Hurley Symposium in Public Affairs Reporting.

Young hopes to show student journalists the many different types of opportunities available in the Washington area to cover the news and be strategic communicators. She also wants to use her professional experience to teach students the best practices to do journalistic work.

While it is no longer the focus of her work, Young will still be doing some investigative reporting. She is eager to start her new job on Aug. 1.

"I went places that I didn't think I'd ever work, and it turned out to be some of the greatest experiences ever," Young said. "This is going to be a wonderful experience to be able to give back in ways that I received from so many professors at the University of Kansas."

# Chemicals and corruption

Carey Gillam exposes how corporations place profits ahead of safety with poisonous chemicals in the environment



Carey Gillam met with long-time corn and wheat farmer Mark Nelson in August 2018 to discuss harvest results at one of Nelson's fields in Spring Hill, Kansas.

Carey Gillam (j'85) always knew that she wanted to be a journalist. However, she didn't know what area to specialize in. Gillam was young when the Watergate scandal took place in the early '70s. Soon after, the movie "All the President's Men" came out in 1976, and she quickly became interested in investigative journalism after seeing firsthand the profound impact it had on the nation.

After graduating from the William Allen White School of Journalism and Mass Communications, Gillam worked as a professional journalist for 33 years, including 17 years with Reuters, an international news organization. Before taking on an agricultural beat in 1998, she was a banking and corporate reporter with no business knowledge about food and agriculture. As a result, Gillam spent a lot of time learning and understanding that particular industry.

A major part of her beat was to research various companies that were influential in agriculture. She was especially interested in Monsanto and its multibillion-dollar Roundup herbicide, which played a significant role

*"We have a deeply flawed regulatory system that essentially allows these big, powerful companies to run the show."*

in Gillam's work. She did extensive research and reviewed numerous studies to familiarize herself with the controversy that followed the science involved in this product.

In 2016, she became the research director for U.S. Right to Know, a nonprofit group that researches U.S. food policies and seeks transparency in the country's food system. That same year, she signed a contract with a book publisher to share her stories. In 2017, Gillam published her book, "Whitewash: The Story of a Weed Killer, Cancer, and the Corruption of Science."

"The book is about the big companies spreading chemicals as representative of nature's problems with pesticide-dependent food production," Gillam said. "It's creating

all sorts of environmental hazards as well as health hazards for our population not only here in the U.S. but around the world."

She decided to focus on Roundup because it was the most widely used herbicide in the world, and Monsanto was a powerful agrochemical company. But the bigger picture of her book is how corrupt companies place profit interests ahead of public safety.

Gillam said the book is based on 20 years of preparation and research. "Whitewash" combines FOIA and court documents, scientific studies, government data, interviews and more. She sued the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency twice for not complying with FOIA — and won both times.

Gillam made it clear that the book lays out



the research and facts to show that Roundup is linked to environmental and human health hazards.

As a result of the evidence Gillam writes about in “Whitewash,” Monsanto has faced extreme backlash and criticism. The company has also lost several lawsuits in which people claimed that using Roundup caused their cancers. Currently, there are thousands of lawsuits against Monsanto pending nationwide for similar reasons.

But there is another and equally important message that Gillam wanted people to understand.

“If you get rid of this chemical and this company, you don’t solve the problem,” Gillam said. “We have a deeply flawed regulatory system that essentially allows these big, powerful companies to run the show.”

Gillam said it’s not just one company and one chemical, but a handful of corporations dictating policies that push for putting poisonous chemicals into our environment. She suggested becoming more active and demanding that lawmakers and retailers protect people instead of profit.

The most important thing, Gillam noted, is education and information. In order to deal with this issue, people must first understand it, which is why Gillam said she wrote “Whitewash” and believes it is a great starting point.

Because of her work, Gillam has spoken in multiple countries and all over the United States on pesticide issues. She also shared her research with congressional staffers in Washington, D.C., and testified with seven experts before the European Parliament in Brussels.

“I was the only non-scientist and the only person from the United States. I kept saying ‘Why would they ask me?’” Gillam said. “It was very surreal, fascinating and also a little terrifying.”

Not only has her book received international coverage and acclaim, “Whitewash” also won the 2018 Rachel Carson Environment Book Award from the Society of Environmental Journalists, a gold medal from the Independent Publisher Book Awards and first place for the Thorpe Menn Literary Excellence Award.

However, Gillam has also faced harassment



Carey Gillam spoke to members of the Society of Environmental Journalists after accepting the group’s Rachel Carson Environment Book Award.



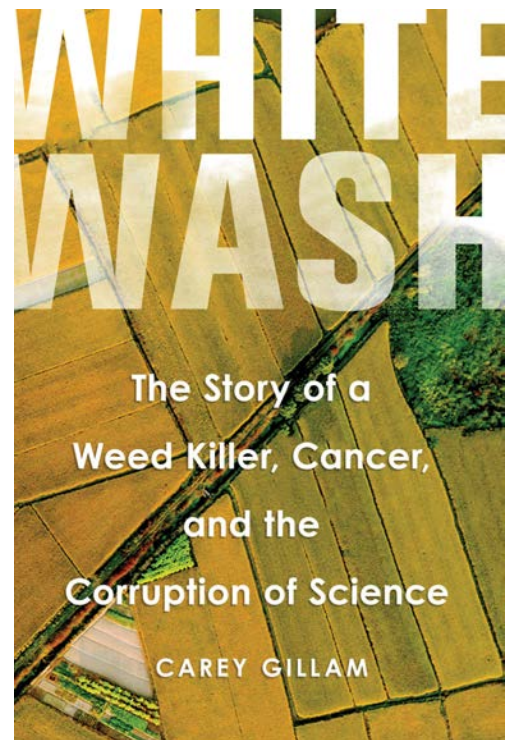
and criticism from powerful companies and their scientists in an attempt to discredit her work. Opponents have loaded up negative reviews for her book on Amazon and shown up to her public appearances to shout Gillam down. Despite that, she still gets positive feedback and messages from people all over the world who share their stories.

“It’s been very rewarding, and I feel honored that people paid attention and gave awards to the book. It also really reinforces the problems we’re creating,” Gillam said.

Nearly four decades after its release, Gillam has seen “All the President’s Men” “a gazillion times” and will still watch it occasionally. It has helped influence her decision to become an investigative journalist and watchdog. Through her research, she has shined light on today’s food and agriculture systems and is working toward a safer future for generations to come.

“All journalists should be described as watchdogs,” Gillam said. “That’s our job to represent the people and go out there, find the truth, and demand transparency from whoever it is we’re covering.”

—Angel Tran is a May 2019 graduate from Wichita, Kansas



“Whitewash: The Story of a Weed Killer, Cancer, and the Corruption of Science” is available on Amazon and Barnes & Noble.

# Covering the Louisiana coast

At KU, Sara Sneath knew she wanted to work to protect the planet and is an environmental reporter

Sara Sneath (j'13) wants to help the planet. So, most days, she rides her bike to work. In fact, she is a huge cyclist and participates in many bike runs and outdoor activities. But that isn't the only way she's preserving the environment. Sneath also has been a reporter for The Times-Picayune Louisiana Coastal Reporting Team and NOLA.com.

After Sneath took an environmental sociology class at the University of Kansas, she became interested in all the different stories that were related to the environment. So, when Sneath graduated with double majors in journalism and sociology, she left KU hoping to get into environmental work and help make the world better.

In her job at NOLA.com, the day-to-day tasks were different and required Sneath to be versatile. Her work included on-field research, reporting, feature writing, educational packages as well as attending government meetings and acting as a watchdog.

However, the best part of her job was going into the smaller Louisiana communities and talking to people about how they're affected by environmental issues. Sneath enjoyed seeing how other people live and would sometimes spend the whole day with them.

"There are communities that can't speak for themselves and therefore, it's important for us as journalists to talk to them and reach out and see how they're impacted by the decisions people who have power make," she said.

Because the Louisiana coast is so diverse, she has had the opportunity to celebrate at a Cambodian New Year festival, attend a potluck with Native Americans and meet people from historic African American communities. Sneath has also spoken with individuals who trap animals for a living or go out on their boats into the Gulf of Mexico for four or five days at a time to fish.

"We find ourselves in these echo chambers where the people that we surround ourselves with are very similar to us," Sneath said. "It's really cool to be able to meet all these differ-



Sara Sneath holds an alligator in a marsh in Jesuit Bend, Louisiana. (Photo by Ted Jackson)

ent people from all walks of life."

Aside from working at the community level, one major project that Sneath worked on was a series called "Saving the Southern Wild," which looked at three Louisiana species — the American alligator, brown pelican and Louisiana black bear — that were all once in danger. Since then, they have recovered under the Endangered Species Act. Sneath chose those three animals for various reasons, but believed they were all iconic symbols of Louisiana.

With the current legislative and administrative changes that could drastically modify the Endangered Species Act, Sneath wanted to see how those alterations would affect species in Louisiana and how the act previously played a role in the species' survival.

In 2017, The Times-Picayune and The New York Times also established a partnership with the purpose to "explore the causes and potentially catastrophic effects of coastal erosion and sea level rise along the Louisiana coast," according to NOLA.com.

"That became a focus for our team, and we

reported on it for almost a year," Sneath said.

More recently, Sneath has started working as an environmental reporter for The New Orleans Advocate, which absorbed The Times-Picayune.

She hopes to learn more skills and diversify the kind of stories she'd like to tell. Aside from writing, Sneath believes that some stories are best told in audio, video or photo form. She is also looking to do another series.

She plans on continuing her environmental work and raising awareness in any way that she can even if it's as simple as riding her bike. But Sneath's biggest advice to everyone as consumers is to be thinking about the environment when it comes to voting or calling state representatives.

"The most important thing to do is to hold those people who are in positions of power accountable because a lot of these issues can only truly be changed or addressed by our government," Sneath said.

—Angel Tran is a May 2019 graduate from Wichita, Kansas

# Buzbee awarded National Citation

Executive editor of The Associated Press is the fourth J-School graduate to receive the prestigious award

In accepting the William Allen White Foundation's National Citation award in April, Sally Buzbee framed her keynote address as more of a pep talk than a speech, encouraging the audience of journalists, students and instructors to innovate, collaborate and remain true to "good, old-fashioned facts."

Buzbee, executive editor and senior vice president of The Associated Press, acknowledged that the news industry continues to face many challenges, but she pointed to three "guideposts" to propel journalists into the future.

News organizations must innovate with technology to report and verify, citing examples of using geo-locations and crowdsourcing during disasters. She also explained how the AP uses data distributions to localize national stories.

"We tell a national story, as we often do. But it doesn't end there. Then we send out local data, so each newspaper or TV station or website can put a spin on the story using data," she said.

She also pointed to ways news organizations can work together — instead of competing against each other — to strengthen their reporting, mentioning the California wildfires as a perfect example where collaboration strengthened the coverage.

"These collaborations are some of the most vital things happening in the news industry," she said. "They're resulting in excellent journalism, and they're helping us all figure out what the future might look like."

Partnering with nonprofits is another innovative collaboration that has emerged recently and has led to powerful investigative journalism, she said.

She acknowledged that journalists are facing unprecedented attacks on their credibility and even their safety, but they must remain steadfast in believing in the "power of good, old-fashioned facts."

"Hold on to the bedrocks of the past that have made journalism strong: the focus on facts, the accuracy, the credibility, the not taking sides part, the training and the processes that our journalists have that make us strong," she said.

Buzbee closed with a challenge to the audience: Take risks and embrace the new. "Be bold and confident, and I think we'll get there."



## ABOUT SALLY BUZBEE

Sally Buzbee was the 69th recipient of the National Citation Award and only the fourth William Allen White School of Journalism and Mass Communications graduate to be selected. The others are Bill Kurtis in 1998, Gerald Seib in 2005 and Bob Dotson in 2015.

Buzbee graduated from the J-School in 1988 and has been with the AP her entire career, working as a reporter in Topeka, Los Angeles and Washington. In 1996, she moved into editing roles and was Middle East regional editor in Cairo and bureau chief in Washington, D.C. She became executive editor in 2017. Based in New York City, she oversees global news operations from journalists in more than 250 locations in 100 countries.

After her speech, Buzbee was awarded the National Citation medallion from William Allen White Foundation Board of Trustees Chairman Rand Mikulecky, who noted that the award also comes with a \$5,000 honorarium, which Buzbee donated to the J-School's student scholarship fund.

# Faculty & Staff Achievements

Here are a few highlights of our faculty's research and recent professional activities



1984 J-School graduate Mark Mears, (from left) Associate Professor Max Utsler and Dean Ann Brill.

**Associate Professor Max Utsler** received the Bengtson Mentoring Award during William Allen White Day on April 11. The award, which was established by 1984 J-School graduate Mark Mears to honor retired Professor Tim Bengtson, recognizes a faculty member who inspires students to reach their full potential.

## **Associate Professor Yvonne Chen**

is the recipient of the 2019 John Katich Award for Creativity. The annual Katich Award is given to a tenure-track or tenured faculty member in the William Allen White School of Journalism and Mass Communications who demonstrates creativity in teaching, research, service or a combination of these areas.



Chen

At KU Medical Center's Third Annual Diversity and Inclusion Symposium on March 26, Associate Professor **Mugur Geana** shared insights from the school's Center for Excellence in Health Communication to Underserved Populations (CEHCUP) and his experience in addressing health literacy, cultural tailoring and digital literacy. Associate Professor Crystal Lumpkins was KUMC's faculty lead for this year's topic: Health Literacy: From Patient to Practitioner.

## **Assistant Professor Teri Finneman**

moderated an opening session of the Kansas Press Association convention in February. The discussion examined the role of journalism in covering government, the impact of fake news rhetoric on the industry, how journalists do their jobs in a state lacking in open records/government transparency, and the role of objectivity in today's journalism. Finneman also taught two sessions on social media engagement and brought four J-School students to the convention.



Associate Professor Jerry Crawford was honored as a 2018 Outstanding Educator by the Mortar Board in December.

The Torch chapter of Mortar Board honored **Associate Professor Jerry Crawford** as a 2018 Outstanding Educator at halftime of the men's basketball game on Dec. 4. Mortar Board is a national college senior honors society that values scholarship, leadership and service.

**Assistant Professor Hong Vu** had a chapter accepted for publication in "Asian Women Leadership: A Cross-National and Cross-Sector Comparison," to be published by Routledge. The chapter, which is titled "Female Leadership in Vietnam: Traditional Gender Norm, Quota and the Media," reviews the history of Vietnam's female leadership and feminism and its current policy in encouraging women to participate in policymaking.

## NEW FACULTY AND STAFF

**Himée Kamatuka** is the recruitment coordinator for the School of Journalism. A first-generation American, Kamatuka was born and raised in Lawrence. She is a William Allen White School of Journalism and Mass Communications alumna who also minored in African-American Studies. As an undergrad, Kamatuka conducted research as KU TRIO McNair Scholar and participated the Multicultural Scholars Program and Black Student Union. Her background includes working with KU TRIO Talent Search, a federal grant program through the Department of Education, educating potential first-generation 6th-12th grade students about the college process. In her role as recruitment coordinator, she is excited to



Kamatuka



Muñoz

meet prospective students, showcase the beautiful campus, and highlight the amazing opportunities for all in the School of Journalism.

**Eddie Muñoz** is academic adviser for the J-School. He grew up in Lawrence and has been a Jayhawk all of his life. He earned a bachelor's degree in history from KU in 2002 and is currently pursuing a master's degree in higher education administration. He started his professional career at KU doing administrative work in the Undergraduate Advising Center, then moved on to a dual administrative and advising role in the School of Engineering. Immediately before coming to the School of Journalism and Mass Communications, he served as the executive assistant to the Vice Provost for Student Affairs.



Associate Professor Peter Bobkowski delivered the Budig Teaching lecture in March.

Associate Professor **Peter Bobkowski** received the 2018-2019 Gretchen and Gene Budig Teaching Professorship of Writing. The Budig professorship recognizes outstanding faculty instruction, and recipients are asked to deliver a formal lecture. Bobkowski presented his lecture, "Telling Stories: How I Learned to Write and Teach Writing," on March

5. Bobkowski also was awarded a Keeler Family Intra-University Professorship for the 2019-2020 academic year. He will spend the fall semester working with researchers at KU's Achievement & Assessment Institute (AAI) and in the Department of Educational Psychology in the School of Education to advance a project that comprehensively

defines data literacy and develops interdisciplinary materials for teaching and assessing data literacy.

**Associate Professor Hyunjin Seo** gave a presentation at Harvard Law School on March 5 on research from her digital inclusion project, which is an effort to help underserved populations access the internet through hands-on digital literacy courses.

**Cal Butcher**, director of Media Crossroads, has been awarded the annual Distinguished Service Award from the Colorado High School Activities Association. Butcher has been a public address announcer for Colorado High School State Championship events in track and field, volleyball, basketball and spirit for the past 23 years. The award was presented at the CHSAA Hall of Fame Banquet & Ceremony in Denver on April 23. Butcher is also the voice of the Kansas track and field and cross country teams and recently announced his 10th Kansas Relays.

# Student Spotlight

Jayhawk Journalists bring home national and regional awards and spread out across the globe for internships

## INVESTIGATIVE REPORTERS AND EDITORS AWARDS



The University Daily Kansan was named a finalist in the Investigative Reporters and Editors Awards in the Student-Small division for a story **Conner Mitchell** wrote about a secret

settlement the university paid to an employee terminated from the School of Architecture and Design.

## ACES: THE SOCIETY FOR EDITING SCHOLARSHIP



**Savanna Smith** won a scholarship from ACES: The Society for Editing, which awards scholarships to students committed to a career in editing. Scholarship winners receive

\$1,500 and aid to attend the ACES national conference. At the conference, Smith won second place in the student division of the headline contest.

## COLLEGE MEDIA BUSINESS AND ADVERTISING MANAGERS AWARDS

Two staffers from the University Daily Kansan/Jayhawk Media Group won awards at the annual convention of the College Media Business and Advertising Managers convention Feb. 28-March 2 in La Jolla, California. Senior **Taylor Moreno** won second place in the best sales representative competition. Senior **Baylee Parsons** won third place in the competition for best student sales or operations manager.

## GRADUATE STUDENT AWARDS



The J-School honored graduate students during Graduate Student Appreciation Week in April. **Tien Lee** (left), Associate Dean For Graduate Studies, presented awards for:

- Most creative research paper title: **Shola Aromona** (second from left)
- Most productive researcher: **John Watson** (front)
- Outstanding GTA: **Jill Hinrich Howell** (third from left)
- Most resilient: **Nyan Lynn** (right)
- Outstanding graduate student: **Shola Aromona**

## OUTSTANDING STUDENT IN LEADERSHIP

Doctoral student **Michelle Keller** received the Outstanding Woman Student in Leadership Award in April from KU's Emily Taylor Center for Women and Gender Equity. The award recognizes a woman student who has demonstrated outstanding leadership skills by taking an active role in campus or community organizations, developing a new project or addressing a current need.



## JAYHAWK IMPACT AWARD WINNERS



Two J-School students were honored in April at the Jayhawk Impact Awards. **Thomas O'Hara** (left) and **Angel Tran** (right) were selected as Tradition of Excellence recipients. The award recognizes students who uphold the prestige and history of the students who came before them and who wish to continue carving a path of distinction for the future.

## SOCIETY OF PROFESSIONAL JOURNALISTS AWARDS

Several J-School students were recognized in the Large (10,000+ students) category in this year's Region 7 Society of Professional Journalists' Mark of Excellence Awards:

- **Lara Korte** won first place for In-Depth Reporting, for a story on a program for students who aged out of the foster-care system.
- **Chandler Boese** won first place for Breaking News Reporting, for coverage of a fire at America's Best Value Inn.
- **Tianna Witmer** won for Feature Writing, for a story about a KU graduate and World War II pilot whose remains were finally found and returned.
- **Hailey Dixon** was a finalist for Sports Writing, for a story about junior college football athletes.
- **Rebekah Lodos** was a finalist for General Column Writing, for a portfolio of three columns on feminist issues.

## GREAT PLAINS JOURNALISM AWARDS

**Chandler Boese** and **Shaun Goodwin** were finalists in the 2019 Great Plains Journalism Awards Contest. The regional contest honors print, online, TV and magazine journalists for outstanding stories, photography and design in Oklahoma, Arkansas, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska, Iowa, North Dakota and South Dakota.

## Kansas Association of Broadcasters Awards



Students picked up their awards during the Kansas Association of Broadcasters awards ceremony at KU in April. From left: Keely McCormick, Warren Sears, Lauren Wolfe, Courtney Gehrke, Malik Jackson and Joshua McQuade.

The following students won awards in the Kansas Association of Broadcasters' Student Awards competition:

- **Courtney Gehrke** and KUJH staff, first place in Complete Newscast
- **Aksinya Kichigina**, first place in Hard News Package
- **Keely McCormick**, second place in Sportscast
- **Jack Nadeau** and **Nick Couzin**, honorable mention in Sports Play-by-Play
- **Keely McCormick** and **Malik Jackson**, honorable mention in Entertainment Program



## KANSAS HIGH SCHOOL JOURNALIST OF THE YEAR RECEIVES J-SCHOOL SCHOLARSHIP

**Nicole-Marie Konopelko**, senior from Pittsburg High School, received a plaque March 6 from Eric Thomas, Kansas Scholastic Press Association executive director, for being named Kansas Student Journalist of the Year. Konopelko, who is editor-in-chief of her high school paper, *The Booster Redux*, also was runner-up in the Journalism Education Association's contest for national high school journalist of the year. She is the recipient of the J-School's Kaiser Scholarship, which is a full scholarship to attend the J-School starting this fall.

# Who, What & Where

Find out what your J-School classmates are doing now.

Let us know what you've been up to by emailing your updates to [jschool@ku.edu](mailto:jschool@ku.edu).

## 1940s

**Margery Stubbs Handy** (j'47) and Russell L. Handy Jr. live in Sun City Center, Florida, where she writes poetry and plays tennis three times a week.

## 1970s

**Judith Diebolt** (j'70) is on the board of trustees of The Helm, a nonprofit organization at the John A. and Marlene L. Boll Life Center in Grosse Pointe Farms, Michigan. She's a retired reporter and editor at the Detroit Free Press and The Detroit News.

**Carla Ernst** (j'73) wrote "Life Without Pockets: My Long Journey into Womanhood," which was published in 2018 by Henschel HAUS Publishing. She owns CarlaAnne Communications in Wauwatosa, Wisconsin.

**Doug Barrington** (j'78) co-owns Team Barrington/Realty Professionals in Topeka, Kansas.

**Timothy McCarthy** (j'79) a judge on the 10th District Court in Olathe, Kansas, received the Distinguished Public Service Award from United Community Services of Johnson County for his work on Veterans Treatment Court. He lives in Overland Park, Kansas, with **Kay Small McCarthy** (c'81, l'87) who owns a law firm.

## 1980s

**Barbara Kinney** (j'80) in November released a new book, "#StillWithHer: Hillary Rodham Clinton and the Moments That Sparked a Movement," which was published by Press Syndication Group. Kinney was the official White House photographer during Bill Clinton's presidency and covered Hillary Clinton's 2016 presidential campaign.

**Jeff Kiouss** (j'80) is a freelance audio technician who works primarily for FOX Sports but has freelanced for ESPN, CBS and other regional networks. He worked The Olympics in 1996 in Atlanta, four World

## WOMAN ENTREPRENEUR OF THE YEAR



**Patti Regan** (j'87), leader of the Regan Group and CEO of TRG Fulfillment, was awarded Woman Entrepreneur of the Year at the Los Angeles Lakers game on Jan. 29. Patti manages direct client relationships while also positioning TRG as a partner for other marketing agencies. Under her leadership, the Regan Group is now one of the top 50 promotions agencies in North America and has won multiple awards for its innovative campaigns.

Series, college football, basketball, soccer, tennis and various other sports.

**Rick Zuroweste** (j'82) wrote "Christmas Comes to Prairie Dog Village," a children's book that was published in December. He owns Zuroweste Marketing Consulting in Lewisville, Texas.

**Darryll L. Fortune** (j'83) is principal consultant of SmallFortune Public Relations

& Marketing, LLC, in Milwaukee. Fortune hosts a talk radio show, "A Brand New You," a self-help program focused on taking positive actions to overcome barriers in life. He also co-owns FortuNuts ([www.fortunuts.net](http://www.fortunuts.net)), a packaged nuts business with his wife, Melanie Fortune, also a KU alumna.

**Kathryn Myers** (j'85, l'91, g'05) and **John Hampton** (c'92) own The Black Stag, a brewery and restaurant in Lawrence.

**Phil Wilke** (c'88, j'92) was named general manager of North State Public Radio, the NPR affiliate based at Chico University in Chico, California. Previously he had been development director at KRWG Public Media in Las Cruces, New Mexico, and media manager at Kansas Public Radio in Lawrence.

**Mary Padilla** (j'88) manages plant communications at General Motors in Kansas City.

## 1990s

**Gene King** (j'90, j'01) is director of public relations and thought leadership at Ally Financial based in Charlotte, North Carolina. He completed his accreditation in public relations in 2015.

**Derek Schmidt** (j'90, l'16) in November was elected to a third term as Kansas attorney general, making him the second-longest serving attorney general in state history.

**Monica (Hayde) Schreiber** (j'90) has worked for the last eight years as a marketing and business development manager for international law firm Skadden, Arps, in the firm's Palo Alto, California, office. After graduation, she worked for local newspapers in and around Palo Alto, then graduated from law school in 2000 from the University of California, Berkeley. She lives in Belmont, California, with husband, Matt, and two teenage daughters. She writes restaurant reviews for the Palo Alto Weekly and freelance articles for Silicon Valley magazine.



**Taiju Takahashi** (j'91) joined WJTV in Jackson, Mississippi, as news director in December. For the past two years, he was the assistant news director at KGW in Portland, Oregon.

**Malissa Courson Nesmith** (j'92) is vice president of marketing and business development at Lee Aerospace in Wichita.

**Scott Stucky** (c'92, j'92) lives in Atlanta, where he's vice president and news director at Fox 5 Atlanta/WAGA-TV.

**Sara Beane** (j'93) has accepted a job as marketing/content writer for U Inc., in Overland Park, Kansas.

**Katherine Manweiler** (j'93) lives in Wichita, Kansas, where she's self-employed as a copywriter and marketer.

**Marlene Dearing Neill** (j'94) has been promoted to associate professor and graduate program director at Baylor University in the Department of Journalism, Public Relations & New Media.

**Jennifer Miller Pesanelli** (j'93, c'94) lives in Rockville, Maryland, where she's executive officer at the Biophysical Society.

**Hale Sheppard** (j'93) is a partner in the Tax Dispute Section and Chair of the International



Tax Section of the law firm of Chamberlain Hrdlicka in Atlanta, Georgia. He published 13 articles in major tax journals, including the Journal of Taxation, Journal of International Taxation, International Tax Journal, Journal of Tax Practice & Procedure, Taxes – The Tax Magazine, and Journal of Real Estate Taxation. In addition, he was inducted as a Fellow in the American College of Tax Counsel. He also was invited to present in 2018 at the Southern Federal Tax Institute, Tennessee Federal Tax Conference, Fraud and Forensic Accounting Conference, Georgia Estate Planning Conference, and American Institute of Federal Taxation.

**Josh Whetzel** (j'94) in November received Labette Community College's William and Allene Guthrie Van Meter Outstanding Alumni Achievement Award. He's in his 19th year as radio and TV Voice of the Rochester Red Wings, the Triple-A affiliate of the Minnesota

## KU WOMEN'S HALL OF FAME INDUCTEE



**Stephanie K. Blackwood** (j'74) was inducted in April into the University of Kansas Women's Hall of Fame, which is sponsored by the Emily Taylor Center for Women and Gender Equity. Blackwood, director of major gifts for the Ms. Women's Foundation, has advocated for women's advancement and LGBTQ inclusion in the fields of innovative marketing, development and communications.

(Photo courtesy of Kimberly Seifert Photography, KU Women's Hall of Fame 2019)

Twins.

**Neil Getzlow** (j'95) has started a new company, Glow Relationships + Communications in Overland Park, Kansas. He was a communications manager for McDonald's for more than 13 years.

**Erin Curtis-Dierks** (j'97) and **Amy Nouri** (j'10) have joined alum **Katie Hollar Barnard** (j'03) at her legal marketing agency, Firesign in Prairie Village, Kansas. Curtis-Dierks is the marketing project manager, and Nouri is the vice president of public relations and programming for the agency.

**Kelly (Kepler) Dispennette** (j'98) is managing director, corporate development, for International Speedway Corporation with headquarters in Daytona Beach, Florida.

## 2000s

**Nicholas Bartkoski** (j'00, c'01, g'04) is an assistant professor of business at Southwestern College in Winfield, Kansas. He and his wife, Jennifer, make their home in Wichita with their sons, Thomas and Leo.

**Megan Brouillette Dunn** (j'00) is an enterprise sales manager at Comcast Business. She and her husband, Jeremy, live in Denver.

**Krista Tatschl Eyler's** (j'00) musical, "Overture," of which she is the composer, co-book writer and lead actress, won entry into the 2019 New York Musical Festival and was in the top 10 of all selections globally. The musical is a work of historical fiction about the 1953 season of the Kansas City Philharmonic and premiered at the New York Music Festival in July 2019.

**Bill Woodard** (j'00) is a media relations specialist at Stormont-Vail Healthcare in Topeka, Kansas.

**Autumn Bishop** (j'03, j'19) is social media and digital communications specialist for Lawrence Memorial Hospital. She recently finished her master's degree in digital content strategy from the J-School.

**Kristi Henderson** (j'03, j'14) is chief of staff and communications for the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences at KU.

**Leita Schultes Walker** (j'03, c'03, l'06) is a litigator in Ballard Spahr's media and entertainment law group. She lives in Minneapolis.

**Katie Briscoe** (j'05) has been promoted to president at MMYG Global.

**William Cross** (j'05, l'11) is an associate at Lathrop Gage in Kansas City. He specializes in

labor and employment law.

**Ryan Greene** (j'05) is director of social media and content at Top Rank Boxing. He previously was director of Social Strategy-Sports and Entertainment Brands at MGM Resorts International.

**Derek Klaus** (j'06) directs communications at Visit KC.

**Malinda Osborne Larkin** (j'06) was promoted to senior news editor of the Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association.

**Morgan Wallace Crane** (j'07, l'12) is senior counsel for Lyft Inc. in San Francisco, California.

**Jonathan Kealing** (j'07) is the chief network officer at Institute for Nonprofit News in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

**Chris Pumpelly** (c'07, j'07) lives in Wichita, where he directs operations at Bodhala.

**Kimberly Wallace Carlson** (j'08) is director of engagement at the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation in Kansas City.

**Christopher Nelson** (j'09, l'12) is an associate at Lathrop Gage in Overland Park, Kansas. He's part of the firm's business litigation team.

## 2010s

**Stephen Montemayor** (j'10) is a reporter

on the politics and government team at the Minneapolis Star Tribune, where he previously covered federal courts and law enforcement.

**Brenna Long Malmberg** (j'11, c'11) manages content marketing at Punkpost, a greeting card company. She resides in San Diego, California.

**Jessica Nelson Palm** (j'11) has been promoted to vice president, lead executive, at TeamKC: Life+Talent at the Kansas City Area Development Council.

**Isaiah Cardona** (j'12) is art director at Intouch Solutions, a full service agency in Overland Park, Kansas.

**Devinee Fitzgerald** (j'12) works at Yelp, where she's a senior account executive.

**Andrew Vaupel** (j'12, b'12) is associate editor of the Kansas City Business Journal.

**Brian "Fraze" Frazier Wright** (j'12) is a musician and performer in Chicago, Illinois. He's also vice president of the Green Pet Shop, an eco-friendly pet supply company.

**Jessica Bjorgaard Crozier** (j'13) directs public relations and social media at InQuest Marketing in Kansas City.

**Whitney Antwine** (j'14) is the paid media manager for Jubilant Digital Marketing in Overland Park, Kansas.

**Ashleigh Lee** (j'14) is an internal communications associate at Garmin in Olathe, Kansas.

**Nikki Wentling** (j'14) has been promoted to national reporter at Stars and Stripes in Washington, D.C.

**Hannah Wise** (j'14) has accepted a position at The New York Times. She also was named to Editor & Publisher's "25 under 35" list of young newspaper professionals moving the industry forward by showcasing a wide range of skills.

**Lydia Young** (c'14, j'14) is a social media specialist at Hallmark Cards in Kansas City.

**Hannah Barling** (j'15) is social media specialist for the Naveen Jindal School of Management at the University of Texas at Dallas.

**Laura Fagen** (j'15, c'15, g'18, g'18) lives in Minneapolis, Minnesota, where she's a digital communications specialist at Hennepin Theatre Trust.

**Derek Skillett** (j'15) is a night copy editor at the Lawrence Journal-World.

**Victoria Kirk** (j'15) lives in Los Angeles, where she's a proposal specialist at Chrome River Technologies.

**Lauren Sati Rich** (j'15, a'15) is a merchandising artist at Gear for Sports in Lenexa, Kansas.

**Jennifer Salva** (j'15) has been named a Law School Student of the Year by National Jurist magazine. Salva is attending Washburn University School of Law in Topeka.

## DOLE HUMANITARIAN AWARD RECIPIENT

**Shelly London** (j'74) was named the 2019 recipient of the Dole Humanitarian Award. The award, from the KU Department of Special Education in collaboration with the Dole Institute of Politics, honors individuals who have had a direct effect on parents and families. London has led national initiatives to support families of individuals with learning and attention issues, and she helped launch Understood.org.



**Lauren Armendariz** (j'16) is the digital marketing manager for First Hawaiian Bank in Honolulu.

**Hank Cavagnaro** (j'16) has accepted a position as a multimedia journalist for KVUE in Austin, Texas. He also won an award from the Missouri Broadcasters Association for Best News Series.

**Kelly Cordingley** (j'16) is the marketing and content manager at Travel Mindset in Chicago, Illinois.

**Vicky Diaz-Camacho** (j'16) has joined KCPT's FlatlandKC as a community reporter.

**Melissa Gall** (j'16) has been promoted to senior account executive at Parris Communications in Kansas City, Missouri.

**Margaret Hair** (j'16) is the director of communications at the KU School of Law.

**Emma Hogg** (j'16) is a reporter for KMOV in St. Louis. She previously was a reporter for KWQC News in Davenport, Iowa.

**Allison Kite** (j'16) is the City Hall reporter for the Kansas City Star.

**Molly Norburg** (j'16, c'16) is an advance associate for the Office of the Mayor in Chicago, Illinois.

**Ally Northrup** (j'16) is a marketing coordinator for Advance Auto Parts.

**Abby Ogden** (j'16) is a project manager at Barkley, a marketing and advertising agency in Kansas City.

**Cole Anneberg** (j'17) is a marketing coordinator for Hawes Group in Vancouver, Washington.

**Nathan Bachynski** (j'17) coordinates digital marketing at Allebach Communications in Souderton, Pennsylvania.

**Mary Kate Baker** (j'17) is a field representative for Royal Caribbean Cruise Lines in Boston.

**Ryan Brinker** (j'17) is the public information officer for the Kansas Department of Commerce.

**Kelly Davis** (j'17) is social media specialist at Rally House.

**Maddie Irelan** (j'17) is a producer at Tic Toc by Bloomberg in New York City.

**Amie Just** (j'17) accepted a position to cover the Saints for the Times-Picayune/New Orleans Advocate. She previously covered Louisiana State University football and basketball for NOLA.com in New Orleans.

**Marissa Khalil** (j'17) is a production

## HOD HUMISTON AWARD



**Brian Hanni** (j'02), Voice of the Jayhawks, received the 2019 Hod Humiston Award for Sports Broadcasting from the Kansas

Association of Broadcasters (KAB).

The award honors an individual who has made significant contributions to the field of sports broadcasting as well as work in the community. Hanni was a sports director at KLWN, did play by play for Texas Tech baseball and basketball and has been heavily involved in several charities in Lawrence during his nearly 20-year career. Hanni was the first recipient of the award who previously earned a KAB Scholarship while attending KU (2000 and 2001).

assistant for B17 Entertainment in Los Angeles.

**Rebeka Luttinger** (j'17) lives in Dallas, Texas, where she's a communications associate at Temple Emanu-El.

**Candace Miller** (j'17) lives in Kansas City where she's a consulting analyst at Cerner.

**Madelyne Moloney** (j'17) is a public relations associate for Guaranteed Rate in Chicago, Illinois.

**Michael O'Brien** (j'17) is the marketing and public relations manager at Saint Luke's Health System in Kansas City, Missouri.

**Abby Stuke** (j'17) is the director of events at the Lenexa Chamber of Commerce in Lenexa, Kansas.

**Meg Talbott** (j'17) manages accounts at Quest Diagnostics in Lenexa, Kansas.

**Alison Peterson Tyler** (j'17) resides in Denver, where she coordinates social media for Red Robin.

**Autumn Bishop** (j'03, j'18) was promoted to marketing communications manager for LMH Health.

**Chandler Boese** (j'18) is a copy editor at the Columbus (Ohio) Dispatch.

**Caroline Burkard** (j'18) is a multimedia journalist at WECT in Wilmington, North Carolina.

**Madison Coker** (j'18) has been promoted to communications project manager at Sprint in Kansas City.

**Nick Couzin** (j'18) has joined Fox affiliate KVRR in Fargo, North Dakota, as weekend sports anchor/reporter.

**McKenzi Davis** (j'18) is a multimedia journalist at KSNT in Topeka, Kansas.

**Vanessa Gonzales** (j'18) is an associate account executive for The Marketing Store.

**Danya Issawi** (j'18) is a news assistant at The New York Times.

**Shane Jackson** (j'18) is a sports reporter at the Lawrence Journal-World.

**Kara Kahn** (j'18) is an account associate at Kemper & Company in Kansas City, Missouri.

**Ilana Karp** (j'18) is a web editor/social video producer at Right This Minute in Phoenix.

**Kathleen Keleher** (j'18) is a news reporter for the News-Press & Gazette Company in Idaho Falls, Idaho.

**Sara Kruger** (j'18) is assistant director, philanthropic resources, at MD Anderson Cancer Center.

**Jackson Kurtz** (j'18) is a multimedia journalist at WJCL-TV in Savannah, Georgia.

**Ryan Miller** (j'18) is the media coordinator for the Nuclear Waste Program at the Washington State Department of Ecology.

**Anna Pankiewicz** (j'18) is an account executive at Octagon in Kansas City, Missouri.

**Hanna Ritland** (j'18) is a large customer sales associate at Google in Chicago.

**Jayla Scruggs** (j'18) is a digital interactive specialist at Capitol Federal.

**Lexanna Sims** (j'18) is a producer at WVTV-TV in Columbus, Georgia.

**Grant Stephens** (j'18) is a multimedia journalist at WIBW in Topeka, Kansas.

**Kailin Stinson** (j'18) is a website marketer with Thruline Marketing in Lenexa, Kansas.

**Ellis Wiltsey** (j'18) is a multimedia journalist at KOLN in Lincoln, Nebraska.

**Jordan Wolf** (j'18) is an editorial producer at MiLB.com.

# Transcending life's tragedies

After enduring the effects and aftershocks of gun violence three times, Todd Allen Smith shares his story of survival

Few people can say they have experienced a shooting, and even fewer can say that they have experienced two shootings.

But Todd Allen Smith experienced —and survived — two shootings.

And in between those horrific events, a close friend of his was murdered.

Smith, who graduated in 2002 from KU with his master's in journalism, always knew that he wanted to become a writer. He enjoyed reading and hoped to write fictional books. Yet given the tragedies that have occurred in his life, Smith said he couldn't write any other book until he shared his own story first.

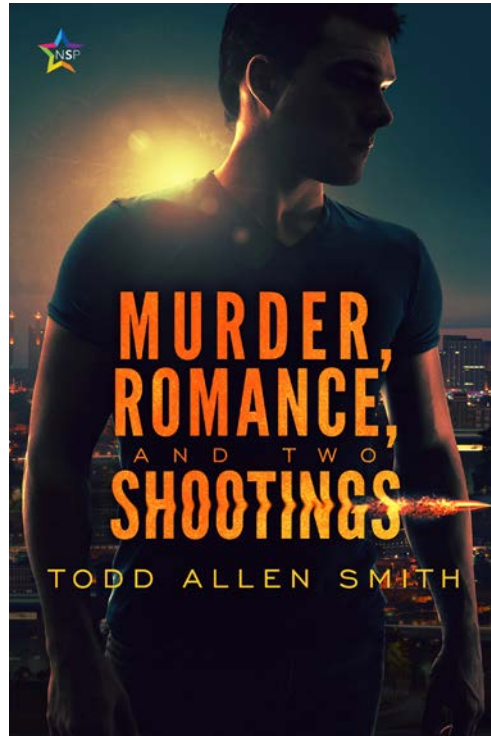
"If I was to write a book, I had to write this book first," Smith said. "It's three major points of my life that changed my life forever. I couldn't just ignore what happened to me."

As a result, "Murder, Romance, and Two Shootings" was published in 2018. He said the book accurately recounts his personal experiences, but he did fictionalize minor details, such as names and places. In this memoir, Smith recounted details of both shootings, the death of his friend and eventually finding the love of his life.

"All those tragedies changed my life. Each one [left] me a little different each time," Smith said.

The first shooting happened when Smith was just out of college in the summer of 1997. Smith traveled to the East Coast looking for jobs. He was out walking one evening to get a Slurpee from a 7-Eleven when two men attempted to rob him. Smith thought he could escape, but ended up with a bullet lodged in his leg.

Four years later, one of Smith's closest friends was shot and killed in what Smith called a "gay bashing" in Kansas City, Missouri. The crime remains unsolved to this day. The killing took an emotional toll on Smith, who also was in a serious relationship at the time that "couldn't survive the tragedy because it was just too much."



"Murder, Romance, and Two Shootings" is available on Amazon and Barnes & Noble.

Then the second shooting came in 2008. But this time, Smith wasn't alone.

As a St. Louis Suburban Journals reporter, he was covering a Kirkwood City Council meeting on Feb. 7, 2008. After looking through the agenda, Smith thought it was going to be like any ordinary meeting until Charles "Cookie" Thornton opened fire. Smith was shot in the hand.

Six people died in that tragedy, including the Kirkwood mayor. Smith was the only person shot who survived.

"The first [shooting] was mentally a lot. It's sort of unexpected to be shot like that," Smith said. "And the second time takes a lot out of you because you have a hard time trusting people. You're never completely the same."

The romance and recovery aspects, however, are just as crucial to Smith's story as the tragedies that preceded it.



Todd Allen Smith

Physical recovery was extensive for both shootings, but he was determined to walk and use his hand again. "I'm not going to let somebody take that away from me. I just had the drive to make it work again. I just didn't want to go through life without a leg or hand," Smith said.

Smith also had the love and support of his then-boyfriend, David Kaplan. The second shooting tested their relationship, but it eventually brought them closer together. When Smith was recovering in the hospital after the second shooting, he proposed to Kaplan. Later, they adopted a son who turned 4 earlier this year.

Smith and his husband have been traveling across Europe this past spring with their son. Kaplan has been doing sabbatical work in Germany, so Smith took the opportunity to document their international adventures on his blog, *That Away Dad*.

Excited to share this new and more optimistic chapter of his life, Smith also plans to write a book based on his family's European experiences with the release planned for spring of 2020.

Even though Smith's life was drastically changed after these tragedies, he doesn't let them negatively affect his life. These events have shaped Smith into the person he is today, and he tries to focus on the positives in moving forward.

"I turned to family and friends that helped me through each time. The book is about the importance of having a relationship with loving people and how they can help you through struggles in your life," Smith said.

—Angel Tran is a May 2019 graduate from Wichita, Kansas

# Making assists for team KU

**K**evin and Adrian (Mitchell) Newell are no strangers to philanthropy.

Kevin (j'79) has served on numerous non-profit boards, including being a founding member of the Ronald McDonald House near Loyola University Medical Center in Chicago. Adrian (c'80) is working with 11 past members of the Women's Professional Basketball League (WBL), serving as secretary of a non-profit organization, Legends of the Ball Inc., which showcases the role the league played in the advancement of women's professional basketball.

In 2014, the Newells honored Kevin's mother by creating the Delores A. Newell Scholarship for KU journalism students. This year, the Newells decided to give back to KU again by providing scholarship opportunities for high school students to attend the Jayhawk Media Workshop, a five-day summer camp that was held at the William Allen White School of Journalism and Mass Communications in June.

Through hands-on activities, high school students have fun learning to produce all types of media: news publications, video, photography, website and yearbook — all taught by experienced J-School and high school journalism instructors. Teens stay in the KU residence



Adrian, Delores and Kevin Newell

halls and participate in evening social activities. Workshop topics include in-depth writing, photojournalism, leadership, publication design and multimedia.

Previous Jayhawk Media Workshop attendees said what they enjoyed most about the camp was learning from professionals, getting the chance to be real reporters, having the freedom to be creative, and meeting new people. The Newells' support, given during the One Day One KU campaign on Feb. 20, helped

students who have an interest in media forge their path to a journalism career and attend the camp when they might not otherwise have been able to do so.

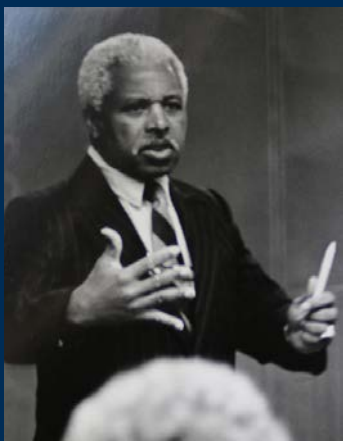
While at KU, Kevin and Adrian Newell were star athletes. Kevin was an All-American track athlete and team captain who was a member of the 1977 NCAA Men's Indoor national champion mile relay team. Adrian played basketball, breaking records side by side with Lynette Woodard. Second all-time in the record books in both scoring and rebounds, Adrian is only the fourth woman in KU basketball history to have her jersey retired (2018).

They were successful after KU as well. Kevin rose to become the executive vice president and global chief brand and strategy officer for McDonald's before retiring a few years ago. Adrian was drafted by the Chicago Hustle of the WBL in 1979 and named an All-Star in 1980.

The Newells give back to open doors for young people to get a top-quality education.

"It's all about exposure," Kevin said. "My experience at KU opened my eyes to a world of possibilities. I just want to do my small part to help create opportunities for other wide-eyed kids to have that same KU experience."

## IN MEMORIAM



**Samuel Adams**, who was an associate professor at the William Allen White School of Journalism and Mass Communications from 1973 to 1999, died on April 17, 2019, at the age of 93.

Adams was an award-winning journalist who covered many stories of the civil rights movement. He was nominated for a Pulitzer Prize for a series of articles that chronicled his trek through 12 southern states after legislation outlawed segregation in 1964. Adams traveled with his wife, Elenora, to check compliance of the new laws. A year later, he received another Pulitzer nomination for his reporting on the mishandling of federal funds at Gibbs Junior College in St. Petersburg, Florida.

He worked at the Atlanta Daily World, the Des

Moines Register, and the St. Petersburg Times and taught at the University of South Florida, University of Wisconsin, University of Kansas, Hampton Institute and University of the Virgin Islands.

Adams had bachelor's degrees in English and fine arts from West Virginia State College, a bachelor degree in journalism from Wayne State University, and a master's degree in journalism from the University of Minnesota.

At KU, he founded the Ida B. Wells Award, presented annually by the National Association of Black Journalists to honor those who advance, hire and promote minorities in news media. Adams received the award in 2002 and the NABJ Lifetime Achievement Award in 1997.

## A NEW DOOR FOR THE NEXT GENERATION

Stauffer-Flint Hall is one of the most iconic buildings on Mount Oread. Built in 1898, it was originally created as a mechanical building and never intended to hold classrooms. A single existing copy of the hardbound book, “The Building of the University of Kansas,” which had been a 1931 architecture graduate



Marlys Shulda

thesis written by J. Howard Compton (c’31), tells the eloquent tale of Stauffer-Flint Hall’s beginnings:

*The machine shops had been under the supervision of Professor Blake of the Physics Department.*

*After the shops were destroyed by fire in 1898, Root & Siemens (KC architects) were employed ... & according to Regents’ records were to receive as their fee three percent of the total cost of the building.*

*The walls were of rock face ashlar stone quarried on Mount Oread and cost \$21,000. The roof was of red tile ... & the building two stories high. The first floor contained hydraulic and testing laboratories, lathe, forge, and casting rooms, and the university light and power plant; while on the second floor were mechanical engineering laboratories and wood turning rooms.*

*Mr. George A. Fowler (donated) \$18,000, but the building cost more than was anticipated. Out of gratitude for his generosity, the University officials ask Mr. Fowler to deliver a commencement address, to which he replied, “How much money do you need to finish the building?” He was informed that \$3,000 was needed. The money was received, but the address never made.*

*The east end of the second story of Fowler Shops was destroyed by fire on May 9, 1918. The fire caused such excitement, for it was thought for a while to be the work of a German spy. A metal roof replaced the tile roof & destroyed some of the beauty of the building; never-the-less it is still one of the best pieces of architecture on campus.*

The building was remodeled in the early 1950s to permanently house the nationally accredited School of Journalism. It was named Flint Hall in 1952 to honor Leon Flint, who



A new front door for Stauffer-Flint Hall and plaza facing Jayhawk Boulevard will be unveiled in spring 2020.

was chairman of the KU Department of Journalism from 1916 to 1941. In 1982, Oscar Stauffer donated \$1 million to again remodel the interior, and the building was renamed Stauffer-Flint Hall in 1983.

Over the years the building has been lovingly cared for by deans, faculty and students. Although the familiar stones and windows maintain their beautiful, elegant and timeless look, the inside hasn’t had a facelift since 1982. While the iconic building has long been a beacon for aspiring journalists, it’s been missing a front door that matches the energy, enthusiasm and talent within its walls.

That’s about to change. A front door that faces Jayhawk Boulevard, including digital

technology and special lighting, will showcase the 24/7 nature of media externally, and a new plaza will be constructed to light the way for all who walk or drive by this highly visible intersection.

As we continue to build on the timeless core values in our curriculum, we know students and professionals are looking for an environment that also reflects the dynamic and digital world of today’s media. Once inside the doors, the remodeled first floor will reflect the creative and dedicated work that has long been the hallmark of Jayhawk Journalists.

We are creating a new state-of-the-art broadcast studio, a world-class newsroom, multi-use classrooms and laboratories, a student strategy center, and small flex-space meeting rooms.

Thanks to the generosity of donors and the University of Kansas, construction has already begun. Please help us write the next chapter in the William Allen White School of Journalism and Mass Communications’ story by considering a gift to support this exciting renovation.

— Marlys Shulda is development director for the School of Journalism through KU Endowment.

**Please support the J-School by donating to the J-School remodeling project or scholarships. Donate online at [rockcha.lk/jschool-donate](http://rockcha.lk/jschool-donate), use the envelope provided in this issue, or contact Marlys Shulda at [mshulda@kuendowment.org](mailto:mshulda@kuendowment.org) or 785-832-7352.**

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