Hall of Fame to induct six on June 4

We congratulate the following six journalists who will be honored and inducted into the 2016 Omaha Press Club Journalists of Excellence Hall of Fame. Each has made notable contributions to journalism in the Omaha area: Jim Flowers, Frank Partsch, John Prescott, Jim Roberts, Dr. Marguerita Washington and Dr. Eileen Wirth.

More information about the honorees on page 2.
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OPC Hall of Fame will induct six on June 4

Jim Flowers, KETV, WOWT, KMTV

Jim Flowers has reported live while chasing both the second largest tornado on record (in Hallam, Neb.) and the second largest hailstone in the world (Aurora, Neb.). He’s been reporting weather for 36 years, starting in 1979 as chief meteorologist at WOLV-TV in Columbia, S.C. One of his early reporting challenges in South Carolina was Hurricane David. In 1982, he joined KETV in Omaha, where he created the country’s first “Storm Team” concept and co-produced a half-hour special on severe weather, “When the Siren Sounds.” KETV was one of the country’s first stations to install Doppler radar during his tenure. Ten years later, he became chief meteorologist for WOWT. He installed the first radar tracking graphics system in Omaha as well as the first automated severe weather crawl system. The award-winning meteorologist created a winter forecast methodology and co-authored numerous severe weather brochures, including “Surviving the Storm” and “Weathering Winter.” Since 2013, Flowers has been KMTV chief meteorologist.

Frank Partsch, Omaha World-Herald

Francis L. “Frank” Partsch is the retired editorial page editor of The Omaha World-Herald (1982-2003). He joined the newspaper in 1976 as chief of its state capital bureau in Lincoln. Partsch had spent the previous four years as editor of the Sidney (Neb.) Telegraph. Before then, he was in Chicago as a staff reporter in The Wall Street Journal’s Midwest Bureau. He served on the board of directors and edited the quarterly journal for the National Conference of Editorial Writers (now the Association of Opinion Journalists). In 2007, he was inducted into the Nebraska Journalism Hall of Fame and in 2008 received a dean’s award from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln College of Journalism and Mass Communications (formerly the N.U. School of Journalism). From 2005 until early 2008, he was part-time assistant to The World-Herald publisher, participating in the development of a professional enrichment program for undergraduates in partnership with the UNL College of Journalism and Mass Communications.

Marguerita LeEtta Washington (posthumous), Omaha Star

Dr. Marguerita Washington’s interest in education took her to the Omaha Public School System as a resource teacher in special education. In 1989, she inherited the Omaha Star from her aunt, Mildred Brown, founder of the black-owned newspaper in 1938. She took over as owner-publisher and became respected as an effective leader during her more than 25 years at the newspaper. Before her Feb. 13 death, Dec. 2 was declared Dr. Marguerita Washington Day by Mayor Jean Stothert. Those attending to honor her said she had a major impact through positive stories about the African-American community. In 2005, the YWCA recognized Washington as one of the 10 Women of Vision in Omaha. In 2006 she gained Historical Landmark status for the Omaha Star building. In 2007, she founded the Mildred D. Brown Memorial Study Center to ensure that scholarships are provided to journalism students; they also receive hands-on experience at a community newspaper. Active in the Omaha community, she served on 20 boards.

Eileen Wirth, Omaha World-Herald, Creighton University

A respected mentor for the next generation of journalists, Dr. Eileen Wirth will retire this spring as chair of Creighton University’s Department of Journalism, Media and Computing. She joined Creighton in 1991 as a professor after an 11-year career as a reporter at The Omaha World-Herald, eight years as a public relations writer and event planner at Union Pacific Railroad and two years at the McCartney Group. Wirth has served on the OPC Education Committee and the OPC board of directors. She has twice been president of the OPC Foundation board, including in 2016. Her interest in education led her to become president of the Omaha Library board and the Library Foundation board. Her eight books include “From Society Page to Front Page: Nebraska Women in Journalism.” She holds B.A., M.A. and Ph.D. degrees from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and an M.A. from the University of Minnesota.

John Prescott, KMTV, KHAS-TV, WOWT

John Prescott’s career began as a KMTV reporter-photographer in 1968, leaving as assistant news director. He served as KHAS-TV (Hastings) news director before returning to Omaha as WOWT executive news producer and later assistant news director. He was a writer-editor at Union Pacific Railroad, where he drew an overseas assignment covering UP’s assistance to Poland’s railway adapting to a market economy. He next served as the first civilian speechwriter in the commander’s staff group at the U.S. Strategic Command, retiring in 2010 as senior media advisor, USSTRATCOM Global Innovation and Strategy Center. Prescott received an OPC scholarship in 1968, a 1984 UNO Alumni Achievement Award and two Silver Quill Awards from IABC. He was a writer and performer in 43 Omaha Press Club shows and served on the Omaha Press Club board of directors and as president of the Omaha Press Club Foundation. He is currently writing family histories for Legacy Preservation in Omaha.

Jim Roberts (posthumous), KMTV

Broadcast news pioneer Jim Roberts is the partial namesake of the OPC Foundation’s Panko-Roberts Scholarship. He was a reporter for the Ohio State Journal (1945-1950) before serving in the Air Force. He worked at KMTV from 1954-1963 and was OPC president in 1960. Roberts was assigned by KMTV to report from Berlin on the building of the infamous Berlin Wall and “Checkpoint Charlie,” a Berlin passage between Communist East and free West Germany. He covered the Starkweather-Fugate murder rampage and flew to Wyoming, where he filmed a bloodied Starkweather in a jail cell. In 1958, Roberts was named only the second news director in KMTV history, following Floyd Kalber, who left for NBC in Chicago and later “The Today Show.” In 1963, Roberts left for Washington, D.C. to become an aide to Congressman Glenn Cunningham. Roberts was killed in an automobile accident in 1967 at age 39. The respected newsman worked with other broadcast news pioneers such as Tom Brokaw and Mark Gautier.

Ann Marie Kudlacz, executive director of the Refugee Empowerment Center, spoke at the March 17 OPC Noon Education Forum. The mission of the center is to resettle and empower refugees to become self-sufficient through direct services and educational programs. She was introduced by Dr. James E. Van Arsdall, MCC and UNMC educator and OPC Education Committee member. For information on the center, go online to ssscamaha.info/

- photo by Gary Willis
Scholarship Dinner on April 29

By Eileen Wirth
OPC Foundation President

The OPC Foundation invites all members to attend our favorite evening of the year – the annual OPC Scholarship Dinner that will be held at the club on Friday, April 29.

This year we will present our Career Achievement Award to James D. Fogarty, founder of both Fogarty Creative Group and Legacy Preservation LLC that publishes family and business histories.

Our Journalism Educator Award recipient is Dr. Jeremy Harris Lipschultz, Isaacson Professor at the University of Nebraska at Omaha Social Media Lab and College of Communication, Fine Arts and Media.

In addition to having distinguished professional careers, both honorees have long been active in the Press Club. Fogarty is a past president.

The highlight of the evening will be the presentation of five scholarships to outstanding students from Creighton University, UNO and the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. In addition we will present two Howard Silber Scholarships, the Jim Denney Good News Scholarship and the Gautier Award.

The evening will begin April 29 with a 5 p.m. seminar for the students featuring Fogarty and Lipschultz. A cocktail reception will follow at 5:30 p.m. with dinner beginning at 6:30 p.m. The program will follow. Tickets to the dinner are $35; reservations are required. Call 402-345-8008 for reservations.

TREV ALBERTS WILL BE NEXT “FACE ON THE BARROOM FLOOR” ON MAY 20

WHO: Trev Alberts, vice chancellor of athletics, University of Nebraska at Omaha. A linebacker with the Nebraska Cornhuskers from 1991 to 1994, Alberts was inducted into the College Football Hall of Fame in 2015. He will be the OPC’s 149th Face on the Barroom Floor since 1971.

WHEN: Friday, May 20 (Reception – 5:30 p.m., Dinner – 6:30 p.m., Roast following)

RSVP: Call 402-345-8008 or email jeaniec@opc.omhcoxmail.com

NOTE: Look for more information on Alberts and the event’s roasters in the May OPC News.

Obituaries:

1966 OPC President James Clemon dies at age 81

A former editor of World-Herald editorial pages and former OPC president has died. James A. Clemon was a longtime Press Club supporter and writer for the annual OPC Show, which raises funds for scholarships. He served as club president in 1966.

“Jim Clemon made me a star,” said John Prescott, an OPC scholarship recipient who worked at KMTV and WOWT. “In ’74 Clemon wrote a song to be sung by protesting NFO farmers. Bill Hord and I sang a duet and I carried a live chicken on stage. He wrote the ‘Sage of the Sandhills’ into the show and I was typecast for the rest of my OPC Show career. Jim Clemon was the heart and soul of the Press Club Show.”

The Omaha Press Club Foundation invites friends of Clemon, who died March 7 at age 81, to pay tribute to him by contributing to the Foundation, said Foundation President Eileen Wirth. “This is a great chance for Jim’s friends to support his work for journalism scholarships,” she said.

Send donations to the OPC Foundation, P.O. Box 4842, Omaha, NE 68104-0842. Note that they are in memory of James Clemon. Donors will be recognized at this year’s OPC Scholarship Dinner.
Father Daniel Hendrickson shared the journey that has led him to his current position as the new president of Creighton University at the Omaha Press Club’s monthly Education Forum on Feb. 25. He also mentioned how he is gathering information and building his vision for Creighton’s future.

Born and raised in Fremont, Neb., Hendrickson graduated from Mount Michael Benedictine High School in Elkhorn, earned a bachelor’s degree in psychology and theology at Marquette University and then entered the Society of Jesus. Hendrickson began his Jesuit formation studying at Creighton in 1996 and was hired to teach philosophy. He was ordained into the priesthood at St. John’s Church on the Creighton campus in 2006 and went on to earn master’s degrees from Fordham University, Santa Clara University and Columbia University, as well as a Ph.D. from Columbia.

Intuitively, Hendrickson was quick to acknowledge and express his gratitude for the resources Creighton currently has, saying it always strives to be a good steward of the generous resources it has received. But with larger classes of students come larger responsibilities to provide those students with the quality education that is expected from Creighton.

Creighton University is growing, with 8,435 students currently and a freshman class of 1,070 students. And for the 13th year in a row it has earned the Midwest No. 1 ranking in the “America’s Best Colleges” edition of the U.S. News & World Report.

The students are what Hendrickson likes most about his work. Watching the transformation they make, seeing them grow is exciting, and he is looking forward to challenging and inspiring future generations of Creighton students.
Christine Villamonte was studying to become a dietician when she found her passion for event planning. Her professors were impressed by how well she handled the details of a hospitality event for her nutrition group. Christine knew she had found her calling; she had also found her soon-to-be husband and now executive director of the OPC, Steve Villamonte. Christine and Steve were catering at the Omaha World-Herald when they were approached to run the Press Club. It seemed like a perfect fit. The OPC was the right venue, at the right time and gave them a chance to highlight their multiple event-planning and culinary talents.

Ambiance is the key to the Omaha Press Club’s attraction, especially for engagement and wedding dinners. Couples are surrounded by beautiful views of the city, and the evening hours provide a quieter, more intimate setting. It’s easy to get swept up in the moment when you’re surrounded by a beautiful view, eating delicious food and being waited on by a talented, caring and professional staff.

Christine’s specialty is listening to what clients want and what works within their budget, creatively balancing the two in order to create a special moment for couples that come to the OPC for engagement and wedding dinners. She revels in the details and coordinates with the couple to develop and capture the essence of the experience the couple is striving to create.

The OPC staff’s attention to details helps build lasting memories, providing amazing, made-from-scratch food and watching the start of a new family. Christine enjoys seeing patrons’ faces as they walk through the OPC doors and experience their moment in time. Generations of families have come through the doors of the OPC, and it’s been the Press Club’s privilege to be part of their continuing story.

Interested in finding out more about booking the best view in town for your engagement and/or wedding dinners? Call Christine at 402-345-8008 or email opcchristine@gmail.com. Reminder: For members, there is no rental fee for the event space.

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CANCELLATION POLICY:
All reservations must be cancelled 48 HOURS in advance.

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OPC Foundation

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Galen Lillethorup
Dave Ogden, Ph.D.

Dinner
Thurs. - Sat. • 5:30 p.m. to close

OPC EVENTS

Friday, April 8
Winemakers’ Dinner
6 p.m. social & hors d’oeuvres
6:30 dinner

Tuesday, April 19
Shatel Sports Lunch
Speaker Trev Alberts
11:30 a.m. lunch, noon program

Thursday, April 21
2nd Congressional District
Republican Primary Debate
Don Bacon, Chip Maxwell
11:30 a.m. lunch, noon program

Wednesday, April 27
Administrative Professionals’ Day
Special menu

Hours of Operation

LUNCH
Monday - Friday
11:30 a.m. to 2 p.m.

BAR
Tuesday - Saturday
4:30 p.m. to close

DINNER
Thursday - Saturday
5:30 p.m. to close

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Submissions for May issue are due
on or before April 20.

WE'RE ONLINE! READ YOUR OPC NEWSLETTER AT OMAHAPRESSCLUB.COM