Foundation dinner to honor scholars

By Henry J. Cordes
OPC Foundation

There are obviously a lot of great events at the Omaha Press Club each year, but to me, it’s hard to top the annual Scholarship Dinner. On that night, the Omaha Press Club Foundation awards nearly $50,000 in scholarships to future journalists and communications professionals at Creighton University, the University of Nebraska at Omaha and the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. As the new chair of the foundation’s scholarship committee, I wanted to tell you about this year’s dinner, set for Friday night April 27.

The 20 future communicators that will be honored that night represent the most gifted and promising at the schools. And while the money is nice, many of the honorees would tell you what’s even more significant is the validation that comes with the award -- the recognition that they have the skills to succeed. Such encouragement is all the more important in these times, as the media business takes some lumps during conversion to the digital age. It’s important that we all show that good journalism -- and the impact it has in our community -- is something we value and want to see continue in the future. These kids represent that future.

I can’t talk about the scholarship program without also recognizing the donors who have made it possible. In particular, the families of former First National Bank executive John Davis and of former World-Herald reporters Jim Denney and Howard Silber make significant annual contributions to continue the scholarships in their names. Your attendance at the dinner also assures future scholarships, as part of the proceeds of the night go into the scholarship program.

In addition to the students, I’m also pleased to announce the distinguished media professionals who will be honored that night: Joanne Stewart, who recently retired after more than four decades as an editor at the Omaha World-Herald, and Dr. Carol Zuegner, the chair of Creighton’s Department of Journalism, Media and Computing.

So call the club now and make your reservations for April 27. Help us honor the best of journalism – past, present and future.

Ashford, Eastman set for April 19 debate

The two Democrats vying to unseat Republican Congressman Don Bacon in this November’s general election, Brad Ashford and Kara Eastman, will debate the issues April 19 at the Press Club. The 2nd District Democratic nominee will be decided in the May 15 primary election.

Ashford is seeking a second term in the U.S. House of Representatives after being defeated by Bacon two years ago. A businessman and a lawyer, Ashford served four

Mark your calendar:
OPC’s Hall of Fame to induct 6 on June 2

Since 2007 the Omaha Press Club has been honoring the most notable area journalists from both the past and present. Each year our Journalists of Excellence Hall of Fame dinner proves to be an amazing evening.

This year our inductees will undoubtedly create an evening of both honor and reverence, but most assuredly generate much laughter and love for their industry friends and family. Those to be honored on June 2:

• Harold Dow, KETV, CBS (posthumous)
• James D. Fogarty, Legacy Preservation Publishers, Omaha World-Herald, KETV
• Cate Folsom, Omaha World-Herald
• Ron Hull, NET, University of Nebraska-Lincoln
• Jeff Jordan, KMTV, Omaha World-Herald (posthumous)
• Bob Runnels, KMTV

Please call or email the Omaha Press Club to reserve your seat at this year’s dinner. We will be honoring our outstanding journalists, starting with a cocktail hour at 5:30 p.m. and followed by dinner and our induction ceremony. This is always a fun, fast-paced evening with some stories you’ll hear nowhere else and some you may have enjoyed a hundred times!

Whether you’ve been in journalism for 50 years or only five months, the Hall of Fame event is not to be missed. We encourage you to invite your family, friends, and current or past colleagues. The price is $55 ($45 per person for OPC members). Call 402-345-8008 for reservations or email jeaniec@opc.omhcoxmail.com or go to omahapressclub.com and click the RSVP button.

Please share this contact information with others who may wish to attend. This evening is open to non-members and members alike. We look forward to seeing you in June.
terms in the Nebraska Legislature before being elected to Congress in 2016.

Kara Eastman came to Omaha in 2006 and started the Omaha Healthy Kids Alliance, a nonprofit organization that aims to protect children from lead poisoning and other environmental hazards. She is also a member of the board of Metropolitan Community College.

The luncheon debate is sponsored by the Press Club and League of Women Voters. WOWT is partnering in the debate and will record it for rebroadcast on Channel 6. WOWT’s Brian Mastre will serve as moderator.

Lunch, at $17 per person, will be served beginning at 11:30 a.m. The debate will begin promptly at noon and conclude at 1 p.m.

The Omaha Press Club remembers

Joe McCartney, 79

Longtime OPC member Joe McCartney died March 3. A member of the Press Club’s Journalists of Excellence Hall of Fame, McCartney was an OPC board member from 1982-86 and president of the club in 1987.

McCartney began his journalism career at WOW radio and TV while a student at Omaha University. He started as an assistant to sports broadcaster Jack Payne and later became a reporter and documentary producer for Channel 6.

After earning a master’s degree from the University of Minnesota, McCartney taught journalism for 15 years at UNO and then became head of public relations at Union Pacific Railroad. He founded the McCartney Group in 1990 and retired in 1999.

He is survived by his wife, Jo; son Tom; daughter Kathy Schneider; sister Mary McCully; six grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren.

Robert McCartney, 85

Bob McCartney, an OPC member who joined his son, Rob, on stage at several Press Club gridiron shows, died Feb. 14.

McCartney (no relation to Joe McCartney) was a career Air Force officer and pilot who retired as a colonel in 1983 after duty that included wartime missions in Vietnam and Southeast Asia and later assignments at Offutt AFB.

Civilian life eventually brought him back to Nebraska and years of volunteer service in the Omaha area with church, scouts and the Civil Air Patrol.

In addition to son Rob, an anchor with KETV News, McCartney is survived by his wife, Nancy, and daughters Heather and Heidi.

The Press Club’s Steve and Christine Villalomante said they remembered Bob McCartney as a long time member and supporter of the club with a great sense of humor who was always willing to share a compliment.

Omaha’s opioid crisis knows no boundaries

By Kay Kriss Weinstein

The Omaha Press Club’s Education Forum on March 15 looked at both the police and treatment aspects of the much-publicized opioid epidemic.

Paul Yakel, a psychologist and coordinator for the Douglas County Adult Drug Court, and Omaha Police Sgt. Dave Bianchi, narcotics unit supervisor, were the featured panelists. From a law enforcement perspective, Bianchi said Omaha could see the opioid problem coming from the East and West coasts before it arrived, and the Police Department was prepared.

In his 26 years with OPD, Bianchi has seen the local drug crisis change from crack to meth to opioids and noted that much local crime is fueled by the economic need for those addicted to purchase their drugs illegally.

Yakel said, “The opioid epidemic is just the current flavor of the day.”

Both panelists agreed that opioid abuse started with patients seeking pain management and that in turn led to their addiction.

Yakel was critical of the massive advertising campaigns by drug companies marketing prescription drugs to the public.

The two agreed that the epidemic in Omaha knows no boundaries economically or geographically, and both said that the opioid epidemic is just the visual part of bigger and more numerous societal problems that need to be fixed.

Paul Yakel, left, and Sgt. Dave Bianchi discuss the opioid epidemic. Photo by Gary Willis.
Cathy Hughes, Radio One founder, will be honored on May 18

Legendary media mogul with Omaha roots to be next “Face on Barroom Floor”

By Tom O’Connor
Face on the Floor Committee

C athy Hughes, who has become a legendary figure in the media world after leaving her humble beginnings in Omaha, will be honored May 18 as the Omaha Press Club’s next “Face on the Barroom Floor.”

In 1980, Hughes founded Radio One, Inc., which has grown into the largest African-American owned and operated broadcast company in the nation and the ninth highest earning African-American business in the U.S. The company, now known as Urban One, has holdings in radio, cable television and digital media.

The scope of Urban One is immense. The company:
- Owns and operates 55 radio stations in 16 U.S. markets offering hip-hop, rap, rhythm & blues, talk radio and news;
- Has a television network (TV One) that reaches more than 57.4 million people; and
- Has a digital company (Interactive One) that reaches more than 18 million unique monthly users through more than 80 national and local brands.

“Cathy Hughes is one of the most remarkable women to come from Omaha, who also happens to be an African-American entrepreneur,” said Johnny Rodgers, a Heisman Trophy winner at Nebraska who was the 102nd Face on the Barroom Floor. “She’s a perfect example of what someone can become. She’s as good as it gets. I’m so proud of her.”

Hughes began her radio career in Omaha at KOWH-AM, a station owned by a group of African-American professionals. She also worked at the Omaha Star newspaper.

While at Duchesne Academy of the Sacred Heart at the age of 17, Hughes became pregnant and had a son, Alfred Liggins III. After two years of marriage to Alfred Liggins Jr., Hughes divorced and moved to Washington, D.C., with her young son. She soon landed a job at as a lecturer at Howard University and went on to become the general sales manager of WHUR, the radio station of Howard University. Her son was always by her side and eventually became her business partner.

As general sales manager at WHUR, Hughes increased station revenue from $250,000 to $3 million in her first year. She also became the first woman vice president and general manager of a station in the nation’s capital and created the format known as the “Quiet Storm,” which revolutionized urban radio and was aired on more than 480 stations nationwide.

In 1980, Hughes purchased her first radio station, WOL-AM, in Washington D.C., and pioneered yet another innovative format -- 24-hour talk from a black perspective. With the theme “Information is Power,” she served as the station’s morning show host for 11 years.

In 1999, Hughes became the first African-American woman to chair a publicly held corporation – Radio One, Inc. – following the sale of more than 7 million shares of common stock to the public.

Hughes said her humble beginnings in Omaha were not a deterrent to her success but rather part of the catalyst that fueled her ambition to empower African-Americans with information and to tell stories from their perspective.

Hughes, who will turn 71 on April 22, is the daughter of William and Helen Woods and grew up near 32nd Street and Paxton Boulevard.

On May 17, the day before she is honored by the Omaha Press Club, a street-naming ceremony will be held in her honor at 11 a.m. at the Fontenelle Park Pavilion at 4405 Fontenelle Blvd. A community reception for Hughes will be held from 3 to 7 p.m. at Love’s Jazz & Arts Center, 2510 N. 24th St.

On May 18, Hughes will be one of the keynote speakers for the 11th annual Empowerment Network Conference at Hilton Omaha, 1001 Cass St.

A list of roasters and more details on the May 18 “Face event” will be included in the Press Club’s May newsletter. For more information or to make a reservation, call 402-345-8008.

Lunch seats filling quickly for Moos

R eservations are going quickly for the appearance of Nebraska Athletic Director Bill Moos at the Shatel Series Luncheon on Tuesday, April 24 at the Press Club. He and luncheon host Tom Shatel will make brief remarks and then take questions from the audience.

The cost is $17 per person, which includes lunch. To find out if seats are still available, call 402-345-8008, email Jeanie at jeaniec@omhcoxmail.com with your member number and the number of people attending or RSVP online on omahapressclub.com (click RSVP in the upper right hand corner and choose “Shatel Series” from the dropdown menu). The 48-hour cancellation policy applies.

Lunch will be served starting at 11:30 a.m. The program runs from noon to 1 p.m. Lunch includes hamburger steak, mashed potatoes and gravy, and a dessert. If you have special dietary needs, please notify the OPC when you make your reservation.

Validated member parking is available on the top floor of the Central City Garage, just west of the First National Bank Building (bring your ticket with you to the club for validation). For non-members, parking is available in the DoubleTree Hotel Garage for $3/car.

Bill Moos was hired in October 2017 as the 15th athletic director for the Cornhuskers. Previously, he was athletic director at Washington State, Oregon and Montana.
A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Steve Villamonte

Spring is in the air on the 22nd floor, with multiple Press Club events for your pleasure. You will be reading this newsletter soon after the club served Easter Brunch, one of our signature events. If you missed Easter here, don’t miss our next signature brunch on Mother’s Day May 13.

If you’re more into fine wines and multicourse dinners, we have two events coming up. One is our regular quarterly wine dinner on May 15.

And the other? We are starting a new dinner series called “Great Chefs of Omaha.”

The Press Club boasts an unmatched ambiance that attracts a wide variety of people. Many Omaha chefs offer unique styles of culinary delights. The Press Club is bringing those two attractions together for our members and selecting top chefs to showcase their talents once a month in our unique venue. The chefs also will have the opportunity to invite their families, friends and followers.

The chefs will write a five- to six-course menu, and OPC’s chefs will provide preparation and plating support. The cost for the dinner will be $45 for members and $55 for non-members. For those who would like wines paired with the meal, the club will offer a $65 member and $75 non-member price.

The first guest chef night will be planned for the end of May and announced in the May newsletter.

Our Shatel Lunch Series is usually open to the public, but the member interest is so strong for the April 24 lunch featuring Husker Athletic Director Bill Moos that we are taking member reservations first before booking any non-member. The event is almost full, so if you have not made an RSVP, call ASAP.

With a busy schedule at the club in the coming weeks, check out omahapressclub.com frequently to keep posted on events you don’t want to miss.

And do you know a soon-to-be bride or groom? If so, send them to omahapressclub.com and our new “Wedding Receptions” link at the top of the page.

-Steve Villamonte, CEC, BS
OPC Executive Director

PHONE 402-345-8008 FOR RESERVATIONS

Scholarship Awards Dinner
Friday, April 27
5:30 p.m.
$35 Inclusive

Salad
An OPC Signature
“Thunderbird Salad”

Entrée
Crimini Mushroom,
Gruyere Cheese
Fresh Basil Breast of Chicken
en Croute with a roasted Garlic
Cream and Enoki Garni
Risotto Pilaf and Glazed Zucchini
Rotella’s French Roll and Butter

Desserts
Double Chocolate Terrine
with a Raspberry Coulis

Winemaker’s Dinner
Friday, May 11
$50
6 p.m.

Quaff
Villamonte’s Ceviche Shooters
Peruvian Smoked Salmon Roll

Appetizer
Brie and Portabella Mushroom Bisque

Salad
Villamonte’s Thunderbird in Parmesan Crust

Sorbet
Pomegranate

Entrée
Folie Deux Son Merlot Braised Lamb Shank
Rosemary Whipped Potatoes
Roasted Parsnips and Spring Carrots

Dessert
Chocolate Raspberry Delice
Chef de Cuisine: Steve Villamonte BA, CEC
(Certified Executive Chef)

Mother’s Day Brunch
Sunday, May 13
Two seatings: 10 a.m. and 12:30 p.m.
Adults $22 • Children under 10 $12

Carving Station
Steamship Round of Beef with Horseradish
Chantilly & Red Wine Au Jus
Old School Pineapple-Glazed Ham

Entrées
Chicken Crepes Supreme
Baked Tilapia Buerre Blanc
Eggs Benedict
Risotto • Lyonnais Potatoes
Seasonal Vegetables

A La Carte
Build-Your-Own Omelet
Multi-Topping Pancake Bar

Salad Display
Thunderbird Salad, Imported
Cheese & Antipasto,
Coleslaw, Potato Salad, Deviled Eggs,
Smoked Salmon Chaud-Froid,
Fresh Fruit Display
Fresh Baked Pastries • Breakfast Breads
Pecan Rolls

Desserts
New York-style Cheesecake with Strawberries
Chocolate Driscoll Strawberries
Warm Peach Cobbler with
French Vanilla Ice Cream
Roasters salute a man of many words

By Don Summerside
Communications Committee

Fans of the late comedian Joan Rivers will remember her catchphrase: “Can we talk?”

If the roasters of Steve Martin, the newest “Face on the Barroom Floor,” were looking for a catchphrase, it could have been: “Can he ever talk!”

Martin, the newly retired CEO of Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Nebraska, heard a lot about his chatty personality while being installed March 22 as the OPC’s 156th “Face.”

As roaster Susan Courtney, Blue Cross executive vice president, put it: “Steve really likes to talk, REALLY likes to talk.”

And from David Scott, co-founder of Tetrad Property Group: “You say, ‘Hello, Steve,’ and that is the last word you’re going to get in before you walk away.”

Terry Kroeger, publisher of the Omaha World-Herald, said that when Martin played football at Washburn University, he was known as “the guy who couldn’t stop talking in the huddle. He set a single-season conference record for causing delay-of-game penalties.”

Emcee Mary Maxwell pointed to Martin’s willingness to expound about any subject: “The first time I met him at a Blue Cross Blue Shield function, I asked him what time the meeting would begin. He said: ‘Did you know that Aristotle defined time as the measure of motion?’ He then went on to improvise a 10-minute tutorial on how grandfather clocks worked. I wasn’t just impressed. I was struck dumb. I hid in the ladies’ restroom until I was sure he had moved on.”

Karen Aman, vice chair of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield board of directors, recalled that she was part of the CEO search committee back in 2002. “During the interview, we asked Steve: ‘What do you anticipate as hiring pay?’ His response: ‘Pay me what you think I’m worth.’ Well, we learned our lesson on that one.”

Martin’s fondness for single malt whisky and other things Scotch also was not ed by the roasters. Maxwell said “Steve comes to us tonight already familiar with a barroom floor, having hosted several ‘Burns Nights’ at the Dundee Dell, which may have ended badly. At least tonight he’s face up.”

Martin’s “Face on the Barroom Floor,” created by artist Jim Horan, depicts Steve holding the Blue Cross emblem in his right hand and the Blue Shield emblem in his left hand. To represent the thousands of Blue Cross customers. Horan inserted nearly 200 people into the background of the caricature. At the front of the drawing is a cross section of health providers and the people they serve. Also pictured are the Blue Cross headquarters and the Les Bruning sculpture in front of the building.

After all the jokes about Martin’s speaking style, the audience might have anticipated a lengthy rebuttal to the roasters, particularly when Steve began his remarks with “Get comfortable.”

However, he then promised to “surprise you with my brevity,” and he delivered, concluding with: “I’m humbled that you came. Thanks to all of you . . . Enjoy taking a walk on my face.”

Parking Reminder

PC members receive up to two hours of free parking in the Central City Garage, directly west of the club at 122 N. 17th St., during the workday and free parking in the evenings from 5 p.m. to 2 a.m. with validation.

Members can still receive up to two hours of validated parking in the DoubleTree Hotel garage from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. No validated parking is available in the DoubleTree garage after 5 p.m. However, you may still park in that garage in the evenings if you wish to self-pay.

In the Central City Garage, members may park free in any space on the rooftop level at lunchtime, and in any space from #142 on up after 5 p.m. To reach the OPC, take the garage elevator to the basement level (marked B on the elevator). Follow the signs east and proceed through the tunnel into the First National Bank and just a few steps more to the elevators.

Important: Bring your parking ticket to the club for validation.
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D.C. “Woody” Bradford, Jeremy Masket, Bridget (Weide) Brooks & Marcia Cady

“Face on the Barroom Floor”

Dinner, $55 per person

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**Communications Committee**

Susan Eustice • Henry Cordes

Cindy Workman • Howard K. Marcus

Don Summerside • Gary Willis • Chris Allen

Jocelyn Houston • Jennifer Bull • Karen Way

Emily Kerr • Tom O’Connor • Sandra Tursi

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**Events**

**Thursday, April 19**
Democratic Congressional Primary Debate
Brad Ashford, Kara Eastman
11 a.m. open, noon debate

**Tuesday, April 24**
Shatel Sports Luncheon
NU Athletic Director Bill Moos
Lunch at 11:30 a.m., program at noon

**Friday, April 27**
OPC Foundation Scholarship Dinner
5:30 p.m. social, 6:30 p.m. dinner

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**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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**NEWSLETTER COMMITTEE**

Sandra Tursi .................. Graphics Editor

Tom O’Connor .............. Proofreader

Don Summerside ........ Copy Editor

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

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