For nearly 60 years, he has been community leader

Business icon, Mike Yanney, to be next ‘Face’ on Nov. 18

By Tom O’Connor
Communications Committee

If there was a Mount Rushmore dedicated to Omaha’s top business people, Mike Yanney would almost certainly be one of the faces.

On Nov. 18, a different sort of face recognition will be given to Yanney when the Omaha Press Club honors him as its 166th “Face on the Barroom Floor.”

Currently serving as chairman emeritus of Burlington Capital, a firm that manages nearly 70,000 apartment houses around the country, Yanney and his wife of over 60 years, Gail Walling Yanney, MD, have teamed together to serve the community in a multitude of ways.

They have spearheaded countless community projects over the years including Campaign for Nebraska, a massive fundraising effort on behalf of the University of Nebraska. Other organizations that have benefited from the Yanneys include the Omaha Zoological Society, Knights of Aksarben, United Arts Omaha, Museum of Nebraska Art, Nebraska Heart Association, Junior Achievement of Omaha, Film Streams, Omaha Performing Arts Society Foundation, and Heritage Services.

In addition, Yanney established a mentorship program, Partnership 4 Kids, which has helped thousands of children from disadvantaged families.

A native of Kearney, Nebraska, Yanney received his undergraduate degree in 1955 from the University of Nebraska at Kearney. He later earned graduate degrees from the American Institute of Banking and the University of Wisconsin School of Banking.

After finishing college, Yanney worked for a bank in Denver. He had no interest in banking but used the degrees to manage the firm that has grown to become one of the largest in the Midwest.

Yanney’s record of community service has been recognized through numerous honorary degrees and awards from various colleges, universities, non-profit organizations, and community groups.

First Amendment Night on Saturday, Oct. 23

By Bridget (Weide) Brooks
Executive Committee

Freedom of the press is a central tenet of a democracy, and the Omaha Press Club has rescheduled last year’s First Amendment Night event (postponed by COVID-19) to Saturday, Oct. 23, to celebrate this important right.

Former Sen. Chuck Hagel, a military veteran who worked as a radio newscaster and talk show host in Omaha while finishing college, will be the speaker and honoree at the inaugural “First Amendment Night: Celebrating Newsmakers and News Media.”

Hagel was also an entrepreneur before running for the U.S. Senate in 1996. He later served as secretary of defense in the Obama administration.

Also being honored is the former executive director of the Nebraska Press Association, Allen Beermann. He was born and raised on a farm in Dakota County and went on to the University of Nebraska, where he earned a degree in journalism.

Six Journalists of Excellence were honored Sept. 18 as 2021 inductees in the Omaha Press Club Hall of Fame. Front, from left, are Henry Cordes, Trina Creighton, Chris Christen. Rear, from left, are Malcolm Adams, Kyle Eustice, who accepted for her late mother, Susan Eustice, and Doug Parrott.

For additional photos of the honorees with their presenters, turn to Page 4.

Sex trafficking is Noon Forum topic on Oct. 21

By Angella Arndt
Communications Committee

The Oct. 21 Noon Education Forum will feature Christon MacTaggart, Freedom from Violence project director of the Women’s Fund of Omaha. The organization focuses on domestic and sexual violence and sexual exploitation. Her topic will be “Sex Trafficking & Trauma in Our Communities.”

Much discussion has occurred about sex trafficking both locally and nationally in the last couple of years. MacTaggart will share information about the local trafficking response, realities and myths of trafficking, how trafficking overlaps other types of violence, and prevention to keep people safe.

OPC Hall of Fame inducts 6 honorees
By Anne Walsh
Communications Committee

There’s no doubt John and Viv Ewing are a beautiful couple, inside and out. It was the outside that drew some good-natured barbs during the 165th “Face on the Barroom Floor” event Sept. 23 honoring the civic-minded pair, just days after their 37th wedding anniversary. Several longtime friends and family members shared memories that held “elements of truth but also embellishments and exaggerations.”

Following a 24-year career as an Omaha deputy chief of police and involvement on more than 60 nonprofit boards, John has served as Douglas County treasurer since 2007. Dr. Viv has a long career in nonprofit executive leadership and is currently vice president of development for Children's Square U.S.A.

Kicking the evening off was emcee Tim Cavanaugh, retired chief deputy in the Douglas County Treasurer’s Office, retired captain in the Omaha Police Department, and a Metropolitan Utilities District board of directors member. Cavanaugh noted that John diligently works out every day “and then posts shirtless pictures on Instagram. Every Day.” He lamented that fellow roaster Thomas Warren “made the mistake of telling John there was a mirror at the bottom of the swimming pool. It took four people and 10 minutes to get him off the bottom.”

Retired Omaha Police Chief Warren, now chief of staff for Omaha Mayor Jean Stothert, recalled a friendship with John that goes all the way back to first grade. While attending Horace Mann Junior High school, now King Science Center, they (along with Warren’s future wife, Aileen) vied for a front-row seat granted to the top student. Warren said he sometimes played dumb, granting John the seat “to boost his confidence.” That spirit of competition defines them still, with each claiming bragging rights for furthering each other’s careers.

In a heartfelt moment, Warren recalled when John suffered a career setback in the police department and was depressed. After an intense pep-talk during which “I slapped him . . . no, I’m just kidding, that’s the exaggeration part,” Warren went on to say, “The proudest moment I had as police chief was when I had the opportunity to promote my good friend, John Ewing.” It was Warren who gave John the still-used nickname “Old Man” for his rolling walk as a child.

John’s brother Eric, executive director of the Great Plains Black History Museum, acknowledged the Ewings’ wedding anniversary, saying “without me John wouldn’t be here today.” While attending the University of Nebraska at Omaha, John had persuaded Eric to stand near Dodge Street wearing a neck-to-toe sandwich sign urging students to “Vote for Vivian Collins for Homecoming Queen.” She won, becoming the first Black woman to receive the honor. Eric insists his brother and sister-in-law have yet to fulfill the IOU debt for his efforts.

Meanwhile, Warren declared “John fought above his weight class” to woo Viv. And Cavanaugh said, “Viv, I didn’t know you were homecoming queen. That had to have driven John crazy – that HE wasn’t the homecoming queen.”

Professing that “you tease the ones you love,” Debbie Orduna, president of Children’s Square U.S.A., said Viv enjoys leading and effectively gives directions, but sometimes struggles with following them. Orduna claims Viv, while driving to her Iowa office, frequently clashes with Siri and ends up in Nebraska City, Missouri Valley or northern Iowa when trying to cross the I-480 bridge between Omaha and Council Bluffs.

Noting that Viv’s license plates say, “Awesome One,” Orduna speculated that John had gifted his wife with the personalized plates because he wanted everyone to know how special she was. “So I asked her, ‘How did you get your husband to get you those plates?’ And she said, ‘I got them!’” From that I learned there’s no need to be humble; if you tell people you’re awesome, you’re awesome!”

Though complimenting Viv’s elegant smile, wonderful personality, true class and lovingly strategic personality, Vanessa Johnson said when Viv phones, she wonders, “Oh Lord, what does she want and how much is it gonna cost me today?” A youth case manager for Saint Francis Ministries, Johnson said she does not demean people, so composing remarks for the roast was difficult “. . . but I did it. And I want to say that I’m good friends with Viv, but for the next two to three minutes, I’m not.”

While respectfully wondering why the Ewings received such a prestigious award only to have it end up on the barroom floor, Johnson said she was confident Viv would find a way to get her face relocated to the ceiling, similar to Michelangelo’s Sistine Chapel.

Daughters Christina and Alexandria Ewing narrated fond recollections of their parents, including their mother’s friendliness. While attending a movie as a family on Thanksgiving night, the girls were astonished when Viv returned from a restroom break mid-movie and sat with people in the row ahead, chatting and sharing their popcorn.

Continue on Page 3
and soda. Friendliness notwithstanding, it turned out Viv thought, in the dark, that she was with her own family. And while Christina and Alexandra admire their father's exercise regimen, they wonder: “Does he like working out, or does he just enjoy the selfies of himself working out?”

Artist Wayne Sealy unveiled the Ewing’s portrait, which shows John wearing a suit and police uniform, as well as a glimpse of the Superman shirt he wears when exercising. A piggybank signifies his work with the Treasurer’s Office, along with his police deputy badge No. 493. Viv is shown holding a Bible, representing the couple’s service as pastors at Salem Baptist Church. Her motivational book, “Yes, You Can Have Your Cake and Eat It, Too,” is included, as well as John’s favorite saying, “Stick with me, kid. You’ll go far.” A UNO logo and homecoming queen reference depict their alma mater and Viv’s honor, Sealy explained, while their competitiveness is illustrated through an UNO card game.

In her rebuttal following the unveiling, Viv addressed the allegation that she stood up John on their first date – at her own home, leaving him to converse with her father and brothers. She was simply running late, as she often did back then (although her family had to clarify who had stopped by). Viv also asserted that indeed she can follow directions; it’s just that she enjoys the scenic routes and Siri is wrong.

Thanking attendees present from the Treasurer’s Office, John reflected on those who positively impacted his life. His mother and father, he said, gave him an amazing foundation. “My Dad always said, ‘Son, I don’t care what you do, just always be the best.’ So I’ve always tried to be the best.”

Of his wife, John said, “I couldn’t have a better partner who compliments me in ways that we are the same, and then challenges me in ways when we’re not the same. And we make a great team.” Of his daughters, he said, “The best reward you can have as a parent is to have kids who are good people, and they are great people.” He also recognized Cavanaugh, Warren and his brother Eric as “three guys very instrumental in my life.”

More than 39 years ago, a 21-year-old rookie police officer walked into the Omaha Press Club and beheld all the Faces. John didn’t know any of them, but hoped then that he would have a public service career worthy of the honor. “So this really means a lot to me,” he said. “It means I’ve done what I set out to do: Serve the community I love.”
Mal Adams received his award from longtime friend, John Prescott. Mal’s brilliant career began as a broadcast journalist with KETV. He was the second Black to report on air in Nebraska TV history and was the first to anchor a regular daily newscast. Adams first went to Japan in 1976 as a news anchor for KNX radio in Los Angeles. In 1981, he became the TV/radio for the Tokyo bureau of CBS News. He also helped start CNN in Japan in 1984. Adams created Totown, the first Black-owned record label in Japan and expanded it into Totown Communications Group. Totown Communications has become an icon in the field of cross-cultural corporate communications.

Chris Christen was introduced by her former professor, Dr. Marilyn Whitney Petersen by video presentation and Emcee Todd Andrews presented her award. Chris first started her career as a reporter-photographer at the Red Oak Express and was named editor two years later. Stringer work for the Omaha World-Herald prompted an invitation to interview for a copyediting position in lifestyles. She served as the paper’s first special edition editor and served as features/special sections/magazine book editor. In May, she resigned to blaze a new a new trail at the University of Nebraska Medical Center as senior manager of creative services.

Henry Cordes received his award from Paul Hammel. Henry has been a reporter and staff writer for the Omaha World-Herald for more than 35 years. The Omaha native joined the paper’s sports department shortly after high school and graduated from UNO in 1985 with a degree in journalism. Cordes is a five-time winner of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln’s Sorensen Award given each year to recognize the state’s most distinguished journalist. His deadline story on a 2007 mass shooting in Omaha was featured in the Poynter Institute’s 2008 book, “Best Newspaper Writing.” Henry is past president of the Omaha Press Club and served twice as president of the Omaha Press Club Foundation, currently serving as chairman of the scholarship committee.

Trina Creighton received her award from Dr. Will Norton, a former UNL journalism dean. As an award-winning anchor/reporter of Omaha’s KMTV for 15 years, Trina wanted to make a difference. Now as a college professor, she’s hoping to inspire her broadcasting students – and her colleagues in academia – to strive for the same goal. Creighton began teaching at UNL in 2001, quickly becoming a journalism faculty member. She also emerged as a leader at UNL, spearheading new diversity and inclusion efforts while working to ensure that everyone on campus has a voice. Today she is chair of the College of Journalism and Mass Communications’ Diversity and Inclusion Committee.

With Joanne Bemis presenting, Kyle Eustice received the award for her mother, the late Susan Eustice. Susan was the divisional director of public and media relations for the Salvation Army division headquarters in Omaha. In this role, she was the public face - and voice - of the organization for more than 20 years. She oversaw numerous fundraisers and events, including the Salvation Army/KETV Back-to-School Backpack Drive and Adopt-A-Family Radiothon at Christmastime. She previously worked for the Leukemia Society and Opera Omaha. Eustice was a past president of the Omaha Press Club and past president of the Public Relations Society of America.

Douglas Parrott received his award from Vonn Jones, KETV news director, and Rich Bailey, founder of Bailey Lauerman. Doug began his career as a reporter for KETV after graduating from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. During his 15 years at KETV, he opened the first Lincoln Bureau for an Omaha TV station and helped successfully push for cameras in Nebraska courtrooms. Parrott left the station to start his public relations career as communications director for Nebraska Gov. Kay Orr. For the past 30 years, he has been one of the state’s leading PR executives working with Bailey Lauerman. He also served as communications director for the past four Olympic Swim Trials.
Mike Boyle was known as the ultimate public servant ... as the man who always fought for the little guy.

A private practice attorney for more than 30 years, Boyle served as mayor for six years (1981-1987) and on the Douglas County Board of Commissioners the past 23 years. In 1982 – at the age of 38, Boyle was honored by the Omaha Press Club as the 19th "Face on the Barroom Floor."

The much beloved Boyle died on Sept. 13 due to complications from pneumonia that developed during his recovery from successful lung cancer surgery in August. His death at age 77 came 2½ years after that of his wife of 53 years, Democratic Party leader and longtime Nebraska Public Service Commissioner Anne Boyle.

"Mike dedicated his entire life to public service," said Jim Cavanaugh, a fellow Democrat who served on the County Board with Boyle. "He once told me, 'I don't have any hobbies. This is what I do.' And he did it very well. He leaves a legacy of dedicated public service and integrity that will guide us for many years to come."

"Mike had a great sense of humor. How do you thank a guy for a million laughs? You couldn't be around him for five minutes and you'd be laughing."

In 1987, after being re-elected for a second term as mayor in 1985, Boyle lost a recall election that was prompted by his firing of the Omaha police chief over the police department's standoff of his brother-in-law.

He didn't let the recall define him. In 1989, Boyle ran for re-election as mayor. He finished first out of a field of six in the primary, but lost to P.J. Morgan, a former state senator, in the general election.

In 1990, Boyle ran for governor, losing narrowly in the primary to Ben Nelson, who went on to serve two terms as governor and two terms as a U.S. senator.

In 1997 after Bernice LaBedz resigned for health reasons, Boyle was appointed to the Douglas County Board to represent District 1, which includes much of downtown and South Omaha. He won election to the board in 2000 and was re-elected four more times, including in 2020 when he won by just three votes over Roger Garcia.

A graduate of Cathedral High School, Boyle served as deputy Douglas County election commissioner from 1968 to 1971 and as county election commissioner from 1971 to 1979. He graduated from Creighton University in 1973 with a degree in economics and management and earned his law degree from Creighton in 1977.

In 1965, Boyle married Anne Howell, joining one of Nebraska's most powerful Democratic families. Anne was the first woman elected in the 130-year history of the Nebraska Public Service Commission and was a former chair of the Nebraska Democratic Party. She died in 2019 after suffering a stroke.

The Boyles had had five children – Maureen, Michael, Pat, Jim and Maggie – and 18 grandchildren. Maureen Boyle was elected to the County Board in 2020 and served eight months with her father.

In his "Face on the Barroom Floor" caricature drawn by Jim Horan, Boyle was surrounded by several police officers to depict his feud with the police department. A bucking bronco – representing the police department's mounted patrol – also is seen in the caricature along with a backdrop of Boyle's beloved downtown Omaha.

The night begins with cocktails at 5:30 p.m., followed by dinner and Hagel's remarks at 7 p.m. A dessert bar will follow.

Tickets are $75 each, with a portion of the ticket price benefiting the Omaha Press Club Foundation Inc., a 501(c)(3) organization that supports journalism scholarships and education. The OPC Foundation awarded more than $50,000 in scholarships to journalism students at Creighton University, the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, and the University of Nebraska at Omaha in 2020.

Roasters included Warren Buffett and Tom Osborne

Remembering – Walter Scott, 95th 'Face on Barroom Floor'

By Tom O’Connor
Communications Committee

Walter Scott Jr., one of Omaha’s leading philanthropists and business executives, died on Sept. 25 at the age of 90.

Scott spent his entire business career with Peter Kiewit Sons’ Inc., serving as chairman and CEO from 1979 to 1998. When he retired as chief executive, Kiewit ranked as the nation’s seventh-largest construction company.

Scott’s impact on the community was enormous, even though he did his best to maintain a low profile. His philanthropy included hundreds of millions of dollars that went toward key projects such as the CHI Health Center, TD Ameritrade Park, the Henry Doorly Zoo, the Holland Center, the University of Nebraska Medical Center, the University of Nebraska at Omaha and the new Omaha VA medical facility.

Following his retirement, Scott worked with other leading philanthropists to establish Heritage Services, which became a driving force in almost every major community project with Scott leading the way.

“Nebraska has lost a giant of philanthropy and a stalwart champion of health care,” said UNMC Chancellor Jeffrey P. Gold. “Mr. Scott has left a huge imprint on UNMC, and the results of his unwavering support will be felt across the state, nation and world in the form of advances in cancer research, cutting-edge education, biodefense and in many other areas.”

And Scott’s work is likely to continue.

According to a statement from one of his family charitable foundations, the man whose net worth is pegged by Forbes Magazine at $4.2 billion made plans to leave the majority of his estate to charity.

“A city is always an unfinished project,” Scott said in an interview with the Omaha World-Herald just over a year before his death, “so we keep looking for new opportunities to improve Omaha.”

In 2004, Scott and his wife, Suzanne, were honored by the Omaha Press Club as the 95th “Face on the Barroom Floor.”

An all-star lineup of roasters included two past “Faces on the Barroom Floor” – Warren Buffett, chairman of Berkshire Hathaway (No. 30, 1985) and Tom Osborne, legendary Nebraska football coach and athletic director (No. 16, 1979).

Other roasters were:
• Ken Stinson, chairman and CEO of Peter Kiewit Sons’ Inc., who served as emcee;
• David Sokol, chairman and CEO of Mid-American Energy Holdings Co.; and
• C. Mickey Skinner, retired vice chairman, Hershey Pasta and Grocery Group.

Suzanne Scott died in 2013. Like her husband, she was active in the community, serving on several boards, including Boys & Girls Clubs of the Midlands, Children’s Hospital & Medical Center, Goodwill Industries, Joslyn Art Museum, the Salvation Army, Bellevue University, and United Way of the Midlands.

In 1984, Suzanne Scott became the founding executive director of the Omaha Zoo Foundation. During her tenure, zoo memberships doubled.
Although the world still seems a little upside down, the Omaha Press Club continues to offer ways to have fun. This month’s highlight is the inaugural First Amendment Night on Saturday, Oct. 23, honoring former U.S. Sen. Chuck Hagel, the evening’s featured speaker, and Allen Beermann, the retired executive director of the Nebraska Press Association.

Wrapping up the month is the always popular Winemaker’s Dinner on Nov 6. And do not forget our Noon Forums, Oct. 21 and Nov 6.

PHONE 402-345-8008 FOR RESERVATIONS

Inaugural First Amendment Celebration
Saturday, Oct. 23, 2021 • 5:30 p.m. social
7 p.m. dinner
$75

Speech
Salmon Beurre Blanc

Religion
OPC Signature
Thunderbird Salad

Press
Orange Peach Mango Sorbet

Assembly
Press Club Filet
Malbec au Poivre

Right to Petition the Government
Free-to-Choose Dessert Bar

November shapes up as extra special with two major events. First comes the 50th anniversary celebration of our OPC restaurant on Nov. 13. That will be followed by the Mike Yanney “Face on the Barroom Floor” event on Nov. 18. Check out the menus in this newsletter as Steve has outdone himself. Both evenings look great and full of unique company with laughs and enjoyment.

A reminder: Our newsletters have been online and paperless since the pandemic began. When you receive an invoice at the beginning of each month, there is a link to connect to the OPC News and read up on the latest events. The newsletter is posted monthly on the OPC website. Go to the omahapressclub.com home page, and click the newsletter link at the top right corner. This is a faster, more convenient way to keep posted on OPC news and events as the world keeps moving around us so quickly.

And a parking reminder: Use the DoubleTree garage (16th and Dodge) and receive a two-hour validation. No need to bring your parking ticket with you as we give you an individual ticket for you to scan (a two-step process, instructions on back) when you leave the garage. For your guests who are parking at their own expense, the Central City Garage (west of the bank) and the street.

Entry to the bank and access to the elevators is normal during regular daytime business hours, but at night you will need to buzz in by pressing buttons on the black boxes at the bank entrances at the northwest corner of 16th and Dodge or the tunnel from the Central City Garage. The process is simple: Tell security you are going to the Omaha Press Club.

Winemaker’s Dinner
Saturday, Nov. 6, 2021 • 6 p.m.
Members $60 • Non-Members $75

Appetizer
Tomato Bisque with Grape
Tomato & Saffron
Wine

Amuse
Chicken Pinot Noir with Wild Mushrooms
Wine

Salad
Thunderbird Caesar Parmesan Crust
Wine

Sorbet
Pumpkin Sorbet
Wine

Entrée
Roasted Tenderloin
Caramelized Vidalia Demi-Glace
Gnocchi with Bacon
Wine

Dessert
Poached Pear Caramel Crème Fraîche
Wine

Face on the Ballroom Floor Honoring Mike Yanney
Thursday, Nov. 18, 2021
Saturday, Oct. 30,
5:30 p.m. reception
open bar
6:30 p.m. Dinner

Members $60 • Non-Members $75

Hors d’oeuvres Menu
Assorted Canapes
Champagne Toast

Salad
OPC Thunderbird Salad

Entrée
OPC Signature Filet with Maître D Butter & Gorgonzola
Fresh Asparagus
Parmesan Crusted Risotto

Dessert
Apple Crisp with Almond Creme
2021 - 2022 Officers

Roger Humphries
President
Roger Humphries Photography

Hunter Samuels
President-elect
Ronald McDonald House

Dale Ervin
Treasurer
First National Bank

Bridget (Weide) Brooks
Secretary
Image Building Communications

Tom Shatel
Past President
Omaha World-Herald

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(2020-2022)
Allen Beermann
Woody Bradford
Bridget (Weide) Brooks
Gary Willis
Jeremy Maskel

(2021-2023)
Angella Arndt
Chris Allen
Todd Andrews
Liz Hruska
Mike McKnight
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Bridget (Weide) Brooks • Hunter Samuels
Todd Andrews • Jon Brooks • Angella Arndt

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

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

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Are you looking for a perfect party setting? A lunch surrounded by brilliance? A dinner your guests will always remember? Keep the OPC in mind.

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Submissions for the November issue are due on or before October 20.