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Three inducted into 2017 Nebraska Journalism Hall of Fame



Photo by Rob Dump

2017 Journalism Hall of Fame banquet (l to r): Nebraska Attorney General, Doug Peterson; Hall of Fame inductees Larry King, Maxine Moul, Eileen Wirth; and Mary Kay Quinlan, associate dean, UNL College of Journalism & Mass Communications.

Over 115 Nebraska journalists, friends and family attended the 2017 Nebraska Journalism Hall of Fame banquet on November 3, 2017, to honor this year's three inductees: Larry King, Maxine Moul and Eileen Wirth.

The banquet and program, held at the Nebraska Club in Lincoln, NE, were cosponsored by the Nebraska Press Association and the UNL College of Journalism and Mass Communications. The Nebraska Press Association is the state's oldest trade association, representing the 165 daily and weekly newspapers in Nebraska. The Hall of Fame was started in 1973 by Jack Lowe, retired longtime editor and copublisher of the Sidney-Telegraph.

The Nebraska Journalism Hall of Fame recognizes distinguished journalists who have made significant contributions to print, their communities, their state or the nation. A selection committee of Nebraska Press Association and Journalism College representatives select the inductees.

NPA Executive Director, Allen Beermann, presided over the evening's program. Nebraska Attorney General Doug Peterson welcomed the attendees and assisted Dean Maria Marron and Associate Dean Mary Kay Quinlan of UNL's College of Journalism and Mass Communications with plaque presentations.

Congratulations, 2017 Nebraska Hall of Fame inductees

Larry King

Larry King was born in a small northwestern Iowa community in 1949. His family heritage did include any journalists. They were farmers. In high school there were no journalism classes or a school newspaper. But there were newspapers in the house – subscriptions to three dailies and a weekly, and the habit of reading those newspapers cover to cover every day was instilled early.



That interest in consuming news continued during a stint in the U.S. Navy during the Vietnam War and the political and civil rights turmoil of the 1960's. Following his discharge he used the GI Bill and a Regents Scholarship to enroll in the University of Nebraska at Omaha, majoring in journalism.

At UNO, he quickly became involved in working for the student newspaper and eventually was named editor. After graduating in 1974 he worked covering the Minneapolis suburbs for about two years.

Late in 1975, he moved back to Omaha to work for the Omaha World-Herald. His newspaper track was a traditional one – police reporter, court reporter, city hall reporter and statehouse reporter in Lincoln. Then on to editing positions: assistant metro editor, metro editor for 10 years, assistant managing editor and executive editor for 10 years.

As the industry moved into digital products, he was named director of content initiatives for the World-Herald and later for BH Media, a company formed by the World-Herald as it purchased other newspapers. He was then named senior vice president of news for BH Media as it expanded to a company with 31 dailies and numerous weeklies in Midwest South and East. During that time, those newspapers won numerous national awards. The World-Herald and its outstanding staff of veteran journalists have been recognized among the nation's best for news reporting, sports coverage, design and photography.

He also was active for two decades, including stints as president, in Media of Nebraska, an organization of newspapers and broadcasters that strongly pursue 1st Amendment, open government and public record issues involving state, local and law enforcement agencies.

He received the Alumni Achievement Award from the UNO Communications Department in 1986 and the university's Alumni Achievement Award in 2000.

King retired in 2015.

Maxine Moul

Maxine Burnett Moul's career has been as a community journalist, public servant, and feminist. Her 45 years of service to Nebraska rural development began when she and her husband, Francis, purchased his hometown newspaper at Syracuse, NE in 1971. As small-town entrepreneurs, they built their company to 120 employees, with five newspapers in Southeast Nebraska, two weekly magazines, seven shoppers' guides serving Missouri, Kansas, Iowa and Nebraska and a printing company that had customers from Texas to South Dakota. Their newspapers were annual award winners in the Nebraska Press Association competitions, including the Ak-Sar-Ben Service to Agriculture and Community Service awards. They also received several National Press Association awards.



She was a senior at Oakland High School when a teacher encouraged her to consider journalism. During her 4-H Club Congress trip to Washington, DC in 1964, she met Senator Robert Kennedy, who had a profound influence on her interest in public service.

While at the University of Nebraska College of Journalism, she was a summer intern for Look Magazine, whose managing editor was Patricia Carbine, a founder with Gloria Steinem of the Ms. Foundation for Women. Many feminists influenced her interest in and work on women's issues.

cont. on pg. 3

Moul - cont. from 2

From 1991 to 1999, Moul led rural development efforts for Governor Ben Nelson’s administration as Lt. Governor and Director of the Nebraska Department of Economic Development. She was the first chair of the Nebraska Community Foundation, now serving more than 250 communities with an impact surpassing \$450 million.

She was the Democratic candidate for Congress in the First District in 2006 and was President Obama’s appointee as Nebraska State Director of USDA Rural Development in 2009, serving until 2017.

Moul received the Nebraskaland Foundation’s Pioneer Award in 2010 and was inducted into the Marian Andersen Nebraska Women’s Journalism Hall of Fame in 2013. The Moul children are Jennifer Ann Moul (deceased in 1985) and Jeff (Diane) Moul, and grandchildren are Adia, Annalise and Logan Moul.

Eileen Wirth

Eileen Wirth, Ph.D., a Nebraska City native, spent more than forty years as a ground breaking woman journalist in her career as an Omaha World-Herald reporter, Union Pacific public relations writer, Creighton University professor and regional history author.

A job on the Daily Nebraskan (the Rag) led to Wirth’s love affair with journalism.

She joined the World-Herald in 1969, one of the first women in city news, covering religion and social issues

such as gender and race discrimination, poverty and housing.

Wirth’s passion for advocating for social change led her into public relations and community service. She joined Union Pacific Railroad’s PR Department in 1980 and volunteered for public and Catholic education, refugees, services to girls and women, the Omaha Public Library, the Nebraska State Historical Society and the Omaha Press Club Foundation.



In 1991 she joined Creighton University’s journalism department and received her doctorate from UNL. After becoming department chair in 1997, she led her department into innovations in digital journalism and a merger with computer science that gained national recognition. In 2015, she was a finalist for the (AEJMC) Association for Education in Journalism & Mass Communication’s Administrator of the Year Award. Wirth also is a member of the Marian Andersen Nebraska Women Journalists Hall of Fame and the Omaha Press Club’s Journalists of Excellence Hall of Fame.

Wirth’s books include her proudest accomplishment, “From Society Page to Front Page,” that chronicles the history of Nebraska’s women journalists from the 1860’s to the 1970’s. She retired in 2016 as professor emerita of journalism at Creighton University.



(Left) NPA Executive Director Allen Beermann presided over the banquet program and Dean Maria Marron, UNL College of Journalism and Mass Communications welcomed those attending the banquet.

Hall of Fame photos courtesy of Rob Dump, Northeast Nebraska News Co.

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“Wounds of Whiteclay”

2017 recipient of the Robert F. Kennedy Journalism Awards Grand Prize

This year’s Hall of Fame banquet included a special recognition of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln’s College of Journalism and Mass Communications eleven students who took home the grand prize at the Robert F. Kennedy Journalism Awards ceremony May 23, 2017, in Washington, D.C.

It was the first time in the event’s 49-year history that the top prize went to a college group. Other division winners included National Geographic, The New Yorker, HBO and Univision.

The students won for their in-depth reporting project “The Wounds of Whiteclay: Nebraska’s Shameful Legacy,” which delved into the issues and impact of alcohol sales in the small community of Whiteclay.

Grand Prize Winners

Amber Baesler, senior, Lincoln, NE
Chris Bowling, senior, Liberty Township, OH
Lauren Brown-Hulme, senior, Prairie Village, KS
Jake Crandall, senior, Fairway, KS
Vanessa Daves, senior, Hinsdale, IL
Matt Hanson, senior, Prairie Village, KS
Calla Kessler, senior, Omaha, NE
Marcella Mercer, senior, Nebraska City, NE
Alyssa Mae Ranard, senior, Ashland, NE
Natasha Rausch, senior, West Chester, OH
James Wooldridge, junior, Prairie Village, KS
Professor Joseph Starita



“Wounds of Whiteclay” project coordinator Rebekka Herrera-Schlichting, and student reporter/graphic designer on the project, Chris Bowling, spoke to Hall of Fame attendees about the Whiteclay project and on winning the prestigious 2017 Robert F. Kennedy Journalism Award.



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Glad to be Hub carriers

Oldest carrier stays fit, youngest earns an income

Mary Jane Skala, Kearney Hub Staff Writer, Sept. 30, 2017

At 81 years old, Charlie Pickens has lost 25 pounds since he started delivering the Kearney Hub seven years ago. Sam Snodgrass, 8, began delivering the Kearney Hub before he could read.

Pickens and Sam are the oldest, and the youngest, of the Hub's 96 carriers. Those carriers are responsible for the Hub's 232 routes, including 24 motor routes.

A bit after noon each day, Pickens picks up his 90 papers and heads north up Second Avenue, delivering papers at businesses from West 25th St. to Menards, near 60th Street. He also makes deliveries to a few homes east of Second Avenue on Kearney's north end.

"I go to Good Samaritan, the mall, over to Eagle's Nest," he said. It takes about three hours a day.

He began delivering papers in the fall of 2010 when his sore back forced him to quit golfing. He'd never used a golf cart, and he didn't want to start. "I always walked the course," he said. He'd had to quit playing racquetball, too.

He wanted to stay active, but he didn't want to go to a gym. Then he saw an ad for carriers in the Kearney Hub, and he hasn't looked back.

He's in and out of his pickup 75 times each day. "With all this exercise, I can eat what I want," he said. "I enjoy meeting people. I've lived in this town for 57 years, and I'm amazed when I'm out how many people know who I am. Some like to chit-chat. It's fun," he said.

On Saturdays, he gets up at 4 a.m. to deliver the weekend Hub, but he's finished by 6:30 a.m. and goes back into bed.

A retired math professor and department chair at the University of Nebraska at Kearney, Pickens still has time for coffee with friends every morning.

If he misses a day of delivering because he's been out of town, people along his route often ask him where he was. "That makes me feel good," Pickens said. "I'm retired. I've got to do something."

Sam and his brother Robert have been delivering the Hub practically since birth. The sons of Daniel and Amanda Snodgrass, they used to ride along with their



Mary Jane Skala, Kearney Hub

Charlie Pickens, the Hub's oldest carrier at 81, says delivering the paper keeps him in shape.

aunt, Sara Steele, as she delivered the Hub. If she invited them to help, they eagerly said yes.

Amanda Snodgrass lassoed her sons' energy into routes of their own. Daniel, an assistant manager at Sonic, delivered the Hub at the time, too. "I watched him throw the paper onto a porch, and I wanted to do it, too," Robert said.

By the time he was 3, Amanda, a certified nursing assistant, got Robert a Hub route. With his father's help, he delivered 18 papers a day.

Sam, meanwhile, watched hungrily. He had delivered his first paper — one of his brother's — at the age of 2. By age 3, Sam took over his father's route and has been happily delivering the Hub ever since.

cont. on pg. 6

Carriers - cont. from pg. 5

Together, Sam and Robert handle about 140 papers in a combined five routes. They begin deliveries after school at 3:30 p.m. and finish in about 45 minutes. Like Pickens, they're often reluctant to get up at 4 a.m. Saturdays to deliver weekend papers, but they're done in an hour.

The boys saved enough money to buy themselves new beds, and they've made friends with some of their customers. "I have a certain buddy, and if she hears me, she comes out," Sam, a third-grader at Emerson Elementary, said. "If we work hard, we get candy and money."

We get paid good money," Robert, a fifth-grader at Emerson, said. "We love delivering."



Mary Jane Skala, Kearney Hub

Sam Snodgrass, 8, is the Hub's youngest carrier. He and his brother Robert, 11, began delivering the Hub before they started kindergarten.

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Life in Black & White

Christensen recalls a career in journalism

Jerry Purvis, Staff Reporter, Scottsbluff Star-Herald, Oct. 3, 2017

GERING — Don Christensen, a 1951 graduate of Hemingford High School, might have spent his life in the plumbing business. But a job opportunity with the Alliance Times-Herald opened up an entirely different world to him.

“My father was the only plumber in town and I was his helper, so we were always busy,” Christensen said. “I could dig ditches for him, handle the tools and about anything else from his 1920 Chevrolet pickup.”

He recalled one night the pickup lights went out while they were on their way back to town. With no road pavement or stripes for guidance, Christensen sat on the fender with a flashlight to light the way home.

“College wasn’t a big deal when I graduated from high school and we couldn’t afford it anyway,” he said. “I needed to find a job and there was an opening with the Alliance Times-Herald.”

Christensen started his journalism career operating the newspaper’s linotype machine to set type. He got into photography making the photo plates that went onto the printing press. He also worked with the paper’s huge copy camera to make the halftone photographs that went onto the press.

“Whenever I go to Alliance, I wonder whether that old camera is still in the basement, but I never stopped to find out,” he said.

After a lot of hours working with photos, Christensen started to think photography might be a career choice, and photojournalism opened up to him. He was also a member of the volunteer fire department at the time and had the opportunity to respond to a wide variety of emergencies.

Christensen was still relatively new to the news business in July 1957 when he responded to what he called his “greatest challenge.”

The Alliance airport manager had called for a search for a missing plane in the area. Christensen grabbed his Speed Graphic camera and some extra film holders and went to work. Hitching a ride with a local rancher/pilot, they joined the search.

“It wasn’t long before we spotted a downed airplane on a hilltop near Bingham,” he said. “Seeing a piece of white cloth waving, we landed about a mile away on some pretty rough Sandhills terrain.”

Running back to the crash site, Christensen and the pilot found out what had happened.

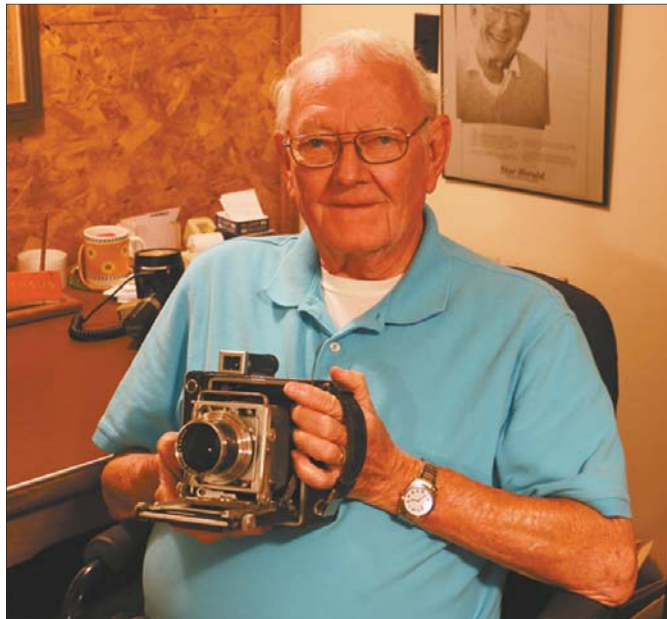
Waving the white cloth was 16-year-old Judy Diehl of Cozad, who suffered a crushed knee. She had been trying to flag down help for the past 36 hours, after both her parents and the pilot were killed in the crash.

“It was a real tragedy,” Christensen said. “The girl was taken to the Alliance hospital, treated and released. I often wonder what happened to her but I haven’t heard anything since. That was the big story of my career and a copy of the front page still hangs on my wall.”

After about 10 years at the Times-Herald, Christensen was considering a move when he saw an ad in the Scottsbluff Star-Herald in 1960. The contact was Editor Morris Van Newkirk.

“He was a bit skeptical when he talked with me,” Christensen said, “but he gave me a chance.”

As it turned out, Christensen would spend the rest of his career with the Star-Herald. He’s collected volumes of newspaper clippings of his work over the years.



Jerry Purvis/Star-Herald

For much of Don Christensen’s early career, he was accompanied by a Speed Graphic camera that uses 3x5-inch sheet film.

Christensen - cont. from pg. 7

“My main focus was photography, so I always wanted to come up with different angles for pictures, whether it was from the floor or hanging by my toes,” he said. “I think that different perspective played a part in my success.”

He also spent a lot of time covering the Nebraska and Wyoming National Guard training. He said it was a real honor when the Wyoming Adjutant General invited him to come along for a visit to Vandenberg Air Force Base in California to witness a Minuteman missile launch in 1970. “The base general suggested no pictures, but I couldn’t resist,” Christensen said. “We were about 2 miles from the launch site, so I used a 400 mm lens. One of those pictures ended up in the paper.”

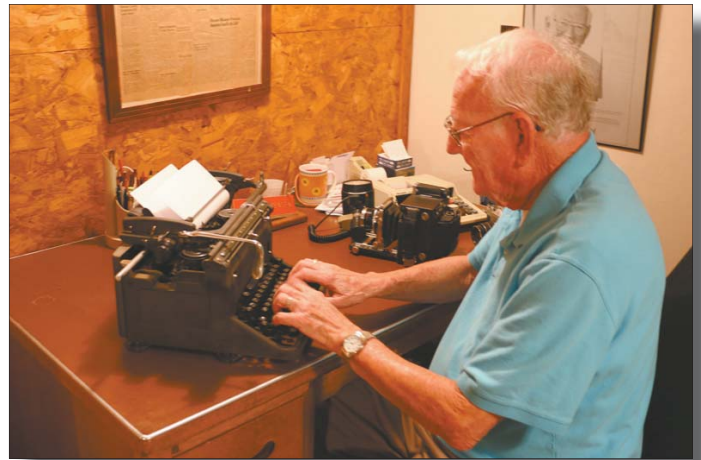
As his role expanded at the newspaper, Christensen added coverage of both Scottsbluff and Gering city councils to his beat. That led to numerous associations with community leaders throughout the years. That included the Nebraska State Patrol, who always gave him a call when there was a serious accident.

He also served as regional reporter, searching out interesting stories from around the Panhandle. He even went to Sterling, Colorado, to interview Rebecca Ann King, the new Miss America in 1974.

Later, his good relationship in the community afforded him the opportunity to write the copy for the 1999 book, “Coming Home: Scottsbluff, the First 100 Years.” He considers that another milestone in his career.

His newspaper experience and connections led to the opportunity to serve in an entirely different field as a board member for the CAPstone Child Advocacy Center.

From there, he served on the Gering City Council from 2004 to 2016.



Jerry Purvis/Star-Herald

Don Christensen tried a few keystrokes on the old Underwood manual typewriter he used throughout his career at the Star-Herald.

“The entire news industry has changed dramatically since I started in the business,” Christensen said. “I seriously doubt whether I could fit into it today.”

Sitting on Christensen’s desk in his basement is the original Underwood typewriter he first used for writing at the Star-Herald. There is also one of his early cameras, a Speed Graphic that used 3x5-inch sheet film.

“I keep track of my career going through scrapbooks of my work,” he said. “I see the pictures and wonder where those people are today and what happened to them.”

Although he could have gone into the plumbing business, Christensen said he’s happy with the career path he chose. It provided the opportunity to chronicle the life of the community and tell the stories of its people.

As he concluded, “I wouldn’t have it any other way.”

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