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Cheers to David Louie and Lorrie Yapczenski DeSimone who received their Medill BSJs in 1972. In 2022, they, along with the entire 50th reunion class, were invited to campus to participate in Northwestern's 164th Commencement Ceremony.



**George R.R. Martin
Chair in Storytelling**

**Centennial Impact:
Medillians Give Back**

Medill Award Winners

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Dean Charles Whitaker (left) and George R.R. Martin taken at Medill in June 2021 by Jenna Braunstein.

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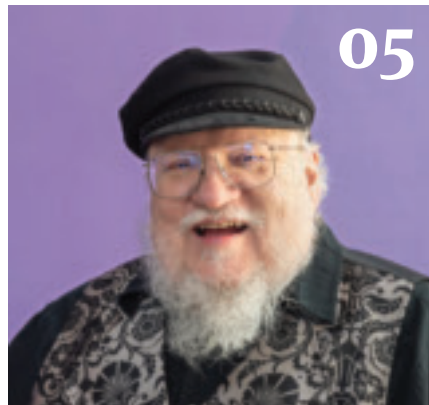
SUBMIT STORY PITCHES AND LETTERS

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George R.R. Martin Gift

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| Dean Charles Whitaker

Storytelling is at the heart of what we do in Medill. It's in our DNA. Whether it's the stories we tell about people, places and policy as journalists or the stories we tell about brands and businesses as marketers and strategic communicators, we revel in the craft of composing narratives that inform, influence and inspire. That is why we are so excited to announce a transformational \$5 million gift from distinguished alumnus and master storyteller George R.R. Martin (BSJ70, MSJ71); whose endowment of the George R.R. Martin Professorship in Storytelling and a companion summer intensive writing workshop will help cement our reputation as an institution that is not only devoted to truth-telling and audience understanding, but one that also is a breeding ground for creative endeavors beyond the spheres for which we are traditionally known.

Just look at the amazing list of novelists, playwrights, and screenwriters produced by Medill, and one gets a

sense of the extent to which our program has been a launching pad for careers in creative industries. The roster includes not only Martin, author of the acclaimed “A Song of Ice and Fire” novels and co-executive producer of the Emmy award-winning “Game of Thrones” series, but legendary filmmaker, director and producer Garry Marshall (BSJ56); Emmy-winning director and screenwriter Cindy Chupack (BSJ87); Academy Award-winning writer, director, actor Luke Methany (BSJ97); writer and producer Mara Brock Akil (BSJ92); best-selling novelist Gillian Flynn (MSJ97); American Book Award-winner Tananarive Due (BSJ87); and rising literary stars like Andrea Bartz (BSJ/MSJ08); Aimee Agresti (BSJ98); and Lauryn Chamberlain (BSJ14). The list goes on and on. But what each of these creative alums has said is that their Medill training imbued in them a sense of the power of story and instilled in them an appreciation for the beauty of precise, economical language. Their time in J-school wasn't all about Medill “F” s and person-on-the-street stories.

With Martin's gift, we lean into storytelling in a more intentional way. We are conducting a national search for the inaugural occupant of the Martin Chair, an individual who not only will teach longform narrative journalism, but also will conduct courses and host workshops in more creative endeavors, such as fiction and writing for the stage and screen.

For those who may fear that this foray into creative writing signals an abandonment of our commitment to truth and fact-based journalism, let me say unequivocally that nothing is further from the truth. Those are bedrock principles on which the school remains firmly planted. But with the Martin gift, we formally acknowledge — and support — the fact that our community is (and has always been) composed of creatives who seek outlets beyond traditional journalism and marketing for their talent. Rather than squelch that desire, we are developing an appropriate setting — in conjunction with our colleagues in the Weinberg College of Arts and Sciences

and the School of Communication — for them to explore and practice those skills.

Who among us, after all, does not know a journalist who does not have a half-finished novel or play gathering dust in a desk drawer that they hope to one day complete? It is those frustrated creatives whom we will target with the summer writing workshop the Martin gift will help to establish. It will provide an opportunity for journalists with languishing creative projects to commune with others harboring similarly-stalled undertakings and get inspiration from writers and producers, including Mr. Martin, who have traveled a similar path before finding success. We are very excited about what is in store here.

The Martin gift is the second endowed chair that Medill has acquired in the past two years. A generous gift from another distinguished alumnus, John M. Mutz (BSJ57, MSJ58); a business leader and politician who served as Lieutenant Governor of Indiana, established the John M. Mutz Chair in Local News in 2020. That endowed chair focuses on local news sustainability. It advances the work of the Medill Local News Initiative, an innovative research and development project that provides greater understanding of how digital audiences engage with local news and finds new approaches to bolster local news business models. Senior Associate Dean and Professor Tim Franklin is the inaugural holder of the John M. Mutz Chair. Franklin is the leader of the Medill Local News Initiative.

Together, the Martin and Mutz chairs are illustrative of the new initiatives that are expanding Medill's reach and scope. This is a wonderful time for the Medill community with more new developments on the horizon. I look forward to sharing those with you as they come to fruition. As we expressed with our centennial motto: Medill has a storied and unparalleled past, but I am even more excited about our limitless future. Stay tuned. ■

A portrait of George R.R. Martin, an older man with a full white beard and glasses, wearing a black flat cap and a patterned vest over a dark shirt. He is pointing his right index finger upwards. The background is a solid purple color.

George R.R. Martin Gift to Create New Professorship, Writing Program

| **Story:** Alan K. Cabbage

| **Photos:** Jenna Braunstein



“But even when I doubted I’d sell another book, I never doubted I’d write another one. That’s the mark of a real writer. You have stories in you that you’ve got to get out.”

\$5 million gift from renowned author George R.R. Martin (BSJ70, MSJ71) will establish a new professorship at Northwestern’s Medill School of Journalism, Media, Integrated Marketing Communication and a new writing workshop for journalists

who are seeking to launch careers in creative writing.

Martin, an award-winning author of science fiction and fantasy, wrote “A Song of Ice and Fire,” a series of novels that were adapted by HBO into “Game of Thrones,” which became an international hit and the most-watched series ever on that network. He also has been a successful screenwriter and producer of television shows.

The gift will fund the George R.R. Martin Chair in Storytelling at Medill. The professor who is named to this position will teach courses across a wide swath of genres, from narrative nonfiction to creative writing, at the undergraduate and graduate level and lead the George R.R. Martin Summer Intensive Writing Workshop.

“Storytelling is at the heart of what we do at Medill,” said Charles Whitaker

(BSJ80, MSJ81), dean of Medill. “We are deeply grateful to George for establishing these initiatives which will make Medill a destination for aspiring writers from around the country and guide and inspire Northwestern students as they hone their craft.”

Through collaboration with faculty in the School of Communication and Weinberg College of Arts and Sciences, the Martin Chair also will convene panels and conferences on writing for students and the public.

Martin himself had a brief stint as a college professor, a position he says he gained greater respect for after doing it. After graduating from Medill and doing alternative service with VISTA in Chicago, he embarked on a career as a writer and soon had several stories published in science fiction magazines.

“I headed for Dubuque (Iowa) in the spring of 1976 to take a job teaching journalism at a small Catholic women’s college,” Martin wrote in the book, “Dreamsongs,” a collection of his early short stories and novellas — including works written while a student at Northwestern. “Though my writing was going well, I still wasn’t earning enough from my fiction to support myself as a full-time writer... The position at Clarke College seemed the perfect answer. I would only be teaching two or three hours a day, after all. Four at the most. That would leave me half of



every day to write my stories, wouldn't it?

"Anyone who has ever taught is laughing very loudly right now," Martin added. "The truth is the demands on a teacher's time are much greater than they appear. They are only in the classroom a few hours a day, true ... but there are always lessons to be prepared, lectures to be written, papers to read, tests to grade, committees to attend, textbooks to review, students to counsel. As the journalism teacher, I was also expected to serve as the faculty adviser to the school newspaper, the *Courier*, which was great fun but got me into no end of trouble with the nuns, since I refused to be a censor."

After a few years and more success at getting his stories published, Martin left Iowa (a place he said had even colder

winters than Chicago) and moved to New Mexico to begin writing full time. Before leaving Clarke, he started a summer writing workshop for aspiring science fiction writers. It was not a financial success, attracting only seven students despite having well-known authors as instructors, but two participants went on to have novels published.

Now, Martin's gift to Medill will enable the creation of the George R.R. Martin Summer Intensive Writing Workshop, an annual residential fellowship program for journalism professionals who want to launch careers in creative writing. The program will allow six to eight talented writers to spend part of the summer developing work in fiction and screenwriting under the guidance of the George R.R. Martin Chair. In doing

▲ *from left: Dean Charles Whitaker, George R.R. Martin and Northwestern University President Michael Schill at Medill on Nov. 9.*





◀ *Martin and Medill students at a lunch in 2015 during his visit to receive the Medill Hall of Achievement Award.*

“A novelist has tools that screenwriters and directors don’t have. You can tell a story from a different point of view; you have a character’s internal monologues.”



so, these fiction writers, screenwriters and playwrights will be provided the time, space and guidance to hone their writing projects.

ON BEING A WRITER

Even after having other jobs for several years after graduating from Medill, Martin says that when asked what he was, his answer was “a writer.” He now cautions that it’s not an easy path.

“It’s not a career for anyone who values security. It’s a career for gamblers — every time you write a book and put it out, you’re rolling the dice,” Martin said in a talk at the Chicago Humanities Festival in 2019. “But even when I doubted I’d sell another book, I never doubted I’d write another one. That’s the mark of a real writer. You have stories in you that you’ve got to get out. For most writers, you work for a year or two and it’s like throwing it down a well. It’s a casino, and sometimes you get lucky. The main thing, though, is the stories. You want to get back to writing.”

Martin has had significant success — and some failures, he admits — as a screenwriter and producer as well as a novelist. Well before “Game of Thrones” aired on HBO, Martin had written and

▲ *Martin presenting Medill’s 2021 Convocation speech on Saturday, June 12, 2021.*

produced a TV series. His IMDB filmography lists 31 credits for him as writer, creator or producer, including the recently aired “Game of Thrones” prequel, “House of the Dragon,” which also has been a smash hit for HBO, drawing nearly 10 million viewers for its premiere episode.

“Book and television are two different mediums and two different ways of telling the same story, or at least similar stories,” Martin said in his Humanities Festival talk. “Whenever you adapt any work from books to television or movies, you have to make choices about what you leave in what you take out. There are issues that screenwriters have to worry about that fiction writers don’t have to. You have a budget, you have deadlines, you have actors. A novelist has tools that screenwriters and directors don’t have. You can tell a story from a different point of view; you have a character’s internal monologues. All of those things necessitate taking a different approach depending on the medium.” ■

George R.R. Martin: Medill, Northwestern Experiences Shaped My Writing and Career

| By Alan K. Cabbage

In George R.R. Martin's picaresque novel "The Armageddon Rag," the protagonist — who bears more than a passing resemblance to a college-age Martin — is a Northwestern graduate, as are several of the other main characters. Their relationships and their time at the University are key factors in the narrative. Martin (BSJ70, MSJ71) still credits his experience at Northwestern with influencing his writing and shaping his career.

In his commentary on stories in his book "Dreamsongs," a collection of his early short stories and novellas — including ones written while a student at Northwestern — Martin recounts his participation in Medill's graduate program in Washington, D.C.

"My internship was demanding, but exciting," Martin wrote. "The nation was in turmoil in the spring of 1971, and I was at the center of it all, walking the corridors of power, reporting on congressmen and senators, sitting in the Senate press gallery with real reporters. The Medill News Service had client newspapers all over the country, so a number of my stories actually saw print. The program was run by Neil McNeil, a hardnosed political reporter of the green-eyeshade school who would sit in his cubicle reading your copy and roar your name whenever he saw something he didn't like. My name was roared frequently. 'Too cute,' McNeil would scrawl atop my stories, and I'd have to rewrite them and take out everything but the facts before he'd pass them on. I hated it, but I learned a lot."

Martin also credits other Medill and

Northwestern faculty members for their influence on his development as a writer. "I remember my teachers Ben Baldwin, Peter Jacobi, James Stacey and Bergen Evans (professor of English), whose class was so popular it filled Tech Auditorium."

An award-winning author of science fiction and fantasy, Martin has sold millions of copies of his books, which have been translated into 47 languages. The wildly popular HBO adaptation of his "Game of Thrones" fantasy saga became the most-watched series on that network and rocketed him to international fame. "Game of Thrones" has remained HBO's biggest hit of all time since concluding in 2019.

Martin, who earned a minor in history in addition to his Medill degrees, grew up in a cloistered environment in Bayonne, NJ, attending Catholic schools. He notes that he learned about many different things at Northwestern after arriving in the fall of 1966 having never seen the campus or been away from home. "College was a strange new world, as exciting as it was scary," he wrote in "Dreamsongs." "I lived in a freshman dorm called Bobb Hall (my mother kept getting confused and thinking Bob was my roommate), in this strange midwestern land where the news came on too early and no one knew how to make a decent pizza pie."

After receiving his MSJ, Martin, who was a conscientious objector during the Vietnam War, did two years of alternative service with the Volunteers In Service to America (VISTA). "During two years of service with VISTA in Chicago, nights

"I lived in a freshman dorm called Bobb Hall in this strange midwestern land where the news came on too early and no one knew how to make a decent pizza pie."

and weekends I wrote stories," he said in his convocation speech. "By the end of my service, I had sold a dozen or so and even been nominated for an award — I lost. I never did end up getting a job reporting the news. Instead, I ended up making a career writing stories about aliens and dragons and vampires. I can almost picture some of my professors shaking their heads and wondering how I went wrong." ■



▲ Dean Charles Whitaker gives a toast to a crowd of people at the Medill Centennial Celebration.

“In this Centennial year, aiding Medill’s mission of educating diverse young students in the principles of high-quality journalism ... has never been more important.”

W

ith the support of hundreds of Northwestern alumni in celebration of Medill’s Centennial, two new endowed scholarship funds have been launched for students of the Medill School of Journalism, Media, Integrated Marketing Communications at Northwestern University.

The Medill Centennial Undergraduate and Graduate Scholarships will enhance the diversity of the Medill community. The scholarships will be used to help Medill attract top students by meeting their demonstrated financial need and will build talented and diverse classes committed to telling stories and building

Gifts provided to mark the school's Centennial will benefit future students

New scholarship funds launched with support of Medill alumni, McCormick Foundation



brands that combat stereotypes and promote greater cultural awareness.

Through the generosity of the alumni community, both funds exceeded the minimum \$100,000 threshold to endow the scholarships in perpetuity. A special commitment from the Robert R. McCormick Foundation more than doubled the size of each endowment.

“We are proud to invest in Medill’s future,” said Dennis FitzSimons, Chairman of the McCormick Foundation. “The Foundation’s roots in education began with our founder, Robert R. McCormick, who helped Northwestern establish the school of journalism in honor of his

grandfather Joseph Medill. In this Centennial year, aiding Medill’s mission of educating diverse young students in the principles of high-quality journalism and innovative marketing communications has never been more important.”

New gifts may be made to either the undergraduate or graduate fund to continue growing the endowments over time.

“I’m overwhelmed by the generosity of our alumni, and even more with the number of them who gave to support future Medill students,” said Medill Dean Charles Whitaker. “Each and every gift is meaningful to our school and to me personally. This is a wonderful way for us

to fulfill the mission of our Centennial, both celebrating our unparalleled past and preparing for our unlimited future. I also am extremely grateful for the investment from the McCormick Foundation, which has supported Medill throughout our history.”

The scholarships will be awarded for the first time in the 2022-23 academic year. All undergraduate Medill students with unmet financial need will be automatically given consideration. Graduate applicants who meet the requirements for admission to Medill will also be automatically considered on the basis of financial need. ■



▲ *from left: Michael Vega (McCormick23); Ernesto Vega (Parent); Dean Charles Whitaker (BSJ80; MSJ81) Melissa Bernal-Vega (BSJ97); and Matthew Vega (BSJ25).*

“We are inspired by Medill’s uplifting environment that encourages free thought, mindful and meaningful communication.”

Medill to remodel broadcast studio, largest classroom thanks to gift

Feldman Philanthropic Trust and Vega family help provide for enhanced student experiences

A transformational gift from the Aida and Mike Feldman Philanthropic Trust, under the direction of Melissa Bernal-Vega and Ernesto Vega, is enhancing the learning environment for Medill students and creating opportunities for Medill students to learn and collaborate using cutting-edge technology and facilities designed to respond to today's curricular and industry needs.

The gift supported the summer 2022 renovation of the McCormick Foundation Center Forum, Medill's most iconic space on the Evanston campus, with upgrades to the technology and the expansion of the space to provide enough seating to accommodate Medill's entire first-year class. The Alfred M. Bernal Forum was completed in late summer, and the space was renamed in tribute to Melissa's father.

The gift will also allow an upgrade and expansion of Medill's broadcast and digital media suite on the fourth floor of the McCormick Foundation Center. The Aida and Mike Feldman

Broadcast and Digital Media Suite will include space for TV editing and teaching, podcasting, team meetings and voiceover work. In addition to being at the center of curricular activity, the suite will create a space for student media groups to meet and work.

Melissa and Ernesto are co-founders of CANVAS Real Estate, a Florida-based firm with more than 20 years in the residential and commercial real estate and property management businesses. CANVAS has 10 offices across Miami-Dade, Broward and Palm Beach counties and more than 1,100 agents.

Melissa came to Medill as a first-generation student, and it was while she was studying at Northwestern that she met Ernesto, a fellow Cuban American who also grew up in Miami. They are parents of two current Northwestern students: Matthew, a second-year journalism student at Medill, and Michael, a senior studying at the McCormick School of Engineering. Melissa is a co-director of the Northwestern Alumni Admissions Council's Southeast Florida Region and a member of

the Northwestern Parents Leadership Council. She is a member of the Medill Board of Advisers.

"My experience at Northwestern—particularly Medill—informed and transformed my life," said Melissa. "We are inspired by Medill's uplifting environment that encourages free thought, mindful and meaningful communication. We are blessed to be part of its future."

The Vegas are members of the Northwestern University Leadership Circle and NU Loyal Society, with 12 consecutive years of giving to the University. Through the Aida and Mike Feldman Philanthropic Trust, they have also generously supported Northwestern Engineering with the establishment of the Enrique Feldman Studio and Northwestern Student Affairs through their support of the University's Multicultural Center. The Aida and Mike Feldman Philanthropic Trust supports educational bricks and mortar projects across the United States and in Israel. ■

Medill Grad Honors Former Professor with Mary Dedinsky Graduate Journalism Scholarship



At the Chicago Sun-Times, she became the first woman to be named managing editor of a major metropolitan newspaper.

A gift from Medill grad Mike Lazerow and his wife is supporting graduate journalism students. Mike (BSJ96, MSJ96) and Kass Lazerow created The Mary Dedinsky Graduate Journalism Scholarship to honor Mary Dedinsky's (BSJ69, MSJ70) long-time service to Medill and the broader journalism profession.

The Mary Dedinsky Graduate Journalism Scholarship was awarded for the first time to an incoming graduate journalism student in fall 2022, with a preference for a student who could add diversity to the class.

Dedinsky is a Medill emeritus professor who served as associate dean at Medill and director of the journalism program at NU-Q, Medill's pioneering program in Qatar. Dedinsky was inducted into the Medill Hall of

▲ *Mary Dedinsky receives her Medill Hall of Achievement award from Dean Charles Whitaker in November 2021.*

Achievement as a part of the 2020 class. She continues to teach at Medill, and she serves on the governing board of Education for Employment, an international organization that helps young people in many countries move from school to employment.

Before Medill, Dedinsky was an editor and reporter. At the Chicago Sun-Times, she became the first woman to be named managing editor of a major metropolitan newspaper. She also served as an education reporter, investigative reporter, editorial writer, metropolitan editor and director of editorial operations. For her work at the Sun-Times, she was elected

to the Chicago Journalism Hall of Fame and twice served as a Pulitzer Prize juror.

According to Medill Dean Charles Whitaker (BSJ80, MSJ81), scholarship funding is one of the school's most essential needs. "The Mary Dedinsky Graduate Journalism Scholarship will help us attract the most talented students and make their graduate education possible," he said. "I am deeply grateful to Mike and Kass for this wonderful support — especially in tribute to Mary, who is such a cherished member of the Medill family."

In the spring of 1992, Mike Lazerow went to Dedinsky, his academic adviser, with the idea for his first entrepreneurial business venture. Dedinsky encouraged Lazerow to pursue it. Soon University Wire (U-Wire) was born, Lazerow's first tech startup created to collect and distribute news to college newspapers via the internet.

"Being his adviser, I felt I needed to always be on my toes," she said. "This young man was coming up with new ideas and new things, and it was a challenge for me to think imaginatively and creatively myself. It is so exciting when you meet someone who inspires you."

U-Wire launched Lazerow's career in entrepreneurship. Since then, he and Kass Lazerow have co-founded several businesses, invested in more than 60 tech startups and currently run their venture capital firm Velvet Sea Ventures, which has close to \$400 million in assets under management.

Mike Lazerow remembers Dedinsky as much more than an adviser — she was a friend who attended his wedding in 1999.

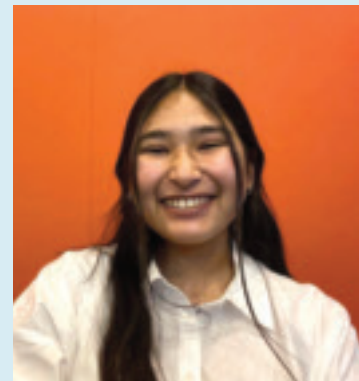
"She didn't just teach at Northwestern," Lazerow said. "She fundamentally changed my Northwestern experience."

Dedinsky was both surprised and honored when she got the call about the Lazerows' decision to create a scholarship in her name.

"Knowing Mike and Kass has really been a gift to me and enriched my life," she said. "When I heard about the scholarship, I couldn't quite believe it."

The Lazerows named the scholarship in honor of a beloved professor and celebrated journalist hoping to inspire others to donate and support graduate journalism. So far, the couple's plan is working as the estate of a late Medill grad anonymously matched the Lazerows' donation to fund additional scholarships in Dedinsky's honor.

For the Lazerows, student support was an obvious choice for their gift. "The scholarship provides one thing: opportunity," Mike Lazerow said. "Going to Medill gives you practical skills to go out and succeed in whatever you want to do. The biggest hurdle is money. Creating graduate scholarships makes Northwestern a more competitive school, so we can attract different points of views and backgrounds." The Lazerows previously supported the Mike and Kass Lazerow Graduate Scholarship and are members of the Northwestern University Leadership Circle. Mike Lazerow also serves on Medill's Board of Advisers. ■



Tanieshaa Shrestha

Inaugural Award Recipient

The Inaugural Mary Dedinsky Graduate Journalism Scholarship recipient is Tanieshaa Shrestha. Shrestha received her undergraduate degree in journalism at Northwestern University in Qatar and completed her degree along with a strategic communications certificate. She started the program in September and she is specializing in social justice for her MSJ. She says she chose that specialization because it's outside of her comfort zone and she wants to further advance her journalism skills.

Medill Celebrates the Inaugural John M. Mutz Chair in Local News

On Wednesday, June 8, 2022, Medill celebrated the investiture of Senior Associate Dean and Professor Tim Franklin as the inaugural holder of the John M. Mutz Chair in Local News. This endowed chair, which was announced in fall 2020, was made possible thanks to a gift from Medill alumnus John M. Mutz (BSJ57, MSJ58) and will study and support innovation in local news at Medill. Mutz, his wife, Carolyn, and his son, Mark, were joined by Franklin, Northwestern Provost Kathleen Hagerty, Dean Charles Whitaker, faculty, friends and family at a special campus event.

The John M. Mutz Chair in Local News will focus on local news sustainability. It will advance the aims of Medill's Local News Initiative, an innovative research and development project aimed at providing greater understanding of how digital audiences engage with local news and finding new approaches to bolster local news business models.

Mutz's \$2 million gift to create the local news chair counts toward We Will. The Campaign for Northwestern, raising his total giving to Northwestern to over \$2.3 million. The chair was supported in part by alumni Patrick G. '59, '09 H and Shirley W. Ryan '61, '19 H ('97, '00 P) through the Ryan Family Chair Challenge, which matches gifts made by other Northwestern supporters to establish new endowed professorships, or chairs, across a wide range of disciplines. In 2017, Mutz's commitment of \$250,000 to the Local News Initiative was instrumental to the program's launch. He also is a member of the Henry and Emma Rogers Society, which recognizes those who have included Northwestern in their estate plans.

Mutz earned undergraduate and

graduate degrees from Medill in 1957 and 1958. He also participated in the Medill Cherubs program for high school journalism students in the summer of 1952. Mutz's daughter, Diana, is a 1984 graduate of the School of Communication, and his son, Mark, graduated from the Weinberg College of Arts and Sciences in 1983. Two of Mutz's grandchildren are also Northwestern alumni: Fletcher, who graduated from Weinberg College in 2017, and Maria, who graduated with a joint degree from the McCormick School of Engineering and Bienen School of Music in 2020.

Mutz is a business leader and politician who served as lieutenant governor of Indiana, Republican candidate for governor and president of Lilly Endowment Inc., one of the world's largest private foundations. Mutz also served as president of PSI Energy, Indiana's largest utility (now Duke Energy).

"My political experience has dramatically shown me how important reliable local news sources are to local governments and economies," Mutz said. "Without it we may lose our democratic society and that would be a tragedy."

Franklin is the inaugural holder of the John M. Mutz Chair and is the leader of Medill's Local News Initiative.

Franklin joined Medill's faculty in 2017 after serving as president of The Poynter Institute, a leading international school for journalists and a media think tank. Before that, he had a distinguished career in journalism serving as top editor of three metropolitan newspapers, The Indianapolis Star, Orlando Sentinel and Baltimore Sun. His newsrooms won numerous national journalism awards, and The Sun was a Pulitzer Prize finalist during his tenure. Before joining Poynter in 2014, Franklin was a managing editor in the Washington bureau of Bloomberg

"My political experience has dramatically shown me how important reliable local news sources are to local governments and economies."

News, helping oversee coverage of the White House, Congress, Supreme Court and many federal agencies. He also had a 17-year-career as a reporter and editor at the Chicago Tribune.

"I'm honored to serve as the inaugural Mutz Chair," Franklin said. "John knows from first-hand experience during his political and business career about the importance of local news in our democracy. He's passionate about the need for robust local news in our society, and he's also passionate about Medill. With John's generous gift, Medill will continue to be a national leader for years to come in developing partnerships, programs and new tools to help local news organizations and the communities they serve."

MORE ABOUT MEDILL'S LOCAL NEWS INITIATIVE

Medill's Local News Initiative began its work in 2018 in partnership with Medill's Spiegel Research Center by analyzing 13 terabytes of reader and subscriber data from the Chicago Tribune, Indianapolis Star and San Francisco Chronicle to gain



Photo credit: Jenna Braunstein.

insights into online reader behavior. Medill now has conducted data-mining research in more than 20 local news markets.

In late June, the Local News Initiative published a report called “The State of Local News in 2022” that focused on researching and analyzing the health of local newspapers and local digital outlets. The report revealed that while overall number of newspapers declined over the past two years, an increase in corporate and philanthropic funding contributed to the establishment of 64 new digital sites focused on covering either state or local news. Most digital sites are located in digitally connected urban areas with diverse sources of funding.

Late last year, the Local News Initiative launched a new tool, the Medill

Subscriber Engagement Index, which was awarded a Google Innovation Challenge grant. The Subscriber Engagement Index tool is available for free to news outlets invited to participate and allows newsrooms to track their digital subscribers and tells participating news outlets which aspects of their content are correlated with retention of digital-only subscribers. The index also tracks the behavior of subscribers to identify at-risk customers as well as which devices they’re using and other valuable metrics.

The Index also allows outlets to benchmark their performance against that of peers across the country. And it offers a “What-If” tool that lets news publishers create scenarios of how changes in their subscription performance might affect the bottom line. ■

▲ *from left: Dean Charles Whitaker, Northwestern Provost Kathleen Hagerty, Prof. Tim Franklin, Carolyn Mutz, John M. Mutz.*



New Grad Spotlight: Ashton Edmunds MSJ22

Ashton Edmunds received his master's degree in journalism from Medill in June and is the inaugural recipient of the Simmons Family Scholarship for Sports Journalism. This full-tuition scholarship supports students enrolling in Medill's sports journalism program, with a preference for alumni of historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs).

Q: What inspired you to choose Medill and the sports journalism specialization?

A: After learning about Medill's rich history within journalism, there was no hesitation when it came to choosing this program. Sports have always been a part of my life and being able to tell stories through that lens is a passion I've always wanted to pursue. Luminaries such as Mike Wilbon (BSJ80), J.A. Adande (BSJ92), and Mike Greenberg (BSJ89) who attended Medill played a vital role in attracting me to Northwestern. Journalism plays such an important part within society and the impact Medill has made on the world at large is second to none.

Q: What surprised you about the Medill experience?

A: The biggest surprise for me was being able to learn about different specializations and having the opportunity to take classes focused on those specific specializations. Before the program, I thought all my classes were going to be sports focused. I know the importance of versatility when it comes to being a journalist

so putting myself in those situations to learn about things I may not have been experienced in has been beneficial for my overall growth.

Q: What was most challenging about the program?

A: Learning how to become a beat reporter and report in a vast city like Chicago. I'm originally from the South so this was a complete 180 experience for me. Despite those challenging moments of learning about the city, its culture, and the people, I've grown into a much better storyteller from when I first started. I'm grateful to each of my professors and peers for pushing me to reach my full potential.

Q: What was your favorite "Medill Moment"?

A: My fondest Medill memory was traveling to Los Angeles for the first time for the Super Bowl and Genesis Open. Having the opportunity to connect and build bonds with each of my classmates is something I'll cherish forever. The entire trip was amazing and seeing the Rams win the championship in their city was a

once in a lifetime experience. Truly something I'll never forget during my time at Medill.

Q: What are you doing now? How did Medill prepare you?

A: I am now the multimedia features writer for the Atlanta Falcons. Medill has prepared me in every aspect from knowing how to ask the right questions, establishing a grasping lead to lure my readers in, and setting the right tone for my story. Those were key things I wanted to hone in on and I see the growth in each of those areas.

Q: What advice do you have for incoming Medillians?

A: Don't be afraid to step out of your comfort zone and learn something new. Challenge yourself in every area because that'll only make you better in the end. Medill will allow you to learn new skills in all mediums of journalism which will serve you well in your career. There will be challenging moments that will test you but continue to push through and keep a steadfast mindset. Most importantly, build relationships with as many classmates as you can because it'll be beneficial in the long run. ■

Medill Award Winners

Inaugural Don Schultz Award

A committee of Medill faculty and industry experts selected **Gayle Kerr** as the inaugural recipient of the Don Schultz Award for Innovation in Teaching, Theory and Practice of Integrated Marketing Communication.

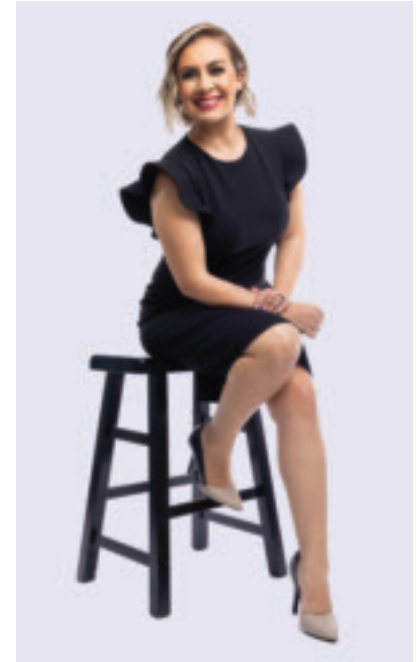
Kerr is a professor at the School of Advertising, Marketing and Public Relations at Queensland University of Technology. This international award recognizes university faculty and marketing professionals who have demonstrated excellence in teaching the principles of integrated marketing communications (IMC) and bridging the gap between the academic and commercial arenas. Kerr will receive a cash prize of \$5,000.

The award is named for longtime Medill Professor Don Schultz. Schultz played a pivotal role in creating the field

Schultz is regarded internationally as the “father of Integrated Marketing Communications.”

of Integrated Marketing Communications and establishing the IMC department at Medill in the early 1990s. Medill was the first school to offer a graduate degree in Integrated Marketing Communications in the United States. Schultz is regarded internationally as the “father of IMC.” He died in 2020. ■

Gayle Kerr



Maritza Félix

Award from Medill, NAHJ recognizes outstanding reporting on Hispanic and Latinx communities

Maritza Félix is the recipient of the 2022 Cecilia Vaisman Award from Medill and the National Association of Hispanic Journalists. Félix (NAHJ) is a freelance journalist, producer and writer in Arizona and the founder of Conecta Arizona, a news-you-can-use service in Spanish that connects people in Arizona and Sonora primarily through WhatsApp and social media. She is the cofounder, coproducer and cohost of Comadres al Aire and the executive producer and host of Cruzando Líneas.

In 2011 Félix was named one of 40 under 40 Arizona Hispanic Leaders in recognition of her influential work in the state.

The Vaisman award honors an individual working in audio or video journalism who works every day to shed light on the various issues affecting Hispanic and Latinx communities inside and outside the United States and is an active member of the NAHJ. It is given jointly by NAJH and Medill and includes a \$5,000 cash prize. The award is named for Medill faculty member Cecilia Vaisman who died in 2015.

Félix's work has been published in major newspapers in Mexico and other countries and broadcast on Univision and Telemundo. She is an independent journalist whose work appears in *The Nation*, *The Hechinger Report*, *Organización Editorial Mexicana*, Channel 4 in the U.K., *Feet in 2 Worlds*, *Slate*, *The Americano*, *Proyecto Puente*, *Uniradio Noticias*, *Telemax*, and *Prensa Arizona*. In 2011 Félix was named one of 40 under 40 Arizona Hispanic Leaders by *Chicanos Por La Causa* in recognition of her influential work in the state. Félix has won five Emmys and is the recipient of the inaugural award for Best Chronicle Written in the US by *Nuevas Plumas*. She also has won multiple awards from the Arizona Press Club. ■



Cheryl McKenzie

She helps guide journalists whose reach extends to all three coasts, and whose mission is to tell the stories of First Nations, Inuit and Metis people across Canada.

2022 NAJA-Medill Milestone Achievement Award

The Native American Journalists Association (NAJA) and Medill selected **Cheryl McKenzie** as the 2022 NAJA-Medill Milestone Achievement Award recipient.

McKenzie is the current executive director of news and current affairs at APTN, a Canadian national news program dedicated to sharing stories of Indigenous Peoples by Indigenous Peoples.

She has been with APTN National News and Current Affairs for 21 years. Her career started as reporter, then a host and producer, and she is now an executive director.

Given by NAJA and Medill, the award commemorates and promotes responsible storytelling and journalism in Indian Country.

McKenzie's work with APTN started with a series of stories on how asbestos exposure harmed a Manitoba family, earning her the nickname "scoops" in the newsroom, and nominations for Gemini and Canadian Association of Broadcasters awards.

Six years ago, McKenzie was promoted to executive producer of the news broadcast and news director of APTN news and current affairs.

Today, she helps guide journalists whose reach extends to all three coasts, and whose mission is to tell the stories of First Nations, Inuit and Metis people across Canada. ■

Medill Award Winners



Pierre Kattar



Ian Urbina



Lisa Desjardins (MSJ97)

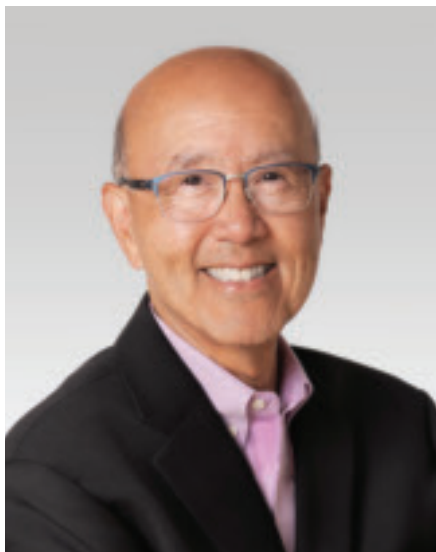
While held by the agents, they were beaten and interrogated, and the team was forced to film a “proof of life” recording and sign a false confession.

2021 James Foley Medill Medal for Courage in Journalism

Ian Urbina and Pierre Kattar were awarded the 2021 James Foley Medill Medal for Courage in Journalism for their coverage of the European Union’s shadow immigration system that sends migrants to Libyan detention centers before reaching European shores. Their report, “The Secretive Prisons That Keep Migrants Out of Europe,” is a collaboration between The New Yorker and The Outlaw Ocean Project to expose the arrangement between the European Union and the Libyan Coast Guard that brings migrants back to the Libyan coast and holds them indefinitely in detention centers. While reporting on the injustice, Libyan intelligence agents abducted Urbina and his team. While held by the agents, they were beaten and interrogated, and the team was forced to film a “proof of life”

recording and sign a false confession. The U.S. State Department was able to intervene and get the team released. Afterward, Urbina and Kattar worked with their sources to ensure their safety in case intelligence agents targeted the sources, too.

This year’s honorable mention also won high praise from the judges. Medill alumna Lisa Desjardins (MSJ97) was selected for her reporting from inside the U.S. Capitol during the Jan. 6 insurrection. Her coverage was broadcast live on PBS NewsHour, beginning when she was just one floor above the protests. She was the only reporter outside of lockdown and inside the Capitol at the time. ■



David Louie (BSJ72)



Cindy Chupack (BSJ87)

2022 Northwestern Medal Recipients

Two Medillians were awarded the 2022 Northwestern Medal in August, David Louie (BSJ72) and Cindy Chupack (BSJ87). The Alumni Medal celebrates Northwestern alumni who have had a transformative impact on their fields, performed exemplary volunteer service to society, or demonstrated an outstanding record of service and support to NU.

Cindy Chupack is a screenwriter, producer, and director whose work across television, film, and other media has been recognized with Emmy Awards, Golden Globe Awards, and more. A New York Times bestselling author, her television credits include “Sex and the City,” “Everybody Loves Raymond” and “Modern Family.” Chupack is a 2020 inductee to Medill’s Hall of Achievement and is an active member of Northwestern’s Council of One Hundred.

David Louie is the Emmy Award-winning business editor and technology reporter for ABC Disney’s KGO-TV San Francisco, for which he became the first Asian-American reporter in 1972. Louie has served as national president of the Asian American Journalists Association and national chairman of the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences. Louie was an inaugural inductee to Medill’s Hall of Achievement in 1997. ■

2022 John Bartlow Martin Award

Michael Barajas and Sophie Novack received the 2022 John Bartlow Martin Award for Public Interest Magazine Journalism from Medill for “Locked Up and Left to Die” an investigation into preventable deaths in Texas jails over the last decade. Their story was published in November 2021 by the Texas Observer with support from the Fund for Investigative Journalism. Barajas is a journalist who covers criminal punishment, mass incarceration and voting rights. Novack is a freelance journalist mostly focused on longform narrative and investigative stories about health care access. Medill established the John Bartlow Martin Award for Public Interest Magazine Journalism in 1988 to encourage outstanding professional work in this crucial area. ■



Michael Barajas; Sophie Novack

Work the Medill Network!



Medill Clubs

Medill has clubs in Chicago, New York City, Washington, D.C., San Francisco, Los Angeles and Boston. Event information is available on the Medill alumni site magazine.medill.northwestern.edu and in our monthly E-mail newsletter. Hope to see you at an event near you! *Thanks to our club leaders and volunteers who make these events happen. We couldn't do it without you.*

▲ *Medill club of Southern California club board members (from left) Ann Lee, Jonathan Lababit and Andrea Casanova with featured alumni speaker Andre Gaines (second from left) at the Medill Club of SoCal summer social on Aug. 28.*

LinkedIn Groups

Medill's LinkedIn groups have a combined membership of more than 10K and are a great way to network, find jobs and connect with fellow alumni. Join our clubs today!

<https://www.linkedin.com/groups/42227/>
<https://www.linkedin.com/groups/46071/>

Coming to Campus?

E-mail Belinda Clarke (b-clarke@northwestern.edu) prior to your visit — we'd love to welcome you to the dean's office to say hello!



▶ Medill alumni gathered around the country to celebrate the school's centennial



Photo credit: Jason Smith

Alumnus Manuel Rapada (BSJ15, IMCert15), senior experience researcher and customer experience storyteller at Adobe, visited campus in May 2022 and spoke to the Knight Lab students over a picnic lunch.