

Oklahoma legislature increases state-set rate for legal notices, enacts other reforms

Oklahoma legislators voted to override the governor's veto of House Bill 2167 – an OPA-sponsored legal notice bill – in the final hours of the 2025 legislative session.

The legislation increases the state-set legal notice rates for the first time since 2005 and includes other reforms for readability and accessibility of legal notices.

"We are thankful for Representative John Pfeiffer, R-Orlando, and Senator Bill Coleman, R-Ponca City, for sponsoring this legislation and

skillfully helping lawmakers understand the importance of their vote to support local newspapers and their cherished place in the fabric of our society," said Mark Thomas, OPA Executive Vice President.

"House Speaker Kyle Hilbert, R-Depew, and Senate Pro Tempore Lonnie Paxton, R-Tuttle, also deserve our appreciation for including these reforms as legislative accomplishments they can be proud of for years to come."

Brett Wesner, owner of Wesner Publications and chair

'We showed what OPA can do when we work together in the interest of government transparency.'

Brett Wesner

of the OPA Government Relations Committee, said passage of the bill was a team effort.

"Thomas, along with dozens of fellow publishers, laid

the groundwork for months, from our legislative day at the Capitol to calls and texts to our members," said Wesner.

"With that, we took great satisfaction with big wins in both houses, only to have the governor veto this vital legislation, 20 years in the making. It took a grueling last minute effort to get our bill heard for a potential override, but our members had made the case to our representatives in Oklahoma City, and we prevailed.

"This would not have happened."

Continued on Page 4

Nearly 300 attend annual OPA Convention

The 2025 Oklahoma Press Association Convention concluded on June 7 with the Awards Banquet at the Grand Casino Hotel & Resort in Shawnee, marking the end of another successful gathering of the state's newspaper and news media professionals.

This year's theme, "Pressopoly," drew inspiration from the classic board game Monopoly, adding a creative and nostalgic flair to the event. Attendees even had the chance to "lock up" friends in the



whimsical Pressopoly Jail, adding fun and engagement to the professional gathering.

Nearly 300 representatives from OPA member publications participated in the

two-day convention, which featured a dynamic mix of educational sessions, networking opportunities, and entertainment.

The OPA Education

Committee curated a standout lineup of speakers, setting the tone for a valuable and insightful event. Highlights included presentations by:

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*Including Speaker Sessions, Award Winners
and Better Newspaper Contest Winners*

From the President

By Shauna Belyeu

Publisher of The Eufaula Indian Journal • OPA President 2024-2025



It's a wrap!

What a great weekend it was! The OPA Convention was a great success. It is always like coming home to a family reunion.

Lisa Sutliff and the whole OPA team have been working hard over this past year to gather up our contest entries, process the results and organize the events that we freely enjoyed.

From Family Feud to the last award, the entire OPA team organized such a wonderful event.

It was exciting to see how our network expanded with new members and fresh faces, bringing new energy to our mission.

It was an honor to present the recipients of the OPA H. Milt Phillips Award and the Oklahoma Newspaper Foundation's Beachy Musselman Award. Russell M. Perry, publisher of The Black Chronicle, received the prestigious Milt Phillips Award from the OPA Board of Directors. Corey Jones, public service reporter for the Tulsa World, was awarded the Beachy Musselman Award by the ONF Board of Trustees. These awards are

a recognition of hard work and dedication.

We were very proud to announce the new A-Mark Prize for Investigative Reporting awards this year.

First place was awarded to Garrett Yalch and Clifton Adcock, The Frontier; second place to Andy Dossett, Bartlesville Examiner-Enterprise; and third place to Ruby Topalian, Oklahoma Watch.

Also, I would like to say congratulations to all of the Sequoyah Award recipients and everyone who was recognized for all their hard work throughout the year. Well done!

Pleasure to work with OPA board and staff

The year has flown by and my term as President is about to come to an end.

It has been an honor and a privilege to serve the past seven years on the Oklahoma Press Association Board of Directors with a great group from around the state. It is always such a diverse group with many great ideas to contribute.

To every board member who has served, I want to say "thank you" for your service and commitment to our organization and for your support

during this past year. Because of their foresight and leadership, I'm confident of a strong and bright future for OPA.

Every single employee at OPA and OPS – Lisa Sutliff, Jennifer Gilliland, Cindy Shea, Landon Cobb, Jeannie Freeman, Scott Wilkerson, Keith Burgin, Wilma Newby, Rod Serfoss, Alexis Marshall, Austin Anderson, Jennifer Cates and Sharon Beuchaw – makes this organization the best in the country (in my humble opinion).

Passing a defining piece of legislation

In the past few years, I have had a front row seat to watch as Mark Thomas navigates the Oklahoma legislative session with knowledge of the various bills, their authors and how the prospective legislation can impact our industry.

This year, Mark led the charge on behalf of all papers across the state and was at the helm of one of the most important legislative efforts our industry has seen in years. This bill was a defining piece of legislation, which was pivotal to every legal

newspaper in the state. Mark, Brett Wesner, Rod Serfoss and the whole team planned, prepared and pushed this bill forward at every step. Through long nights and even longer debates, Mark worked with lawmakers on both sides of the aisle. He answered questions, corrected misconceptions and made sure the voice of community journalism was not only heard, but respected.

On behalf of every newspaper that will benefit from this legislation, large and small, I want to say thank you to Mark – for his vision, for his grit and for never backing down when it mattered most. He's the real rock star.

But just as one bill doesn't end the fight, one term doesn't end the work. I hope you'll join me in supporting Suzie Campbell (Countywide & Sun) on July 1 as the incoming OPA president when she begins her journey into the next year. She brings with her a passion for journalism, a vision for the future and the strength to lead us into our next chapter as we continue to protect the industry.

As I wrap up this last month, I say thank you to each paper who has taken the time to meet with me over this past year and discuss those issues most important to you. It has been my pleasure.

Lean in when you need support, keep up the good work and stay away from those bloopers.

Till next time, friends.

Learn the best practices for Public Notices at
okpress.com/public-notice-training

The Oklahoma Press Association offers three videos that describe and illustrate the standards and best practices for publication of notices along with downloadable material.

Officers, directors elected at business meeting

Members of the Oklahoma Press Association elected new officers and directors for 2025-2026 at the June 6 business meeting during the annual convention at the Grand Casino Resort & Hotel in Shawnee.

Elected as president was Suzie Campbell, publisher of the Countywide & Sun. Erin Dyer-Thompson, co-publisher of the El Reno Tribune, was elected as vice president and

Brian Blansett, publisher of The Lincoln County News, was elected to serve a second one-year term as treasurer. Shauna Belyeu, general manager of The Eufaula Indian Journal, will serve a one-year term as immediate past president.

Ed Choate, publisher of the Muskogee Phoenix, was elected for a renewal of a three-year term on the board. Connor Choate, co-publisher

of the Marietta Monitor, and Jason Collington, editor of the Tulsa World, were both elected to fulfill vacated terms.

Katherine Miller, publisher of The Norman Transcript, was elected as a new board member serving a three-year term.

Other members of the OPA Board of Directors are Brett Wesner, Wesner Publications, and Shaun Witt, Oklahoma Watch.

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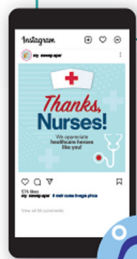
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These are questions answered by the attorneys for the OPA Legal Services Plan members in recent months. OPA members always need timely legal advice on issues related to publishing.

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Legislature increases rate for legal notices

(Continued from Page 1)
pened if the state's publishers hadn't written, called, and texted," Wesner said.

"This was a very difficult piece of legislation to move, but together, we showed what OPA can do when we work together in the interest of government transparency."

HB 2167 passed the House on March 25 by an 83-6 vote. On April 28, the bill passed the Senate 36-6. On May 5, the governor vetoed the legislation, writing a confusing and surprising veto message, even though the bill reached his desk with veto-proof vote majorities in both the House and Senate.

On the final day of session, the House of Representatives voted to override the veto with an 83-3 vote. Several hours later – at 11:02 p.m. – the Senate voted to override the veto with a vote of 35-10.

The new law is effective November 1, 2025. The legislation increases the required per line and per word rates

for those desiring to publish notices and includes reforms to improve readability and accessibility of notices in Oklahoma newspapers.

Rate changes in HB 2167 as follows:

- Increases the per line rate for first and subsequent insertions from .70 and .65 cents per line to \$1.10 and \$1.00 per line.
- Increases the per word rate for first and subsequent insertions from .15 and .14 cents per word to .22 and .20 cents per word.
- Authorizes newspapers to charge a \$5 fee for any notarial act for affidavits.
- Sets a \$25 minimum charge for notices in instances where the statutory per line and per word rates would not reach a minimum of \$25.00.

Increased accessibility by HB 2167 as follows:

- Requires newspapers to provide access to notices

in front of any website payroll.

- Requires newspapers to upload notices to a state-wide free public notice site operated by the press association.

Increased readability by HB 2167 as follows:

- Establishes the newspaper has the authority to publish notices in a format readable to a reasonable person. Notices submitted to a newspaper that are unreadable or intended to be unreadable may be rejected or typeset by the newspaper in a readable format.
- Creates a legal notice minimum type size of 8-point non-condensed type, with a maximum of 10-point non-condensed type. Larger type sizes can be requested in writing by the person placing the notice.
- Clarifies the person desiring the notice is prohibited from elimination of spaces between words or numeric descriptions, or use hyphenation to combine words to reduce the word or line count.
- Establishes a minimum

line length of 1.5 inches for legal notice column width. A column line may be longer, but the rate does not change with the extended line length.

To assist people with placing notices, HB 2167 also:

- Prohibits newspapers from having a deadline for legal notices that is more than five (5) business days prior to the date of publication, excluding the date of publication, Saturdays, Sunday and legal holidays in the State of Oklahoma.
- Allows a person requiring notice to request confirmation of receipt by the newspaper. The newspaper shall confirm receipt and notify the person placing the notice of the dates or issues in which the notice shall appear.
- If the newspaper fails to publish the notice on the dates confirmed the newspaper must run the notice in a future issue, as specified by the person requesting the notice, at no charge. If there are multiple insertions, only the first omitted insertion is at no charge.

OPA Convention

(Continued from Page 1)

- Leonard Woolsey, Publisher of The Galveston County Daily News
- Mike Sanders, Oklahoma State Broadband Director
- Cindy Byrd, Oklahoma State Auditor & Inspector, and
- Eric Meyer, Editor and Publisher of the Marion County Record.

Many association members also spoke during the popular Speed Topics session and two panel discussions.

Their expertise provided attendees with timely and rel-

evant insights into journalism, public service, and industry challenges.

The OPA proudly congratulates this year's award recipients and Better Newspaper Contest winners for their exceptional talent and dedication to the profession.

The success of the event was made possible with the generous support of this year's sponsors. OPA extends sincere thanks to: Citizen Potawatomi Nation, The Chickasaw Nation, eType Services, AT&T, Inasmuch Foundation,

Hilliary Communications, Public Service Company of Oklahoma, Ellis County Star, BancFirst, Canadian Valley Electric Cooperative Inc., and the Oklahoma Indian Gaming Association.

Once again, the OPA Convention proved to be an invaluable gathering for Oklahoma's journalism community.

We hope to see you there next year.



Attendees participate in one of the Saturday afternoon Speed Topic sessions, led by association members.

**Convention Photography by
Emma Finer, McAlester News-Capital, and OPA staff members**

RCFP represents Oklahoma Watch, Frontier in separate Open Records Act lawsuits

The Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press is representing Oklahoma Watch and Frontier Media Group in separate open records lawsuits.

OKLAHOMA WATCH

Oklahoma Watch and reporter Jennifer Palmer are suing the State of Oklahoma for records about an education official's resignation.

In April 2025, Palmer submitted a public records request to the Oklahoma State Department of Education to request the resignation letter of a top agency official.

The request was eventually denied. Oklahoma Watch reported that an unsigned email claimed the record was exempt under a section of the Oklahoma Open Records Act allowing for the discretionary release of certain documents that are part of an internal personnel investigation.

There is no known investigation involving the official and the department has provided resignation letters in the past, said Oklahoma Watch.

"The state Department of Education can no longer deny access to public records and expect the people of Oklahoma

to accept it without question," said Leslie Briggs, an attorney with the Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press. "The Open Records Act ensures the people may exercise their right to know and be informed about their government. We expect OSDE to comply with those rights and will force compliance in court when they do not."

Oklahoma Watch sought the resignation letter as part of an investigation into the agency's hiring practices.

(See court case on OSCN.net:

CV-2025-1271, Oklahoma County.)

FRONTIER MEDIA GROUP

Frontier Media Group and reporter Ashlynd Huffman are also suing the State of Oklahoma for violations of the Open Records Act.

Huffman submitted an open records request to the Oklahoma Department of Corrections in April 2025 seeking reports on the death of an inmate and other violent incidents at Allen Gamble Correctional Center in Holdenville.

The DOC released similar reports to The Frontier a year earlier, according to the Reporters Committee for Freedom of

the Press, but denied Huffman's request claiming the records are confidential under a DOC policy and fall under an exemption in the Oklahoma Open Records Act that allows law enforcement agencies to shield certain records from the public.

Leslie Briggs, the Reporters Committee's Local Legal Initiative attorney for Oklahoma, filed the lawsuit on behalf of Huffman and The Frontier, alleging the DOC's denial violates the state's open records law.

"The public has an overriding interest in accessing serious incident reports from the Department which outweighs any exception or exemption that may apply because the severity of the conditions in prisons implicates not only the constitutional rights of inmates, but the public safety of entire communities — including Department employees who are at risk of serious violence or death if conditions inside a particular facility deteriorate without public intervention," The Frontier's lawsuit argues.

(See court case on OSCN.net:

CV-2025-1369, Oklahoma County.)



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Oklahoma broadband push brings high-speed internet resources to rural communities

■ BY WILLIAM WESNER
OPA INTERN

Oklahoma is making broad strides when it comes to making sure every citizen has a working internet in their area, Mike Sanders said at the OPA Convention on June 7 in Shawnee.

Sanders is Oklahoma broadband's first executive director. He explained that there is still a wide and vast digital divide in the state.

"The digital divide is a rural crisis," said Sanders.

Sanders said what they talk about most at the Broadband office are the two types of internets they are dealing with, the "unserved" and "underserved." Unserved means a household doesn't have the basic 25 Mbps download and 3 Mbps upload internet connection; Underserved means speeds are below the modern standard of 100 Mbps download and 20 Mbps upload.

"Our mission is simple and clear: to deliver fast, reliable, and affordable internet to every corner of our state, especially the small towns and rural

communities that have been left behind for far too long," Sanders said.

According to the Federal Communications Commission's latest broadband map, Oklahoma now ranks fourth in the nation for reducing the number of homes and businesses without access to high-speed internet.

"We've already invested over \$520 million in broadband expansion. When you include the matching funds from internet service providers, the total exceeds \$880 million," said Sanders.

These funds are already supporting over 180 broadband expansion projects across the state.

"Once all these projects are complete, over 150,000 Oklahomans – most of them in small towns – will gain access to high-speed internet for the very first time," he said.

But expansion is not just about connectivity; it's about preserving the community.

A recent grant of \$53.4 million in federal funds has been given to five internet service



Oklahoma Broadband Office Executive Director Mike Sanders told attendees about the ongoing work to bring high-speed internet to rural areas of the state to give state newspapers a reliable and affordable way to bring professional journalism to residents.

providers for the 19 middle-mile infrastructure project. Think of this as an interstate for internet that will connect hubs to local networks to finish the "last mile" to homes.

Even larger funding is on the way: later this year, Oklahoma will receive \$768 million from the federal Broadband Equity, Access and

Deployment (BEAD) Program – marking the state's largest broadband investment to date.

Still challenges remain.

One woman from Grady County shared her struggle with internet companies and how she must drive miles into town just to get a stable internet connection.

"I wish I could give you that \$300,000 and make sure you get high-speed internet, but I also have to be accountable for taxpayers' dollars," said Sanders.

In closing, Sanders emphasized the importance of local newspapers in rural communities.

"Local papers aren't just ink on paper – they are the heartbeat of our communities," he said.

"Broadband makes the heartbeat stronger."



Members of the Oklahoma Press Association attend Mike Sanders' session at the annual convention.

Kansas publisher discusses police raid

■ **BY WILLIAM WESNER**
OPA INTERN

Eric Meyer, publisher of the Marion County Record in Kansas, delivered the keynote speech at the June 6-7 OPA Convention in Shawnee.

Meyer discussed the accounts of an illegal raid, which violated his First and Fourth Amendment rights. What began as routine reporting over a proposed city bill in Marion, Kansas, turned into a national story for the Marion County Record when it began investigating a policy proposed by Mayor David Mayfield that would eliminate votes on bonds in Marion. Sensing something was not right, the newspaper, began aggressively reporting on the proposed bill.

“This is when things begin to unravel,” said Meyer.

While the newspaper was investigating the proposed bill, the City of Marion hired a new police chief, which also sparked interest from the newsroom. Gideon Cody’s hiring came with suspicious circumstances. Cody was a captain in Kansas City, Kansas, earning \$120,000. With one year left until his retirement, he was demoted by the Kansas City Police Department for creating a hostile work environment. Cody quit the Kansas City position and accepted the job of chief of police in the small town of Marion, population 1,900, for \$60,000.

Once in Marion, Chief Cody began giving raises to the police officers, including himself. The newspaper began looking into the circumstance

of the raises and asking questions about them.

As the Marion County Record continued its investigations, U.S. Congressman Jake LaTurner visited Marion for a meet-and-greet and the newspaper was invited to attend the event at a local restaurant. During the meeting, restaurant owner Kari Newell, a friend of the mayor, asked them to leave.

‘When something is wrong, you don’t just sit by and watch it happen.’

Eric Meyer

Soon after this, an anonymous source gave the newspaper a document that showed the restaurant owner’s driver’s license had been suspended. The Marion County Record worked with the state to verify the information but after confirming it, Meyer decided not to run it in the paper and informed the sheriff’s office, which had known of the suspension, of his decision. Even with that information, a Marion city council member sent a note to the newspaper accusing them of trying to release the document.

On Friday morning, August 11, 2023, the police raided Meyer’s home and newsroom. Officers seized computers, phones and all their equipment. One of Meyer’s reporters quit, fearing retaliation from the officers.

Meyer’s mother’s home was also searched; she was 98 years old. Seven officers participated in the search. Joan

Meyer didn’t sleep or eat that night; instead, she sat in her chair until 6:00 a.m.

“You’re going to give me a stroke, and I’m going to die,” she said. Joan Meyer died the next day, and the coroner’s office said it was partially caused by the police officers’ involvement.

“The raid wasn’t just a mistake – it was a flagrant abuse of power,” said Eric Meyer.

Myer filed multiple lawsuits, five federal and local lawsuits under the First and Fourth Amendments and the Privacy Protection Act.

The mayor resigned from office, and the police chief was charged with obstruction after deleting texts in which he discussed destroying evidence.

The raid made national news, and Meyer received support and outreach from all over the country after the story broke.

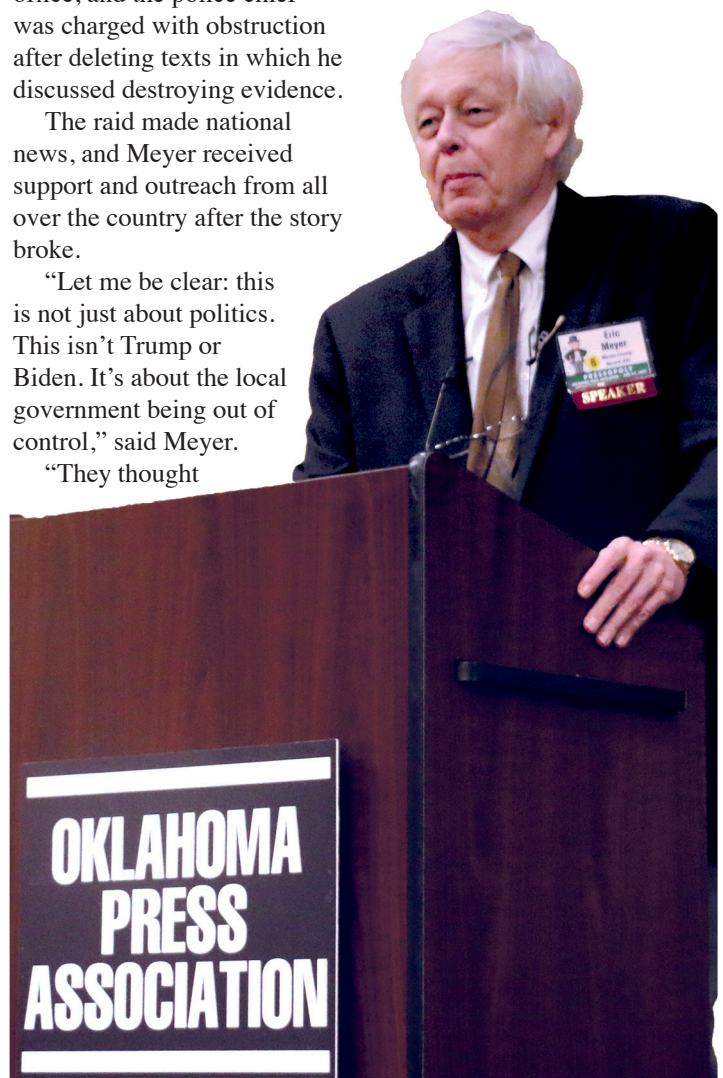
“Let me be clear: this is not just about politics. This isn’t Trump or Biden. It’s about the local government being out of control,” said Meyer.

“They thought

they could wear us down. But I’m stubborn. That’s something I inherited from my mother. When something is wrong, you don’t just sit by and watch it happen.

“We were targeted because we reported aggressively. They wanted Pleasantville – no disagreement, no dissent. But that’s not journalism. That’s propaganda. And our role is to speak truth – even if it’s the kind of truth that gets you in ‘good trouble,’ as the saying goes.

“That’s the kind of trouble we got into – and I’m proud of it.”



Thank You!

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Oklahoma State Auditor fights government fraud

■ BY WILLIAM WESNER

OPA INTERN

State Auditor & Inspector Cindy Byrd opened her remarks at the June 7 OPA Convention by introducing herself and giving a quick background on her role with the State of Oklahoma.

Byrd is the first woman to be elected to this office and is the first in more than 30 years to have hands-on experience conducting audits at every level of state government as a CPA.

"I answer directly to the people of Oklahoma," said Byrd, whose job is to shed light on the state's finances and hold public officials accountable. "The government is not a business. It's a stewardship of services."

In March, Byrd was tasked with investigating the Department of Mental Health and

Substance Abuse. The agency first claimed a \$63 million shortfall, then revised it to \$43 million, and eventually testified they only needed \$6.2 million. A month later, the agency requested an emergency \$23 million just to meet payroll.

"This lack of consistency eroded trust," said Byrd.

Leadership could not explain their financial status, and then eventually the office learned that they entered the fiscal year with a \$9.4 million deficit. Yet, instead of caution they hired 21 new executives and funded Narcan vending machines. "Make no mistake – this crisis is not resolved. Our investigation continues," said Byrd.

She then talked about another audit her office is wrapping up against the Department of Tourism and the

controversial Swadley's BBQ contract. Byrd spoke on the sweetheart deals, questionable billing and the nearly \$17 million spent on state park restaurants. The case is still ongoing, and its findings will be released soon, she said.

"This isn't isolated. Covid funds flooded into Oklahoma, and the state was not equipped to handle them," said Byrd.

From DHS to the Wildlife Department to the Healthcare Authority, she is seeing widespread issues.

"Audits are underway or completed, and I urge you to read the findings," she said.

Byrd's office is also investigating the State Department of Education. The agency distributes money but is not held accountable for outcomes. Despite larger budgets and spending, outcomes remain poor.



State Auditor & Inspector Cindy Byrd speaks at the OPA Convention.

Another audit that raised questions was the Turnpike Authority. Byrd said the Mental Health audit took priority over that case, but it's now back on track and is expected to be released in November.

"If leaders refuse to act, then I will keep calling out fraud, waste and abuse. And I know I can count on you to do the same," said Byrd.

Leonard Woolsey says digital is not the enemy

■ BY WILLIAM WESNER

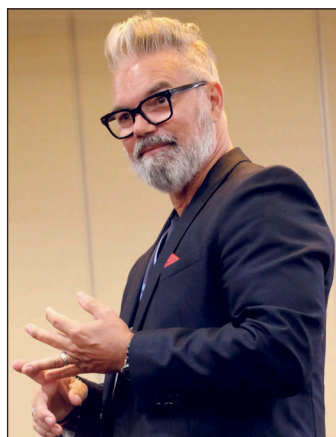
OPA INTERN

"This isn't an obstacle, it's an opportunity," said Southern Newspapers Publisher Leonard Woolsey about the digital migration in newspapers.

Woolsey spoke at the annual OPA Convention in Shawnee on June 7.

Woolsey walked attendees through the transformation of media over the past century – from the era where newspapers dominated the advertising market to today's digitally driven landscape.

"Back in the day, newspapers were the primary influencers," he said. "We own the local media market. But the world changed beneath our



Leonard Woolsey, publisher of Southern Newspapers and the Galveston County Daily News, discusses digital marketing at the OPA Convention.

feet, and now it's time we start changing too."

The United States has the largest advertising market in

the world, \$317 billion. Over 96 percent of new digital ad dollars is going to just two companies: Google and Meta.

"Those companies may have the tech, but they don't have what we have – relationships," said Woolsey.

Woolsey pushed back against bundling digital products as free add-ons.

"Don't give it away," he said. "Don't say, 'Buy a full page and get a free newsletter ad.' That tells them the newsletter has no value."

Instead, he urged publishers to present digital and print together as part of a comprehensive marketing plan.

Woolsey also addressed one of the most common questions

from publishers: how to price digital.

"We price it like print," he said.

Beyond pricing and packaging, Woolsey emphasizes the importance of owning first-party data – email addresses from subscribers, advertisers and contest entrants. As tech giants move away from cookie tracking, first-party data becomes even more crucial.

Woolsey closed his talk with encouragement and urgency. "Get comfortable being uncomfortable," he said. "Don't be afraid to try things. Don't be afraid to fail. Keep learning. Keep going."

AWARD WINNERS



OPA's H. Milt Phillips Award

RUSSELL M. PERRY

The Black Chronicle



Russell M. Perry receives the prestigious OPA H. Milt Phillips Award during the OPA Convention held June 6–7. He proudly holds the award aloft as his daughter, Shannon O'Stricker, and son, Kevin Perry, look on. The OPA Board of Directors selects the recipient based on publishing a high-quality newspaper; contribution to the profession and the newspaper industry; years of service to the community, state and nation in a variety of volunteer activities and strong love and dedication to the family.

Russell M. Perry, an American businessman, banker, publisher and broadcaster, received the H. Milt Phillips Award – the highest honor given by the Oklahoma Press Association – on June 7 at the OPA Awards Banquet.

“Let me say thank you to the association for voting on me for this distinguished award,” said Perry in a tribute video.

Perry started *The Black Chronicle*, which focuses on the state's African community, in 1979. At the same time, he founded and became president of Perry Publishing and Broadcasting Company.

In the video, he talked about growing his company into the largest independent Black-owned broadcasting company in the nation.

“The beautiful thing about it,” he said, “is I have the second generation coming up. My son Kevin Perry and daughter Velvet Perry are continuing the publishing business.”

Perry attributed much of his success to hard work and diversification.

“I’ve been extremely blessed,” he said.

Perry’s company purchased its first radio station in 1993, and continued to make acquisitions. Today it owns 16 stations in Oklahoma, Arkansas, South Carolina and

Georgia, as well as a radio and television tower company.

Perry was nominated in 1999 to serve as the Oklahoma Secretary of Commerce, making him the first African American in the state’s history to serve in this position. However, his position was never officially confirmed by the Senate.

In April 2025, the Oklahoma Senate passed Senate Resolution 13, honoring Perry for his significant contributions to the state and affirming that he served as Oklahoma’s Secretary of Commerce.

During his career, Perry served on the State Fair of Oklahoma board and the National Board of Radio & Television, is the majority principal of the First Security Bank & Trust Co. and has served on the Small Business Bank Advisory Council of the Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City and on the board of trustees of Oklahoma City University. He also served as a board member of many other state and local boards.

Perry was inducted into the Oklahoma Association of Broadcasters Hall of Fame in 2006 and into the Oklahoma Journalism Hall of Fame in 2009. In 2013, he was inducted into the Oklahoma Hall of Fame.

AWARD WINNERS



ONF's Beachy Musselman Award **COREY JONES** *Tulsa World*

The 2025 recipient of the Oklahoma Newspaper Foundation's Beachy Musselman Award is Corey Jones, a member of the Tulsa World and the Public Service Journalism team at Lee Enterprises, where he works on in-depth, special reports.

The award was presented June 7 during the OPA Convention in Shawnee.

Jones' investigative series reporting on fatal pursuits involving Oklahoma law enforcement, particularly the Oklahoma Highway Patrol, continues to receive national media attention.

"I want to thank my editors who first assigned this to me but then supported me along the way as we have expanded what has turned out to be a significant issue in the state," Jones said in his introductory video. "Susan Ellerbach, former editor of Tulsa World; Mike Strain, former managing editor; Paul Tyrrell, still there as city editor; and current editor Jason Collington – all of them allowed me bandwidth, time and ability to pursue this story. I also want to give great thanks to our wonderful attorneys, Schaad Titus and Barry Reynolds, who have been fantastic in helping us hold Oklahoma Highway Patrol accountable to open records law

and the public so we can learn what they're doing and why."

Jones also thanked the people who have been affected by these chases.

"I can't express enough thanks for folks who have been willing to share some of their darkest moments with me and the public," Jones said. "It's so important for the public to understand this is real life; it's not a game, it's not a movie. These are the real life consequences of pursuits which are inherently dangerous."

"When people are willing to share those moments and the horror they've experienced and gone through, I think it's really important in understanding the gravity of this issue and situation."

Jones' investigation found that about 1 in 4 people killed in Oklahoma car chases are innocent motorists not involved in the pursuits.

He spent months in 2024 piecing together a database via federal, state and local public records to exclusively reveal who is being killed, which agencies are pursuing and why in a seven-year period.

The vast majority of 68 fatal chases that killed 79 people were prompted by traffic violations or property crimes. Only two deadly pur-



Corey Jones receives the Oklahoma Newspaper Foundation's Beachy Musselman Award at the June 7 OPA Convention. The award was presented by ONF Vice President J.D. Meisner, publisher of the Cushing Citizen. The award, presented annually, recognizes a journalist for his or her contribution to the field of printed journalism or its related field.

suits began because of violent offenses.

Jones' investigation uncovered reckless trooper actions, shoddy record-keeping, failure to address "alarming" concerns expressed by commanders and unwillingness to formally review several fatal chases despite red flags.

In 2024, the Highway Patrol gutted its pursuit policy by removing all policy language governing troopers

who engage in chases. OHP erased an acknowledgment that discontinuing a chase "may be the most rational means of preserving the lives and property of the public, the (trooper), and the suspect."

Jones continues to report on this because the Oklahoma Highway Patrol continues to make its pursuits fatal, while all other area law enforcement agencies don't allow this tactic.

AWARD WINNERS



New inductees into the Half Century and Quarter Century Clubs were announced by the Oklahoma Press Association on June 7 during the OPA Convention in Shawnee. Inducted into the Half Century Club were (seated) Bruce Campbell, Jerry Fink and John Lewis (C. Ross Coyle not pictured). Quarter Century Club inductees (standing) are Sean Stephens, Denise Frost, Eric Hunter, Calvin Stone and Shauna Belyeu.

OPA HALF CENTURY CLUB INDUCTEES

BRUCE CAMPBELL

Bruce Campbell has been a fixture in the northwest Oklahoma sports world since the 1970s. A graduate of the University of Oklahoma, Campbell worked as a sports writer for the Enid News & Eagle from June 1978 until his retirement in November 2018.

However, retirement didn't stop him as he agreed to stay on with the News & Eagle as a part-time sports writer, a position he still holds today.

While at OU, Campbell worked for The Oklahoma Daily as a sports writer, assistant sports editor, copy editor and sports editor.

After graduation, he worked in Midland, Texas, before returning to the Sooner State. He was a reporter for Oklahoma Journal and sports editor for the Elk City Daily News before joining the Enid News & Eagle.

Campbell has received several awards for his writing. He was honored by the Oklahoma District Tennis Association with a Media Excellence Award and by the Oklahoma Secondary School Activities Association with a Media Excellence Award.

C. ROSS COYLE

C. Ross Coyle is a native Oklahoman who graduated from Marlow High School in 1955. He was recruited as a tight end by legendary University of Oklahoma head coach Bud Wilkinson and became an integral part of the legendary Sooner dynasty of the 1950s.

He went on to play two years in the Canadian Football League with Toronto and Calgary, then played a year in the NFL with the Los Angeles Rams.

Coyle built a home in Blanchard in 1970 and then approached former Blanchard News owner Bill Van Wie about buying the paper two years later. From 1972 through late 2024, Coyle served as owner, editor and publisher of the Blanchard News.

He sold the Blanchard News to Central Oklahoma Weeklies in 2024 and retired after a journalism career that spanned over a half century.

AWARD WINNERS

OPA HALF CENTURY CLUB INDUCTEES

JERRY FINK

Jerry Fink began his journalistic career in 1974 at the Sequoyah County Times under the leadership of Jim Mayo. His duties included editing, reporting, photography and feature writing. He remained at the Sequoyah County Times until 1977 when he went to work for the Tulsa World as a general assignment reporter. In 1980, he joined the state staff and covered breaking news, trials, education, government and features in Eastern Oklahoma.

For the next five years, he served as State Editor, recruiting and working with a staff of freelance writers as well as capitol bureau reporters. In 1997, he joined the Las Vegas Sun as a senior reporter.

In 2012, Fink returned to Oklahoma and came full circle to a Mayo family newspaper. He was hired as editor of The Eufaula Indian Journal and the McIntosh County Democrat.

JOHN LEWIS

John Lewis began his journalism career in 1974 as a carrier for The Seminole Producer, delivering papers to Route 2 on his bicycle. He eventually began using a motorcycle and picked up additional routes.

In late 1978, Lewis was offered the position as a cameraman and press journeyman. Since he had recently married, he jumped at the chance to move up.

A few years later, Lewis took over running the press full time while delivering papers on the side. He also took pictures for the paper for many years.

Lewis was promoted to Circulation Manager in 1996 and was named Production Manager one year later. He holds these titles today and still loves delivering papers to loyal customers that want home delivery.

OPA QUARTER CENTURY CLUB INDUCTEES

SHAUNA BELYEU

Shauna Belyeu graduated from Northeastern State University with a bachelor's degree in criminal justice pre-law with an associate degree in journalism and business administration. She began her newspaper career at the McIntosh County Democrat and The Eufaula Indian Journal in 1999. She was promoted to advertising manager of the two publications in 2002 and to general manager in 2006.

Belyeu was elected to the OPA Board of Directors in 2018 and currently serves as president. She has chaired multiple OPA committees and is also a board representative for the Oklahoma Newspaper Foundation.

She has served as secretary on the board of the Eufaula Chamber of Commerce for four years; as a member of the Eufaula Economic Development Planning Committee; and is currently serving on the Eufaula Area Museum board. Belyeu is also a third-genera-

tion small business owner in Eufaula.

DENISE FROST

Denise Frost has dedicated nearly three decades of her life to serving local communities through her career in the newspaper industry.

In 1986, Frost joined the staff of the McIntosh County Democrat and The Eufaula Indian Journal, where she worked for nine years. She then transitioned into the field of education.

Frost returned to the newspaper industry in 2002, joining The Ada Evening News as an assistant manager in circulation and in the advertising department. She returned to her roots in 2014, working for the McIntosh County Democrat, Henryetta Free-Lance and Okmulgee Times in advertising. Since 2020, Frost has served as office manager for the Free-Lance and Times, a role she still holds.

ERIC HUNTER

Eric Hunter, production and IT manager with the Clinton Daily News, has spent 25 years working at the newspaper.

He began his career with Clinton Daily News while still in high school. In the early days, he served as a photographer and helped in the composition department.

Hunter became an assistant pressman at an early age, working his way into the position of head pressman and IT manager.

In addition to printing the Clinton Daily News, Hunter oversees the printing of several area newspapers.

SEAN STEPHENS

Sean Stephens, publisher of the Clinton Daily News, has been with the newspaper since 1999.

He started his official journalism career as the publication's sports editor before eventually serving as an

assistant to then publisher Rod Serfoss.

In 2012, Stephens made the switch to advertising manager. In May of 2023, he was named publisher of the Clinton Daily News, only the third person to hold that position since 1940.

Stephens earned his journalism degree from Cameron University in 1999.

CALVIN STONE

Calvin Stone, an assistant pressman with the Clinton Daily News, has spent 42 years working in the newspaper industry.

He started his career working for a newspaper in Michigan in 1979. In 1982, he moved to Elk City to work as a pressman for the Elk City Daily News. He worked there from 1982 to 2006 and returned there in 2010.

In 2018, he went to work for the Clinton Daily News in its printing division where he helps print the newspaper as well as numerous weekly publications.

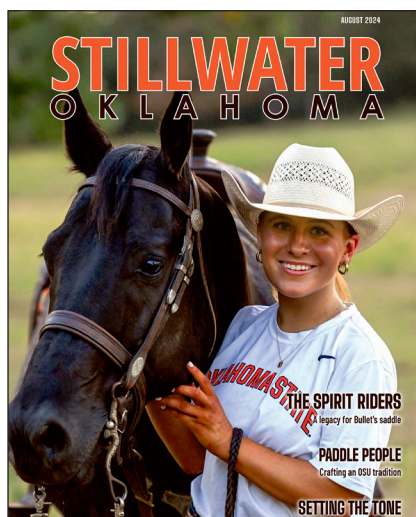
AWARD WINNERS

OPA MAGAZINE CONTEST

FIRST PLACE
**Stillwater
News Press**

SECOND
PLACE
**The Duncan
Banner**

THIRD PLACE
**The Norman
Transcript**



ADDITIONAL AWARDS

2024 ONF JOSEPH H. EDWARDS
OUTDOOR WRITER
OF THE YEAR

JAKE SERMERSHEIM
Tahlequah Daily Press

2024 ONF RAY LOKEY
MEMORIAL AWARD FOR
EXCELLENCE IN REPORTING

LYNN ADAMS
Sequoyah County Times

2024 OPA PERFECTA AWARD WINNERS

The Perfecta Award honors OPA member newspapers that achieve 100 percent accuracy on advertising orders from Oklahoma Press Service in the calendar year.

The All About Hennessey
Post

Alva Review-Courier

The American (Afton)

Apache News

The Beckham County Record

Blackwell Journal-Tribune

Broken Bow News

The Cheyenne Star

Clayton Today

The Comanche Times

The County Times (Lawton)

The Cyril News

The Davis News

The Delaware County Journal

Eastern Times-Register
(Roland)

The Edmond Way

El Reno Tribune

The Elk City News

The Eufaula Indian Journal

Garber-Billings News

Garvin County News Star

Guthrie News Leader

The Healdton Herald

Henryetta Free-Lance

The Herald-Democrat
(Beaver)

Hughes County Tribune

Hugo News

Inola Independent

The Keystone Gusher
(Drumright)

The Kingfisher Times
& Free Press

Kiowa County Democrat

The Konawa Leader

Latimer County News-Tribune

The Lawton Constitution

The Lindsay News

The Madill Record

Marietta Monitor

The Marlow Review

McIntosh County Democrat

The Mooreland Leader

Mustang Times

The Newcastle Pacer

Northwest Oklahoman
(Shattuck)

OKC Friday

The Okeene Record

Okemah News Leader

The Oklahoma Eagle (Tulsa)

Oklmulgee Times

Oologah Lake Leader

The Perkins Journal

Perry Journal

The Piedmont-Surrey Gazette

The Ponca City News

The Prague Times-Herald

The Purcell Register

The Sentinel Leader

Sequoyah County Times

Spiro Graphic

Stigler News-Sentinel

The Stilwell Democrat Journal

Sulphur Times-Democrat

Tahlequah Daily Press

Talihina American

The Thomas Tribune

Tulsa Beacon

The Valliant Leader

Vian Tenkiller News

The Vici Vision

Watonga Republican

Waurika News Journal
& Ryan Leader

The Wewoka Times

The Wilson Post-Democrat

Woods County Enterprise

Yale News

Yukon Progress

A-MARK PRIZE FOR INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALISM



A-Mark Prize for INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALISM 2024 AWARD WINNERS



2025 A-Mark Awards for Investigative Journalism were presented on June 7 during the OPA Convention in Shawnee. From left: Andy Dossett, Bartlesville Examiner-Enterprise (Second Place); Jennifer Palmer, Oklahoma Watch, accepting for Ruby Topalian (Third Place); and Garrett Yalch and Clifton Adcock, The Frontier (First Place).

FIRST PLACE

GARRETT YALCH and CLIFTON ADCOCK,
The Frontier

Fields of green: Oklahoma's medical marijuana black market

SECOND PLACE

ANDY DOSSETT, Bartlesville Examiner-Enterprise
Crypto kings and broken promises: Bartlesville's iconic Price Tower

THIRD PLACE

RUBY TOPALIAN, Oklahoma Watch
*Pay or your son dies:
Oklahoma inmates' families extorted by inside gangs*

AWARDS:

FIRST PLACE:

\$5,000

to the reporter

\$2,500

to the news outlet

SECOND PLACE:

\$3,000

to the reporter

\$1,500

to the news outlet

THIRD PLACE:

\$2,000

to the reporter

\$1,000

to the news outlet

*The A-Mark Prize
is administered by
Oklahoma Newspaper
Foundation*

For more information about
the A-Mark Award see
[OKPRESS.COM/
AMARK-PRIZE](https://okpress.com/AMARK-PRIZE)

OKLAHOMA PRESS ASSOCIATION 2024 BETTER NEWSPAPER CONTEST WINNERS



2024 BETTER NEWSPAPER CONTEST SEQUOYAH AWARD WINNERS:

Front row: LaDonna Rhodes, McIntosh County Democrat (Division 6); Jayson Knight, Minco-Union City Times (Division 7); Hannah Owens, The Cameron University Collegian (College News Media); Reina Owens, McAlester News-Capital (Division 2)

Back row: Jeff Harrison, Midwest City Beacon (Division 4); John Denny Montgomery, The Purcell Register (Division 5); Ryan Horton, Choctaw Times (Division 3); Kevin Hassler, Enid News & Eagle (Division 1).

DIVISION 1: Multi-Day and Online-Only Publications, Population more than 40,000

SEQUOYAH AWARD WINNER *Enid News & Eagle*

NEWS CONTENT

First Place: The Lawton Constitution
Second Place: Enid News & Eagle
Third Place: Stillwater News Press

LAYOUT & DESIGN

First Place: The Norman Transcript
Second Place: The Lawton Constitution
Third Place: Enid News & Eagle

ADVERTISING

First Place: Enid News & Eagle
Second Place: The Lawton Constitution
Third Place: Stillwater News Press

EDITORIAL WRITING

First Place: Enid News & Eagle
Second Place: Stillwater News Press
Third Place: The Lawton Constitution

PHOTOGRAPHY

First Place: The Lawton Constitution
Second Place: The Norman Transcript
Third Place: Enid News & Eagle

SPORTS COVERAGE

First Place: Enid News & Eagle
Second Place: Stillwater News Press
Third Place: The Lawton Constitution

SALES PROMOTION

First Place: Enid News & Eagle, "Be A Dog Gone Hero"
Second Place: The Norman Transcript
Third Place: Stillwater News Press

COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP

First Place: Stillwater News Press, "Political Forums and Debates"
Second Place: The Lawton Constitution
Third Place: Enid News & Eagle

NEWS STORY

First Place: Ashlynd Huffman, The Frontier, "Three prisoners died at an Oklahoma private prison after guards skipped security checks, falsified records"
Second Place: Barbara Hoberock, Oklahoma Voice
Third Place: Paxson Haws and Sam Royka, The Norman Transcript

FEATURE STORY

First Place: Nuria Martinez-Keel, Oklahoma Voice, "Oklahoma state superintendent went from 'excited' to 'disgusted' over standards he helped create"
Second Place: Scott Rains, The Lawton Constitution
Third Place: Barbara Hoberock, Oklahoma Voice

SPORTS STORY

First Place: Joey Goodman, The Lawton Constitution, "Tate overcomes tragedy, claims spot in CNFR"
Second Place: Nick Friesen, Enid News & Eagle
Third Place: Zack Wright, The Norman Transcript

BUSINESS STORY

First Place: Paul Monies, Oklahoma Watch, "Rent-to-buy company has big state investment, limited customer options"
Second Place: Keaton Ross, Oklahoma Watch
Third Place: Dylan Goforth, The Frontier

EDUCATION STORY

First Place: Jennifer Palmer and Beth Wallis, Oklahoma Watch, "State seeks repayment of errant teacher bonuses"
Second Place: Nuria Martinez-Keel, Oklahoma Voice
Third Place: Jennifer Palmer, Paul Monies and Heather Warlick, Oklahoma Watch

IN-DEPTH REPORTING

First Place: Garrett Yalch and Clifton Adcock, The Frontier, "Fields of green: Oklahoma's medical marijuana black market"

Second Place: Jake Ramsey, Oklahoma Watch
Third Place: Nuria Martinez-Keel, Oklahoma Voice

COLUMN WRITING

First Place: Janelle Stecklein, Oklahoma Voice
Second Place: Joey Goodman, The Lawton Constitution
Third Place: David Stringer, The Lawton Constitution

SMALL SPACE AD

First Place: Jan Giza, The Norman Transcript, "Theo's Marketplace"
Second Place: Kathy Young, Enid News & Eagle
Third Place: Belinda Darnell and Taylor Kennedy, The Lawton Constitution

LARGE SPACE AD

First Place: The Norman Transcript, "Sandalwood and Sage"
Second Place: Belinda Darnell and Taylor Kennedy, The Lawton Constitution
Third Place: The Norman Transcript

NEWS PHOTOGRAPH

First Place: Jason Elmquist, Stillwater News Press, "Stillwater's solar eclipse"
Second Place: Nuria Martinez-Keel, Oklahoma Voice

Third Place: Paxson Haws, The Norman Transcript

FEATURE PHOTOGRAPH

First Place: Scott Rains, The Lawton Constitution, "Being goofy with the Grinch"
Second Place: Scott Rains, The Lawton Constitution
Third Place: Billy Hefton, Enid News & Eagle

SPORTS PHOTOGRAPH

First Place: Billy Hefton, Enid News & Eagle, "Enid's Cassidy Patterson celebrates"
Second Place: Billy Hefton, Enid News & Eagle
Third Place: Steve Miller, The Lawton Constitution

PHOTO ESSAY/PICTURE PAGE

First Place: Billy Hefton, Enid News & Eagle, "Serious skateboarder"
Second Place: Billy Hefton, Enid News & Eagle
Third Place: Scott Rains, The Lawton Constitution

FRONT PAGE DESIGN

First Place: Jevaughn Gibbs, The Lawton Constitution, "Dec. 8"
Second Place: Sonya Bilovecky, The Lawton Constitution
Third Place: David Stringer, The Lawton Constitution

POINTS:

Points in the first eight categories are awarded as follows. No points are awarded in categories 9 through 25.

EVENTS 1-3

1st Place	110 Points
2nd Place	80 Points
3rd Place	60 Points

EVENTS 4-8

1st Place	100 Points
2nd Place	70 Points
3rd Place	50 Points

Each division's Sweepstakes winner, which is determined by the amount of points accumulated in the first eight categories, receives the Sequoyah Award – the highest honor in the contest.

2024 OPA BETTER NEWSPAPER CONTEST WINNERS

DIVISION 2: Multi-Day and Online-Only Publications, Population 18,000 – 40,000

SEQUOYAH AWARD WINNER *McAlester News-Capitol*

NEWS CONTENT

First Place: Muskogee Phoenix
Second Place: McAlester News-Capital
Third Place: El Reno Tribune

LAYOUT & DESIGN

First Place: The Shawnee News-Star
Second Place: McAlester News-Capital
Third Place: El Reno Tribune

ADVERTISING

First Place: The Shawnee News-Star
Second Place: El Reno Tribune
Third Place: The Duncan Banner

EDITORIAL WRITING

First Place: McAlester News-Capital
Second Place: The Shawnee News-Star
Third Place: Muskogee Phoenix

PHOTOGRAPHY

First Place: Bartlesville Examiner-Enterprise
Second Place: El Reno Tribune
Third Place: McAlester News-Capital

SPORTS COVERAGE

First Place: Claremore Daily Progress
Second Place: The Shawnee News-Star
Third Place: Sapulpa Herald

SALES PROMOTION

First Place: McAlester News-Capital, "Gridiron Guide"
Second Place: The Duncan Banner
Third Place: El Reno Tribune

COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP

First Place: McAlester News-Capital, "McAlester Christmas angels"
Second Place: The Duncan Banner
Third Place: El Reno Tribune

NEWS STORY

First Place: Charles Betzler, Sapulpa Herald, "Teenage dispute fuels hate-filled vandalism at city parks"
Second Place: Andy Dossett, Bartlesville Examiner-Enterprise
Third Place: Ronn Rowland, Muskogee Phoenix

FEATURE STORY

First Place: Kelly Wray, The Duncan Banner, "Big storms, big screen: Real-life tornado wrangler"
Second Place: Andy Dossett, Bartlesville Examiner-Enterprise
Third Place: Andy Dossett, Bartlesville Examiner-Enterprise

SPORTS STORY

First Place: Glen Miller, El Reno Tribune, "A shot at the Olympic dream"
Second Place: Derek Hatridge, McAlester News-Capital
Third Place: John Tranchina, Sapulpa Herald

BUSINESS STORY

First Place: Brandy Jeffreys, McAlester News-Capital, "Mayor is ready to 'flip the switch' on OKLA Theater sign"
Second Place: Brandy Jeffreys, McAlester News-Capital
Third Place: Tamara Gregor, The Duncan Banner

EDUCATION STORY

First Place: Tamara Gregor, The Duncan Banner, "Pampering preparation for prom: Preschoolers help Elk Crossing residents paint nails for special night"
Second Place: Tamara Gregor, The Duncan Banner
Third Place: James Beaty, McAlester News-Capital

IN-DEPTH REPORTING

First Place: Charlene Belew, The Duncan Banner, "DAEDF vs. City of Duncan on tax"
Second Place: Charlene Belew and Tamara Gregor, The Duncan Banner

Third Place: Andy Dossett, Bartlesville Examiner-Enterprise

COLUMN WRITING

First Place: Glen Miller, El Reno Tribune
Second Place: Kelly Wray, The Duncan Banner
Third Place: James Beaty, McAlester News-Capital

SMALL SPACE AD

First Place: Jessica Banks, McAlester News-Capital, "Freedom Ford"
Second Place: Crystal Childers, The Duncan Banner
Third Place: Aubrey Patton, El Reno Tribune

LARGE SPACE AD

First Place: Crystal Childers, The Duncan Banner, "Public Service Company of Oklahoma"
Second Place: Connie Poole, McAlester News-Capital
Third Place: Aubrey Patton, El Reno Tribune

NEWS PHOTOGRAPH

First Place: Andy Dossett, Bartlesville Examiner-Enterprise, "Fourth of July"
Second Place: Glen Miller, El Reno Tribune
Third Place: Andy Dossett, Bartlesville Examiner-Enterprise

FEATURE PHOTOGRAPH

First Place: Andy Dossett, Bartlesville Examiner-Enterprise, "Followed by a moonshadow"
Second Place: Kelly Wray, The Duncan Banner
Third Place: Tamara Gregor, The Duncan Banner

SPORTS PHOTOGRAPH

First Place: Jason Hodges, The Duncan Banner, "Duncan volleyball"
Second Place: Glen Miller, El Reno Tribune
Third Place: Kelly Wray, The Duncan Banner

PHOTO ESSAY/PICTURE PAGE

First Place: Charlene Belew and Kelly Wray, The Duncan Banner, "Family fun at the rodeo"
Second Place: Madalyn Nix and Dawnyal Hill, McAlester News-Capital
Third Place: Charlene Belew and Tamara Gregor, The Duncan Banner

FRONT PAGE DESIGN

First Place: Dawnyal Hill, McAlester News-Capital, "Oct. 31"
Second Place: Dawnyal Hill, McAlester News-Capital
Third Place: Charlene Belew, The Duncan Banner

DIVISION 3: Multi-Day and Online-Only Publications, Population less than 18,000

SEQUOYAH AWARD WINNER *Choctaw Times*

NEWS CONTENT

First Place: Tahlequah Daily Press
Second Place: Sequoyah County Times
Third Place: Choctaw Times

LAYOUT & DESIGN

First Place: Choctaw Times
Second Place: Okmulgee Times
Third Place: Sequoyah County Times

ADVERTISING

First Place: Choctaw Times
Second Place: The Ada News
Third Place: Okmulgee Times

EDITORIAL WRITING

First Place: Tahlequah Daily Press
Second Place: Clinton Daily News
Third Place: Choctaw Times

PHOTOGRAPHY

First Place: The Ada News
Second Place: Sequoyah County Times
Third Place: Woodward News

SPORTS COVERAGE

First Place: The Ada News
Second Place: Choctaw Times
Third Place: Clinton Daily News

SALES PROMOTION

First Place: Okmulgee Times, "Focus magazine"
Second Place: Woodward News
Third Place: Tahlequah Daily Press

COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP

First Place: Tahlequah Daily Press, "Homelessness series"
Second Place: Clinton Daily News
Third Place: Choctaw Times

NEWS STORY

First Place: Lynn Adams, Sequoyah County Times, "Protracted lawsuit citing watershed pollution enters 23rd year"
Second Place: Lee Guthrie, Tahlequah Daily Press
Third Place: Lynn Adams, Sequoyah County Times

FEATURE STORY

First Place: Lynn Adams, Sequoyah County Times, "Gone, but not forgotten: Long Cemetery board tends unmarked graves"
Second Place: Sean Stephens, Clinton Daily News
Third Place: Lee Guthrie, Tahlequah Daily Press

SPORTS STORY

First Place: Jeff Call, The Ada News, "Cougars win state championship without dropping a set"

Second Place: Jake Sermersheim, Tahlequah Daily Press
Third Place: David Seeley, Sequoyah County Times

BUSINESS STORY

First Place: Amanda Parks, Woodward News, "Domino's franchisee pursues lifelong dream with new Woodward location"
Second Place: Sean Stephens, Clinton Daily News
Third Place: Richard R. Barron, The Ada News

EDUCATION STORY

First Place: Sean Stephens, Clinton Daily News, "Young author steals show at school board meeting"
Second Place: Lynn Adams, Sequoyah County Times
Third Place: Lynn Adams, Sequoyah County Times

IN-DEPTH REPORTING

First Place: Lynn Adams, Sequoyah County Times, "Homelessness"
Second Place: Lynn Adams, Sequoyah County Times
Third Place: Rachael Van Horn, Woodward News

COLUMN WRITING

First Place: Kim Poindexter, Tahlequah Daily Press

Second Place: Lynn Adams, Sequoyah County Times
Third Place: Richard R. Barron, The Ada News

SMALL SPACE AD

First Place: LeaAnn Wells, The Ada News, "Forever and Always Charm Bar"
Second Place: Joe Mack, Tahlequah Daily Press
Third Place: LeaAnne Wells, The Ada News

LARGE SPACE AD

First Place: Sara Acosta, Woodward News, "Barber Dyson Ford: It starts and ends with you"
Second Place: LeaAnne Wells, The Ada News
Third Place: Sean Stephens, Clinton Daily News

NEWS PHOTOGRAPH

First Place: Richard R. Barron, The Ada News, "Drone view of demolished block in Sulphur"
Second Place: Richard R. Barron, The Ada News
Third Place: Richard R. Barron, The Ada News

FEATURE PHOTOGRAPH

First Place: Richard R. Barron, The Ada News, "Getting ready for the eclipse?"
Second Place: Richard R. Barron, The Ada News
Third Place: Richard R. Barron, The Ada News

SPORTS PHOTOGRAPH

First Place: Richard R. Barron, The Ada News, "RWB Conference Tournament Sophie Edred scores a run"
Second Place: Bob Whitaker, Choctaw Times
Third Place: Richard R. Barron, The Ada News

PHOTO ESSAY/PICTURE PAGE

First Place: Richard R. Barron, The Ada News, "Downtown businesses destroyed Wednesday morning"
Second Place: Richard R. Barron, The Ada News
Third Place: Richard R. Barron, The Ada News

FRONT PAGE DESIGN

First Place: Kim Poindexter, Tahlequah Daily Press, "Dec. 10"
Second Place: Lynn Adams, Sequoyah County Times
Third Place: Ryan Horton, Choctaw Times

2024 OPA BETTER NEWSPAPER CONTEST WINNERS

DIVISION 4: Weekly Publications, Population more than 20,000

SEQUOYAH AWARD WINNER *Midwest City Beacon*

NEWS CONTENT

First Place: Mustang Times
Second Place: Midwest City Beacon
Third Place: The Edmond Way

LAYOUT & DESIGN

First Place: The Oklahoma Eagle
Second Place: The Edmond Way
Third Place: OKC Friday

ADVERTISING

First Place: OKC Friday
Second Place: Midwest City Beacon
Third Place: Mustang Times

EDITORIAL WRITING

First Place: Southwest Ledger
Second Place: OKC Friday
Third Place: The Black Chronicle

PHOTOGRAPHY

First Place: Midwest City Beacon
Second Place: Durant Democrat
Third Place: Mustang Times

SPORTS COVERAGE

First Place: Midwest City Beacon
Second Place: Mustang Times
Third Place: The Edmond Way

SALES PROMOTION

First Place: The Edmond Way,
"Holiday Greetings Magazine"
Second Place: Mustang Times
Third Place: OKC Friday

COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP

First Place: Midwest City Beacon,
"Food drive"
Second Place: Mustang Times
Third Place: The Oklahoma Eagle

NEWS STORY

First Place: Mike W. Ray, Southwest
Ledger, "Three Red Rock town
employees overpaid"
Second Place: Gary Lee, The
Oklahoma Eagle
Third Place: Mindy Ragan Wood,
Southwest Ledger

FEATURE STORY

First Place: Ross D. Johnson, The
Oklahoma Eagle, "It Was What
People Do."
Second Place: Gary Lee, The
Oklahoma Eagle
Third Place: Rose Lane, OKC Friday

SPORTS STORY

First Place: Jacob Sturm, Midwest
City Beacon, "Carl Albert's Spiwak
adds record to stellar career"
Second Place: Jason Jewell, OKC
Friday

Third Place: Kevin Farr, Durant
Democrat

BUSINESS STORY

First Place: Kimberly Marsh, The
Oklahoma Eagle, "Women's
Business Summit celebrates
successes"
Second Place: Jacob Sturm, Mustang
Times
Third Place: Eric Swanson, Southwest
Ledger

EDUCATION STORY

Divisions 4 & 5 Combined
First Place: John Neal, The Oklahoma
Eagle, "Report shows minimal
progress for black Tulsans"
Second Place: Suzanne Mackey,
Garvin County News Star
Third Place: John Neal and Gary Lee,
The Oklahoma Eagle

IN-DEPTH REPORTING

First Place: Kimberly Marsh, Gary Lee
and Sam Levraut, The Oklahoma
Eagle, "The year in politics"
Second Place: Mike W. Ray,
Southwest Ledger
Third Place: Mike W. Ray, Southwest
Ledger

COLUMN WRITING

First Place: Jacob Sturm, Mustang
Times
Second Place: George McCormick,
The Edmond Way
Third Place: Ross D. Johnson, The
Oklahoma Eagle

SMALL SPACE AD

Divisions 4 & 5 Combined
First Place: Ross D. Johnson, The
Oklahoma Eagle, "Pet's love
language is ice cream"
Second Place: The Blanchard News
Third Place: Suzie Campbell,
Countywide & Sun

LARGE SPACE AD

Divisions 4 & 5 Combined
First Place: J.D. Meisner, Cushing
Citizen, "Cushing Lumber
Friendship Week"
Second Place: Ross D. Johnson, The
Oklahoma Eagle
Third Place: Suzie Campbell,
Countywide & Sun

NEWS PHOTOGRAPH

First Place: Basil Childers, The
Oklahoma Eagle, "Nichols elected
Tulsa's first black mayor"
Second Place: Matt Swearengin,
Durant Democrat
Third Place: Mike W. Ray, Southwest
Ledger

FEATURE PHOTOGRAPH

First Place: Basil Childers, The
Oklahoma Eagle, "Monroe Nichols
and Karen Keith advance in
mayoral primary"
Second Place: JJ Francais, Southwest
Ledger
Third Place: Kyletta Ray, Southwest
Ledger

SPORTS PHOTOGRAPH

First Place: Matt Swearengin, Durant
Democrat, "SE football player
Kobe Jennings"
Second Place: George McCormick,
The Edmond Way
Third Place: Johnny Holland, OKC
Friday

PHOTO ESSAY/PICTURE PAGE

First Place: Sam Levraut and Ross
D. Johnson, The Oklahoma Eagle,
"Tulsa Mayfest"
Second Place: George McCormick,
The Edmond Way
Third Place: Hugh Scott Jr.,
Southwest Ledger

FRONT PAGE DESIGN

First Place: Ross D. Johnson, The
Oklahoma Eagle, "Oct. 25"
Second Place: Ross D. Johnson, The
Oklahoma Eagle
Third Place: Ross D. Johnson, The
Oklahoma Eagle

DIVISION 5: Weekly Publications, Population 6,000 – 20,000

SEQUOYAH AWARD WINNER *The Purcell Register*

NEWS CONTENT

First Place: The Purcell Register
Second Place: The Express-Star
Third Place: The Eufaula Indian
Journal

LAYOUT & DESIGN

First Place: The Newcastle Pacer
Second Place: The Express-Star
Third Place: The Blanchard News

ADVERTISING

First Place: Cushing Citizen
Second Place: The Tuttle Times
Third Place: The Blanchard News

EDITORIAL WRITING

First Place: The Altus Times
Second Place: Countywide & Sun
Third Place: The Purcell Register

PHOTOGRAPHY

First Place: The Newcastle Pacer
Second Place: The Eufaula
Indian Journal
Third Place: The Purcell Register

SPORTS COVERAGE

First Place: The Eufaula
Indian Journal
Second Place: The Tuttle Times
Third Place: Countywide & Sun

SALES PROMOTION

First Place: The Blanchard News,
"Veterans Day Guide"
Second Place: The Eufaula
Indian Journal
Third Place: The Newcastle Pacer

COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP

First Place: The Purcell Register,
"School bond passage"
Second Place: Countywide & Sun
Third Place: The Tuttle Times

NEWS STORY

First Place: Paxson Haws, The
Express-Star, "Tuttle veteran visits
Washington, D.C. with Honor Flight
program"
Second Place: Suzanne Mackey,
Garvin County News Star
Third Place: Suzanne Mackey, Garvin
County News Star

FEATURE STORY

First Place: Natasha Dunagan,
Countywide & Sun, "Pottawatomie
profile: David Henry earns U.S.
citizenship"

Second Place: DeAnna Maddox,
Cushing Citizen
Third Place: Kathleen Guill, The Altus
Times

SPORTS STORY

First Place: Suzanne Mackey, Garvin
County News Star, "Bucket list
shorter now for first-time noodler"
Second Place: Davis Cordova, The
Express-Star
Third Place: Natasha Dunagan,
Countywide & Sun

BUSINESS STORY

First Place: Suzanne Mackey, Garvin
County News Star, "Moody Hotel
brought back to life"
Second Place: Jayson Knight, The
Tuttle Times
Third Place: Natasha Dunagan,
Countywide & Sun

EDUCATION STORY

Divisions 4 & 5 Combined
First Place: John Neal, The Oklahoma
Eagle, "Report shows minimal
progress for black Tulsans"
Second Place: Suzanne Mackey,
Garvin County News Star
Third Place: John Neal and Gary Lee,
The Oklahoma Eagle

IN-DEPTH REPORTING

First Place: Suzanne Mackey, Garvin
County News Star, "Government
transparency"
Second Place: DeAnna Maddox,
Cushing Citizen
Third Place: Allie Prater, Cushing
Citizen

COLUMN WRITING

First Place: Julie Talton, Countywide
& Sun
Second Place: DeAnna Maddox,
Cushing Citizen
Third Place: Kathleen Guill, The Altus
Times

SMALL SPACE AD

Divisions 4 & 5 Combined
First Place: Ross D. Johnson, The
Oklahoma Eagle, "Pet's love
language is ice cream"
Second Place: The Blanchard News
Third Place: Suzie Campbell,
Countywide & Sun

LARGE SPACE AD

Divisions 4 & 5 Combined
First Place: J.D. Meisner, Cushing
Citizen, "Cushing Lumber
Friendship Week"
Second Place: Ross D. Johnson, The
Oklahoma Eagle

Third Place: Suzie Campbell,
Countywide & Sun

FEATURE PHOTOGRAPH

First Place: Allie Prater, Cushing
Citizen, "Do or dye"
Second Place: Kathleen Guill, The
Altus Times
Third Place: Natasha Dunagan,
Countywide & Sun

SPORTS PHOTOGRAPH

First Place: Rodney Haltom, The
Eufaula Indian Journal, "Brian
Upton bronc riding"
Second Place: Paxson Haws, The
Express-Star
Third Place: Julie Talton, Countywide
& Sun

PHOTO ESSAY/PICTURE PAGE

First Place: Jayson Knight, The Tuttle
Times, "Still kickin"
Second Place: Natasha Dunagan,
Countywide & Sun
Third Place: Suzie Campbell,
Countywide & Sun

FRONT PAGE DESIGN

First Place: Ryan Horton, The
Blanchard News, "Nov. 21"
Second Place: Misty Knisely, The
Express-Star
Third Place: Emily Ciesielski, The
Express-Star

2024 OPA BETTER NEWSPAPER CONTEST WINNERS

DIVISION 6: Weekly Publications, Population 2,800 – 6,000

SEQUOYAH AWARD WINNER *McIntosh County Democrat*

NEWS CONTENT

First Place: Marietta Monitor
Second Place: McIntosh County Democrat
Third Place: Eastern Times-Register

LAYOUT & DESIGN

First Place: Johnston County Sentinel
Second Place: The Keystone Gusher
Third Place: Eastern Times-Register

ADVERTISING

First Place: McIntosh County Democrat
Second Place: The Lincoln County News
Third Place: Marietta Monitor

EDITORIAL WRITING

First Place: Hugo News
Second Place: Johnston County Sentinel
Third Place: Marietta Monitor

PHOTOGRAPHY

First Place: The Lincoln County News
Second Place: Frederick Press-Leader
Third Place: Marietta Monitor

SPORTS COVERAGE

First Place: Marietta Monitor

Second Place: The Lincoln County News
Third Place: McIntosh County Democrat

SALES PROMOTION

First Place: Eastern Times-Register, "School Tabs: Bulldog Bites, Tiger Tales, Grizzly Gold, Ranger Roundup"
Second Place: The Keystone Gusher
Third Place: McIntosh County Democrat

COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP

First Place: McIntosh County Democrat, "Chalk it up, domestic violence walk"
Second Place: The Lincoln County News
Third Place: The Keystone Gusher

NEWS STORY

First Place: Joani Hartin, Marietta Monitor, "Aftermath: Tornado causes severe damage to City of Marietta"
Second Place: Shalene White, The Madill Record
Third Place: Emily Kalka, The Lincoln County News

FEATURE STORY

First Place: Emily Kalka, The Lincoln County News, "The bare facts – a place for every body"
Second Place: John Small, Johnston County Sentinel

Third Place: Joani Hartin, Marietta Monitor

SPORTS STORY

First Place: Connor Choate, Marietta Monitor, "Playing for more: Thackerville dedicates season to coach's late son"
Second Place: Joani Hartin, Marietta Monitor
Third Place: Jentezen Smith, The Lincoln County News

BUSINESS STORY

First Place: Tom Lokey, Johnston County Sentinel, "Tish Lumber Company is latest victim of COVID-19"
Second Place: Joani Hartin, Marietta Monitor
Third Place: Bristow News and Angie Gentry

EDUCATION STORY

First Place: Tom Lokey and Mary Lokey, Johnston County Sentinel, "MSC officials are excited by school's continued growth"
Second Place: Joani Hartin, Marietta Monitor
Third Place: Joani Hartin, Marietta Monitor

IN-DEPTH REPORTING

Divisions 6 & 7 Combined
First Place: Connie Burcham, Watonga Republican, "Officer under investigation"

Second Place: Carol Conner, The Fairfax Chief
Third Place: Emily Kalka, The Lincoln County News

COLUMN WRITING

First Place: John Small, Johnston County Sentinel
Second Place: Brian Blansett, The Lincoln County News
Third Place: Charles White, The Madill Record

SMALL SPACE AD

First Place: Bristow News and Angie Gentry, Bristow News, "Wilson Fairchild"
Second Place: Anabel Ulloa, Marietta Monitor
Third Place: Bristow News and Angie Gentry

LARGE SPACE AD

First Place: Nick Theodoran, The Tonkawa News, "First National Bank Merry Christmas"
Second Place: Bristow News and Angie Gentry
Third Place: Joshua Small, Johnston County Sentinel

NEWS PHOTOGRAPH

First Place: Connor Choate, Marietta Monitor, "Tornado damage"
Second Place: Kathleen Guill, Frederick Press-Leader
Third Place: Brian Blansett, The Lincoln County News

FEATURE PHOTOGRAPH

First Place: Brian Blansett, The Lincoln County News, "At the IFYR"
Second Place: Rick Hester, The Lincoln County News
Third Place: Brian Blansett, The Lincoln County News

SPORTS PHOTOGRAPH

First Place: Kathleen Guill, Frederick Press-Leader, "Bucking bronc with cowboy's hand raised up over head"
Second Place: Bristow News and Brian Blansett
Third Place: Bristow News and Brian Blansett

PHOTO ESSAY/PICTURE PAGE

First Place: Brian Blansett, The Lincoln County News, "East Side Rodeo"
Second Place: Brian Blansett, The Lincoln County News
Third Place: Joshua Small, Mary Lokey and Kierra Hendricks, Johnston County Sentinel

FRONT PAGE DESIGN

First Place: Josh Meo and Connor Choate, Marietta Monitor, "May 3"
Second Place: Connor Choate and Josh Meo, Marietta Monitor
Third Place: Krystle Taylor, Hugo News

DIVISION 7: Weekly Publications, Population less than 2,800

SEQUOYAH AWARD WINNER *Minco-Union City Times*

NEWS CONTENT

First Place: Vian Tenkiller News
Second Place: Yale News
Third Place: Minco-Union City Times

LAYOUT & DESIGN

First Place: Minco-Union City Times
Second Place: Watonga Republican
Third Place: Yale News

ADVERTISING

First Place: Minco-Union City Times
Second Place: Watonga Republican
Third Place: Vian Tenkiller News

EDITORIAL WRITING

First Place: The Fairfax Chief
Second Place: Minco-Union City Times
Third Place: Vian Tenkiller News

PHOTOGRAPHY

First Place: Yale News
Second Place: Minco-Union City Times
Third Place: The Fairfax Chief

SPORTS COVERAGE

First Place: The Fairfax Chief

Second Place: Minco-Union City Times
Third Place: Vian Tenkiller News

SALES PROMOTION

First Place: Minco-Union City Times, "Holiday Living Guide"
Second Place: Watonga Republican
Third Place: Vian Tenkiller News

COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP

First Place: Vian Tenkiller News, "Voter Guide"
Second Place: The Fairfax Chief
Third Place: Yale News

NEWS STORY

First Place: Todd Brooks, The Comanche Times, "A year later, Presgroves still keeping the faith"
Second Place: Brooklynn Peek, The Cordell Beacon
Third Place: Todd Brooks, The Comanche Times

FEATURE STORY

First Place: Luella Nabors, The Fairfax Chief, "Not any old boot – a Blucher"
Second Place: Carol Conner, The Fairfax Chief
Third Place: Todd Brooks, The Comanche Times

SPORTS STORY

First Place: Todd Brooks, The

Comanche Times, "Queen of the mat: West makes Comanche history"
Second Place: Brooklynn Peek, The Cordell Beacon
Third Place: Owen Hutcheson, The Fairfax Chief

BUSINESS STORY

First Place: Arianna Parkinson, The Thomas Tribune, "Kohout debuts home business"
Second Place: Brooklynn Peek, The Cordell Beacon
Third Place: Jayson Knight, Minco-Union City Times

EDUCATION STORY

First Place: Owen Hutcheson, The Fairfax Chief, "Danene Long succeeds Riley Burris as JOM Princess"
Second Place: Jamie King, The Thomas Tribune
Third Place: Brooklynn Peek, The Cordell Beacon

IN-DEPTH REPORTING

Divisions 6 & 7 Combined
First Place: Connie Burcham, Watonga Republican, "Officer under investigation"
Second Place: Carol Conner, The Fairfax Chief
Third Place: Emily Kalka, The Lincoln County News

COLUMN WRITING

First Place: Connie Burcham, Watonga Republican
Second Place: Todd Brooks, The Comanche Times
Third Place: Bruce Hadden, The Fairfax Chief

SMALL SPACE AD

First Place: Felicia Hays, Watonga Republican, "Ross Seed Company"
Second Place: Brooklynn Peek, The Cordell Beacon
Third Place: Steve Coulter, Minco-Union City Times

LARGE SPACE AD

First Place: Brooklynn Peek, The Cordell Beacon, "Blue Sky Bank Christmas"
Second Place: Brooklynn Peek, The Cordell Beacon
Third Place: Sherry Stinson, The Fairfax Chief

NEWS PHOTOGRAPH

First Place: Arianna Parkinson, The Thomas Tribune, "Sweeping down the plain"
Second Place: Arianna Parkinson, The Thomas Tribune
Third Place: Carol Conner, The Fairfax Chief

FEATURE PHOTOGRAPH

First Place: Sherry Stinson, The Fairfax Chief, "The spectacle of Oklahoma's night sky"
Second Place: Sherry Stinson, The Fairfax Chief
Third Place: Owen Hutcheson, The Fairfax Chief

SPORTS PHOTOGRAPH

First Place: Owen Hutcheson, The Fairfax Chief, "Steer wrestling"
Second Place: Owen Hutcheson, The Fairfax Chief
Third Place: Tim Billy, The Thomas Tribune

PHOTO ESSAY/PICTURE PAGE

First Place: Owen Hutcheson, The Fairfax Chief, "39th Rodeo"
Second Place: Owen Hutcheson, The Fairfax Chief
Third Place: Carol Conner and Owen Hutcheson, The Fairfax Chief

FRONT PAGE DESIGN

First Place: Sherry Stinson, The Fairfax Chief, "May 9"
Second Place: Sherry Stinson, The Fairfax Chief
Third Place: Sherry Stinson, The Fairfax Chief

2024 OPA BETTER NEWSPAPER CONTEST WINNERS

College News Media

SEQUOYAH AWARD WINNER *The Cameron University Collegian*

NEWS CONTENT

First Place: The O'Colly, Oklahoma State University
Second Place: The Cameron University Collegian

LAYOUT & DESIGN

First Place: The Cameron University Collegian
Second Place: 15th Street News, Rose State College
Third Place: Northwestern News, Northwestern Oklahoma State University

ADVERTISING

First Place: The Northeastern, Northeastern State University

EDITORIAL WRITING

First Place: Northwestern News
Second Place: The Campus, Oklahoma City University
Third Place: The Cameron University Collegian

PHOTOGRAPHY

First Place: The O'Colly
Second Place: The Cameron University Collegian

SPORTS COVERAGE

First Place: The O'Colly
Second Place: The Vista, University of Central Oklahoma
Third Place: The Cameron University Collegian

NEWS STORY

First Place: Kennedy Thomason, The O'Colly, "The 'Boys From Oklahoma' are back"
Second Place: Brittney Payette, The Cameron University Collegian
Third Place: Raynee Howell, The O'Colly

FEATURE STORY

First Place: Sam Kozlowski, The Vista, "108-year-old Guthrie resident recounts her time as a UCO student in the 1930s"
Second Place: Angel Ford, The Northeastern
Third Place: Bella Casey, The O'Colly

SPORTS STORY

First Place: Gabriel Trevino, The O'Colly, "Remembering the rowdy:

The modern complexity of OSU's Gallagher-Iba Arena"
Second Place: Parker Gerl, The O'Colly
Third Place: Ramona Villegas, The Cameron University Collegian

BUSINESS STORY

First Place: Kennedy Thomason, The O'Colly, "Block 34 to bolster community"
Second Place: Alli Schieber, Northwestern News
Third Place: Valerie Scott, The Vista

EDUCATION STORY

First Place: Sam Kozlowski, The Vista, "Edmond Public Schools ask OK Supreme Court for guidance on book complaints"
Second Place: Aniyah Robinson, The Gazette, Langston University
Third Place: Ciera Terry, The Cameron University Collegian

IN-DEPTH REPORTING

First Place: Alli Schieber, Tara Owen and Ely Noble, Northwestern News, "New image of sports"
Second Place: Brittney Payette and Hannah Owens, The Cameron University Collegian

Third Place: Kennedy Thomason, The O'Colly

COLUMN WRITING

First Place: Amelia Lozano, The Cameron University Collegian
Second Place: Julian Ebacher, The Cameron University Collegian
Third Place: Bradie Gray, The Vista

LARGE SPACE AD

First Place: Katie Culberson, The Northeastern, "100th Homecoming"
Second Place: Breanna Hampton, The Northeastern
Third Place: Katie Culberson, The Northeastern

NEWS PHOTOGRAPH

First Place: Hannah Owens, The Cameron University Collegian, "NCUR"
Second Place: Hannah Owens, The Cameron University Collegian
Third Place: Payton Little, The O'Colly

FEATURE PHOTOGRAPH

First Place: Victor Lopez, The Vista, "Kaleb Gonzalez, black suit, finishes the last scenes"
Second Place: Victor Lopez, The Vista

Third Place: Victor Lopez, The Vista

SPORTS PHOTOGRAPH

First Place: Laura Barrios Bardi, The Trend, University of Science and Arts of Oklahoma, "Why not us? The Drovers finish third at the NAIA Softball World Series in Georgia"
Second Place: Victor Lopez, The Vista
Third Place: Laura Barrios Bardi, The Trend

PHOTO ESSAY/PICTURE PAGE

First Place: Victor Lopez, The Vista, "Rayce Phillips: A day in the life"
Second Place: Laura Barrios Bardi, The Trend
Third Place: Emily Loughridge, The Trend

FRONT PAGE DESIGN

First Place: Angel Ford, Breanna Hampton and Katie Culberson, The Northeastern, "Homecoming"
Second Place: Hannah Owens, The Cameron University Collegian
Third Place: Brittney Payette, The Cameron University Collegian

DIGITAL CONTEST CATEGORIES

DIGITAL MEDIA

(Multi-Day and Online Only)
First Place: The Frontier
Second Place: Tahlequah Daily Press
Third Place: The Lawton Constitution

(Weeklies)

First Place: The Oklahoma Eagle
Second Place: The Edmond Way
Third Place: OKC Friday

(Colleges)

First Place: The Trend
Second Place: The Campus
Third Place: The O'Colly

VIDEO JOURNALISM / MARKETING

(All Divisions)

First Place: Katie Culberson and Angel Ford, The Northeastern, "Dorch commits to NSU as new quarterback"

Second Place: Lauren Hassell and Angel Ford, The Northeastern

Third Place: Suzie Campbell, Countywide & Sun

ONLINE PROJECT

(All Divisions)

First Place: Sydney Funkhouser, TCC Connection, Tulsa Community College, "Eating disorders are soaring among teens, and low cost care is hard to find"

Second Place: Spencer Makhani, Breanna Hampton and Angel Ford, The Northeastern

Third Place: Kevin Green and Josh Jennings, Claremore Daily Progress

OKLAHOMA PRESS ASSOCIATION AWARDS

OPA is pleased to honor its members with a variety of awards for their many achievements.

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Oklahoma Press

IN MEMORIAM

May 2024 to May 2025

Commemorated at the Oklahoma Press Association
Annual Convention in Shawnee, OK
June 6, 2025

In accordance with membership wishes
this list includes only those who were either
longtime newspaper employees still engaged in the trade
at the time of death or those who had though retired
made newspaper work their principal occupation.

Alex K. Adwan,
Tulsa World

Phyllis Mae Argyle,
Okmulgee Times

Harrison 'Lyle' Becker,
Tonkawa News

**Edward 'Edd' Harold
Bellatti,**
Nowata Publishing Co.

Carl Lee Bowers,
The Duncan Banner

Marilyn Joyce Carney,
*The Country
Connection News*

Jim East,
Tulsa Tribune

Timothy Joe Farley,
Yukon Progress

Larry Ross Ferguson,
*The Cleveland
American*

Dan Hogan III,
The Journal Record

Jeffrey Jay Kaley,
The Duncan Banner

Carl Henry Ketchum,
The Purcell Register

**Charles 'Chuck'
Sidney Lake,**
Sapulpa Daily Herald

Albert James Lindsey,
The Black Chronicle

**Louisa Douglas
McCune,**
Oklahoma Today

Mike Monahan,
Guthrie News Leader

**Sherry Gayle
Muchmore,**
Ponca City News

Brenda Nebling,
The Altus Times

Barry L. Newton,
*Oklahoma Newspaper
Advertising Bureau*

**James Arthur
'Jim' Perry,**
Cushing Citizen

Oran C. Redden,
The Moore American

Anita Faye Reding,
Stigler News-Sentinel

Patsy Sue 'Pat' Reeder,
*Claremore
Daily Progress*

**Kenneth Owen
'Ken' Reid,**
*Weatherford
Daily News*

**Elizabeth Ann Waters
Ridenour,**
Muskogee Phoenix

Mary Jane Rogers,
*Sequoyah County
Times*

John Louis Spire Sr.,
Cushing Citizen

Darrell Dion Sumner,
Sapulpa Daily Herald

John V. Young,
Tulsa world

DEATHS

LARRY ROSS FERGUSON, a long-time newspaper publisher who served 20 years in the Oklahoma House of Representatives, died May 23, 2025. He was 87.

Ferguson was born October 4, 1937, and grew up in Pawnee. After high school, he attended the University of Oklahoma, graduating in 1960 with a degree in journalism.

Ferguson and his wife, Nina Gay Flanagan, moved to Fort Sill in Lawton, where Larry continued his military career.

In 1962, the Fergusons moved to Cleveland, Oklahoma, where Larry took over the family newspaper, The Cleveland American. He was an active voice in the community, joined many civic clubs, served in leadership roles and was a member of the First Christian Church.

In 1985, Ferguson won the Oklahoma House seat for District 35, serving for 20 years in the Oklahoma House of Representatives. From 1991 to 1998, he served as House Minority Leader, the longest-serving in Oklahoma history at the time.

After 20 years of legislative service, he returned home to Cleveland, where he remained deeply involved in civic life. He chaired the Cleveland hospital board and enjoyed the family's other newspapers, The Pawnee Chief and The Hominy News-Progress.

He served as president of the Oklahoma State School Boards Association, where he advocated for public education across the state.

Ferguson was inducted into the Oklahoma Press Association's Half Century Club and was inducted into the Oklahoma Journalism Hall of Fame in 2014.

He is survived by his children and their spouses, Lori and Tim Lucas, Guthrie; Rusty and Deana Ferguson, Cleveland; and Kari and Hardy Watkins, Edmond; and his many grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

MIKE MONAHAN, longtime news and sportswriter for the Guthrie News Leader, died April 13, 2025. He was 70.

Monahan was born April 15, 1954, in Lake Forrest, Illinois. He earned his bachelor's degree from Drake University in Des Moines, Iowa.

After a 20-year career with Target Department Stores, Monahan went on to work at the News Leader for more than 17 years.

He was a devoted member of St. Mary Catholic Church in Guthrie, served as an active member of the Knights of Columbus, volunteered with the Logan County Council on Aging and served on the board of directors at God's Food Bank.

Monahan is survived by his four-legged companion, Cooper, and brothers Tom and James Monahan.

Please donate to the

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2025 OPA CONVENTION SNAPSHOTS



Friday night's Welcome Dinner included a lively game of Family Feud and the winning team posed for a victory photo. Pictured are Brittany Jones and Katherine Miller, The Norman Transcript; Thad Swiderski, eType Services; Rochelle Stidham, Guthrie News Leader; Marie Smith, Advantage Newspaper Consultants; Rob Collins, Oklahoma Media Center; Debbie and John Clark, Spiro Graphic; and Janelle Stecklein, Oklahoma Voice, in front



Amanda Parks and Sara Acosta, Woodward News, at the Awards Reception.



Corey Jones, Tulsa World, and Suzanne Mackey, Garvin County News Star, sit in on a Speed Topic session.



Enid News & Eagle's Violet and Kevin Hassler arrested in the Pressopoly Jail.



Norman Transcript's Ben Fenwick stuck in the Pressopoly Jail for his crimes.

2025 OPA CONVENTION SNAPSHOTS



Watonga Republican's Felicia Hays & Kimberly Jenkins enjoy the OPA Grand Blooper show.



Allie Prater, J.D. and Marylee Meisner and DeAnna Maddox, all from Cushing Citizen, can't contain their laughter during the OPA Grand Blooper show.



Family Feud team The Ink Spots gets ready to face off at the OPA Welcome Dinner Friday night as host Shaun Witt, Oklahoma Watch, reads the first question. Pictured for The Ink Spots are Bradley Jager, The Lincoln County News; Leonard Woolsey, The Galveston (Texas) Daily News; Margaux and Connor Choate, Marietta Monitor; LynnDe and Jeff Funk, Enid; and David and Sandra Stringer, The Lawton Constitution.



The Cordell Beacon's Heather Benavidez answers question at Family Feud.

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2024 SWEEPSTAKES WINNERS



2025 SWEEPSTAKES

Daily, Semi- and Tri-Weekly Photo Winner:

ANDY DOSSETT

Bartlesville Examiner-Enterprise



OGE Energy Corp. provides monthly photo winners with a \$100 check and certificate. Sweepstakes winners receive \$200 and a plaque from OGE. Contest open to staff at OPA Legal Newspaper and General News Media members, as well as OPA Individual members. Complete contest rules and online submission form available at okpress.com/oqe-photo-contest.

View winning photos at okpress.com/oqe-photo-contest

Column Winner:

CONNIE BURCHAM

Watonga Republican

My mother would have been 100 years old today

My mother would have been 100 years old today. I find it hard to believe she has been gone 15 years, and I catch myself every-day thinking I should call her and tell her about something.

I think about the things she saw change in her life-time. There were politicians she disliked, and nations she never forgave. She'd lived through the second World War and those nations killed people she knew and loved.

She was pretty tough on us, too. I grew up as part of a tribe of young'uns that she raised solo after my dad died far too young. We'd better stay on the straight and narrow or else. None of us ever found out what 'or else' meant. We were too scared.

Oklahoma Natural Gas provides monthly column and editorial winners with a \$100 check and certificate. Sweepstakes winners receive \$200 and a plaque from ONG. Contest open to staff at OPA Legal Newspaper and General News Media members, as well as OPA Individual members. Complete contest rules and online submission form available at okpress.com/ong-contest.

Views expressed in winning columns and editorials are those of the writers and don't necessarily reflect the company's opinions.

Read winning columns and editorials at okpress.com/ong-contest

All entries judged by members of the Oklahoma Journalism Hall of Fame

Weekly Photo Winner:

SHERRY LOUDERMILK

Coalgate Record-Register



Editorial Winner:

JAMES BEATY

McAlester News-Capital

McAlester Council shouldn't repeal the will of voters

In less than a minute Tuesday night, four McAlester city councilors voted to repeal an eighth-cent sales tax approved six years ago by a vote of the people.

The four city councilors who voted in favor of the motion did more than simply repeal the one-eighth cent sales tax designated for expansion of the McAlester Cancer Treatment Center.

They also voted to repeal the will of the voters who passed the sales tax measure in the first place.

Imagine the outrage among voters if state legislators repealed a state question passed by a vote of the people.