

National Association of Black Journalists

WINTER 2017  
ISSUE

# NABJ

journal

## POWERED BY THE BLACK PRESS

How the new Museum of African  
American History and Culture pays  
homage to black journalists





HERE'S TO ALL  
TRUTH SEEKERS

YOUR PASSION  
OVERCOMES OBSTACLES

YOUR CRAFT REVEALS  
THE TRUE ESSENCE  
OF WHO WE ARE



**Jeep**



# Remembering Gwen Ifill 10



National Association of Black Journalists

# NABJ

journal

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**“I love to get to the human essence of who our viewers are and who our community members are. There’s a certain level of passion in my purpose to tell those stories, inspire people to listen, and seeing our viewers become empowered through different situations.”**

**- Demond Fernandez, Reporter, WFAA, Dallas**

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**TEGNA MEDIA**

# From the President

## Greetings NABJ family!

On behalf of the NABJ Board of Directors, I'm honored to present the 2017 NABJ Journal winter issue.

In this meaningful edition, NABJ highlights the pivotal role black journalists play in the exhibits at the Smithsonian's National Museum of African American History and Culture in Washington, D.C. There are notable lessons to extract from covering Haiti and the divisive U.S. presidential election, which we delve into.

We are inspired by NABJ member J.A. Adande and the founders of the Ida B. Wells Society who are working to provide new opportunities for a new wave of NABJ members to learn from their breadth of experience.

We also remember two great pillars of the journalism community – Gwen Ifill and George Curry. Both Gwen and George touched many NABJ members and mentored scores of journalists across the country. George was a true champion of the black press and Gwen was a talented journalist who broke barriers over three decades in journalism, most recently as an anchor at PBS' "NewsHour."

NABJ is fortunate to have founders who continue to empower our association. I applaud the work of NABJ founder DeWayne Wickham and his recognition by the Enoch Pratt Free Library's African American Department in Baltimore for naming a special collection after him. NABJ also thanks Wickham for leading a delegation of 20 people to Cuba in January. The travelers included NABJ members, Morgan State representatives, journalists, professionals and students.

I'm most proud of the work of the NABJ Media Institute this past year and the programming it has produced over the course of the year – regional conferences, skills-based training, and a specialized digital leadership training at Poynter.

Over the course of 2017, NABJ will publish reports outlining "The State of Black Journalists 2017" in broadcast, print and online. Black men are an endangered species among television anchors. Here, an essay serves as the first installment of this project, which aims to tackle how well black journalists are faring in American journalism. As we seek answers, more questions may arise. NABJ will work with our partners to improve the status of black journalists which in turn improves the state of all newsrooms nationwide.

Thank you to the NABJ Journal's new editor Zuri Berry, deputy editor ShaunteL Lowe and the entire team who contributed to this important issue.

Yours In Service,

Sarah Glover, NABJ President  
@sarah4nabj



National Association of Black Journalists

# NABJ

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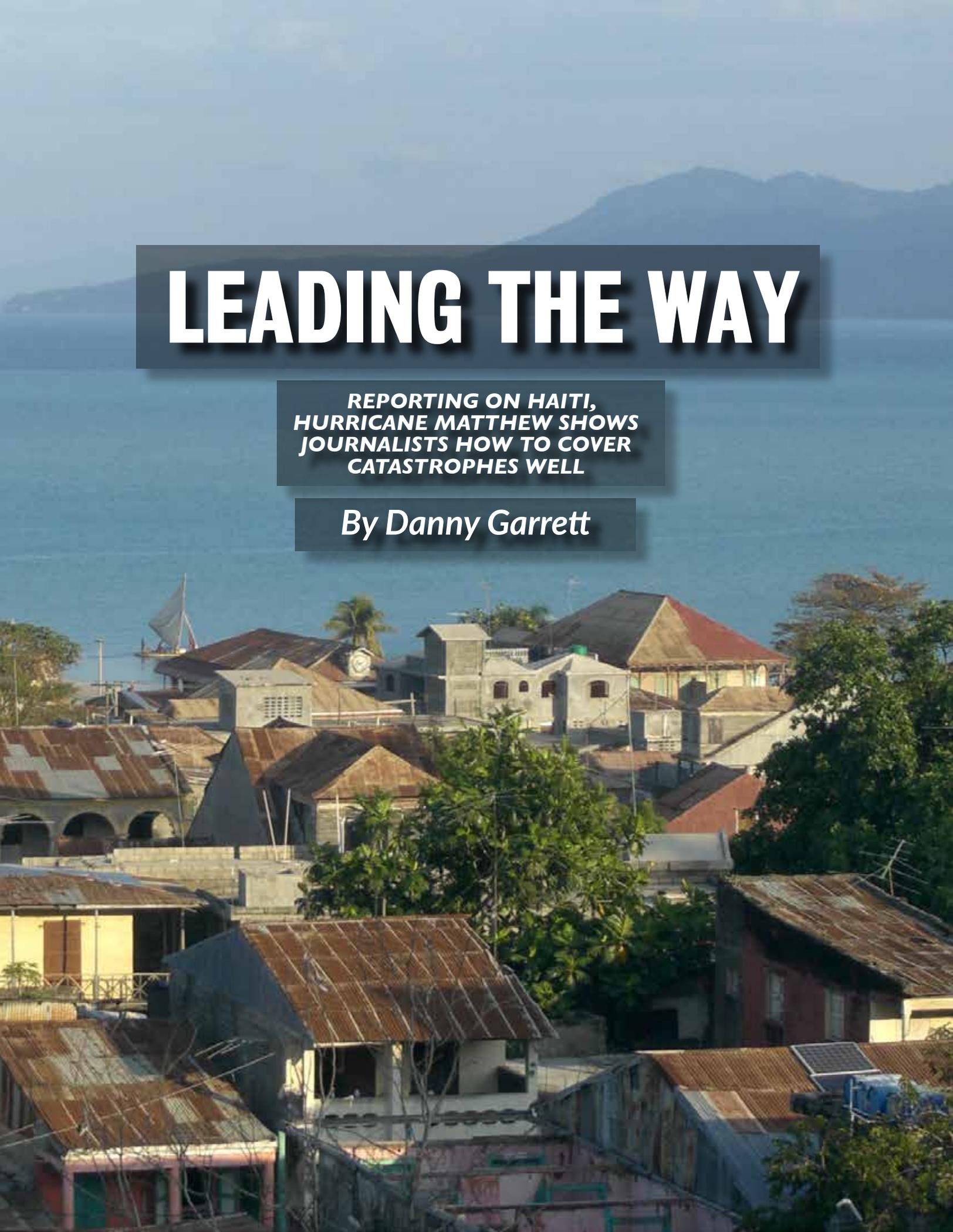
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An aerial photograph of a town, likely in Haiti, showing numerous buildings with rusted metal roofs. In the background, there are mountains and a body of water. The sky is clear and blue.

# LEADING THE WAY

**REPORTING ON HAITI,  
HURRICANE MATTHEW SHOWS  
JOURNALISTS HOW TO COVER  
CATASTROPHES WELL**

*By Danny Garrett*

**T**he island nation of Haiti has a history just as fascinating as it is revolutionary. Toussaint Louverture, and his keen military mind, fought for this country and called it home. Kingly and stately Henri Christophe governed this land and called it the same.

Hopefully, one does not need to venture far within the sprawling pages of history books to read the smooth and silky prose of Jacques-Stephen Alexis, and the post-colonial fervor of Jacques Roumain. It can be argued that one does not fully know the country until one has read Langston Hughes's "A Poem for Jacques Roumain," which immortalized the Haitian writer and politician:

*Never will you become  
Anonymous.  
Never will your dust  
Become air -*

*Then nothingness -  
Invisible.  
Never will you become  
Less than a name -  
Or less than you.*

These words find rest in the minds of the Haitian people and exemplify Haitian land. The mist- and green-covered mountains know the stories. The turquoise waters and white sands of Chouchou Bay and Kokoye Beach recite the lines from memory. The Citadelle Laferrière, which sits atop Bonnet a L'Eveque and the Gingerbread homes of Port-au-Prince, in their Victorian and Caribbean glory, give voice to the volumes.

It is best to keep this picture of Haiti close, ingrained well within the mind. Because in the United States, media outlets addicted to sensation will decimate this truth. When disaster has struck Haiti, which has happened more than once in the past decade, we have seen how detrimental false narratives can be when journalistic fortitude is lacking.

### **THE NARRATIVE OF A DISASTER**

On Oct. 4, 2016, six years after a 7.0-magnitude earthquake shook the island, Hurricane Matthew slammed into Haiti. The Category 4 storm, packing winds of 145 mph, demolished

homes, polluted water sources and killed nearly 1,000 people.

For many, the disaster triggered memories of the 2010 earthquake that struck the Caribbean country. According to the Disasters Emergency Committee, 220,000 people were estimated to have died in the earthquake. (The Haitian government has those estimates much higher.) More than 188,000 houses were badly damaged, and more than 105,000 were destroyed.

For journalists covering Hurricane Matthew, there were concerns about repeating faulty disaster narratives about Haiti that triggered a quick response from the American public to donate tremendously, yet indiscriminately.

UConn professor of public policy Thomas Craemer describes the disaster narrative as reinforcing views that Haiti is this wholesale "poor, violent, overcrowded, and aid-dependent" nation, which can provoke a limited number of responses from the American public. One is to, "Donate, donate, and donate some more," to save a weak and poverty-stricken Haiti from itself. Two is to raise the question, "Why bother donating if nothing has changed within the country in decades?"— which is not true. The United Nations Development Programme can attest to economic and educational improvements within the decade.

Americans chose option one in 2010. Amid incessant images of rubble and suffering black bodies on TV screens, Americans joined the rest of the world in donating half a billion dollars in aid to the Red Cross. It was one of the foundation's most successful fundraising efforts. But after an investigation by NPR and ProPublica, the two media outlets could not find where the nearly \$500 million was spent. The Red Cross claimed that it provided homes for more than 130,000 people, but NPR and ProPublica could only find six homes built.

The Red Cross fiasco was but one glaring issue in Haiti which reinforced the poor, violent and disaster-prone stereotype of the country that is neither helpful nor true. For years, Haiti has been bestowed the title of "poorest country in the Western

Hemisphere" across the exterior of its thorned crown. The moniker is a far cry from its former title as the Jewel of the Antilles, and its present status as the country that counts as one of its shining towns Jacmel, a place that bustles and flickers from its 35 art galleries to its murals, mosaics and sculptures that line the commune's streets and walls.

Many economists look strictly at Haiti's impoverished status through the lens of its gross domestic product, but reading the country's economic output this way is somewhat misleading. Haiti's GDP does not accurately reflect that many of Haiti's poor are landowners, which provides much subsistence for extended Haitian families, and opens wider participation to Haiti's informal economy. From the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development estimates, Haiti's informal economy accounts for roughly 90 percent of the country's total labor market, which is not figured into the country's GDP measurements.

Therefore, if a journalist is tasked to cover Haiti, the positive economic features of the country shouldn't be ignored.

But something interesting occurred when Hurricane Matthew hit Haiti. Yes, there was the expected focus on poor and suffering Haitians running for their lives, demolished buildings and an "unorganized" response from local Haitian governments. But, somewhat unexpectedly, much of the U.S. national media ceased coverage of the event within a week.

No longer was it false disaster narratives that were cause for concern, but coverage altogether.

NABJ member and NPR TV critic Eric Deggans was not surprised by the quick and minimal coverage. He calls the phenomenon the "tyranny of the broad niche." Deggans argues that American media outlets mainly pander to the "aspirational hopes of the audience" and traffic in narratives of "winners and losers" in the American economy. That equates to focusing on the popular entertainment of an American election, versus the crisis unfolding in Haiti.

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CONTINUED ON PAGE 8



A Catholic church in Jérémie, Haiti, had its roof blown off during Hurricane Matthew. Photo courtesy of Miami Herald/Patrick Farrell.

Individual news consumers, Deggans claims, can perhaps watch the BBC and Al Jazeera to stay up-to-date on international news, and even receive Google alerts on their smartphones about what is transpiring in Haiti. However, Deggans knows that this is not the norm, neither for the average American, nor for our national media. For the latter, he says it is more so about what consumers want, and more precisely, what the buyers want the consumers to want.

#### **COVERING DISASTERS RIGHT**

Luckily, many NABJ members have done their due diligence in covering Haiti and Hurricane Matthew with care. The Miami Herald's Jacqueline Charles and CBS's Vladimir Duthiers are among those members.

Charles, the Caribbean correspondent and senior reporter on Haiti at the Herald, was part of the team whose work was recognized as a finalist in the breaking news category by the Pulitzer Prize committee for reporting on the 2010 earthquake. She was one of the few international journalists who reported on Haiti and

Hurricane Matthew before, during and after the storm. And she was the only international reporter to fly into Jérémie by helicopter with interim president Jocelerme Privert to complete extensive on-the-ground reporting.

Early on, Charles reported on flood waters from Les Cayes to Côtes-de-Fer, and mudslides from Anse du Milieu. Some of her early information derived from initial Haitian radio reports. But most importantly, she interviewed local Haitians who experienced the impactful weather directly and the Haitians who were there on the ground to organize recovery efforts. More than 55,000 residents live in tents and makeshift shelters in the country, according to USA Today. With housing less than optimal, it is imperative for observers to know how residents will protect themselves amidst high winds and surging flood waters. Charles focused her interviews on people like Dr. Fonie Pierre, head of Catholic Relief Services (CRS) in Les Cayes, and organizations like Haiti's Civil Protection Agency. When the storm first came, Dr. Pierre

struck an optimistic tone: "We are 20 people at the office, CRS staff and members of the emergency operation center. Until now we are feeling safe."

Both organizations, CRS and Haiti's Civil Protection, provide helpful information about Haiti's emergency operation center and how residents are seeking shelter.

CBS correspondent Vladimir Duthiers covers Haiti with similar care. Duthiers was on the ground for Hurricane Matthew, with significant reporting done on Jérémie, where 80 percent of the buildings have been damaged or destroyed, according to figures from CARE Haiti. He spoke to locals and focused on recovery efforts, setting the bar for television coverage.

Cholera is a major concern after disasters in Haiti. The last outbreak killed at least 10,000 people and sickened more. It should come as no surprise that Duthiers reported on the work that Doctors Without Borders has done within the region, diagnosing and treating cases. Charles has done the same in her reporting. And if it's not medicine, it is perhaps housing. Her work on UNOPS (United



Worshippers at a church that lost its roof in Morne la Source, Haiti, because of Hurricane Matthew. Photo courtesy of Miami Herald/Patrick Farrell.

Nations Office for Project Services) and their construction projects at Haiti's Fort National deserves supreme recognition.

### THE WAY FORWARD

For Duthiers, the way to keep viewers, especially Americans, interested in stories about Haiti is to be a great storyteller and make those stories relatable. In terms of Haiti, Duthiers recommended that reporters could describe how Haitians fought in the American Revolution or how Haiti's history is similar to the story of the United States.

"They rejected a monarchy. They went up against a superpower like the United States," the CBS correspondent explained. "Haiti's history reflects the same path. They rejected an emperor, in this case Napoleon. They threw off the shackles of tyranny and slavery to declare their independence. They went to war against a much stronger adversary. Most Americans can understand that. They can understand wanting to be free."

The pattern is clear. If just a few journalistic guidelines are followed,

reporting on Haiti and other disasters can be executed well:

- Include information from a diverse array of credible sources in your reporting. For Haiti, sources like the National Hurricane Center, NASA and Haiti's Civil Protection are pertinent.
- Engage with residents and charities on the ground as much as possible.
- Interview a variety of other sources, including military officials, historians and climate scientists. Journalists cannot neglect a more comprehensive treatment of disaster situations. Haiti's modern problems exemplify this.
- Make your stories as relatable as possible to your audience.
- Lastly, be curious, keep an open mind and be cautious of your own bias.

### AFTER THE AFTERMATH

Duthiers returned to Haiti nearly two weeks after the hurricane struck, in both Port-au-Prince and Jérémie. When he returned to Jérémie, residents surrounded him. They asked him to write their names down in his reporter's notebook. They asked him

to not forget about them. They felt it would be "the only sign of their existence for the rest of the world to know about them," he said.

He continued to report on the desolate state of housing. One report stood out. It was about a shelter left untouched by the hurricane, simply because it was constructed of concrete and not tin.

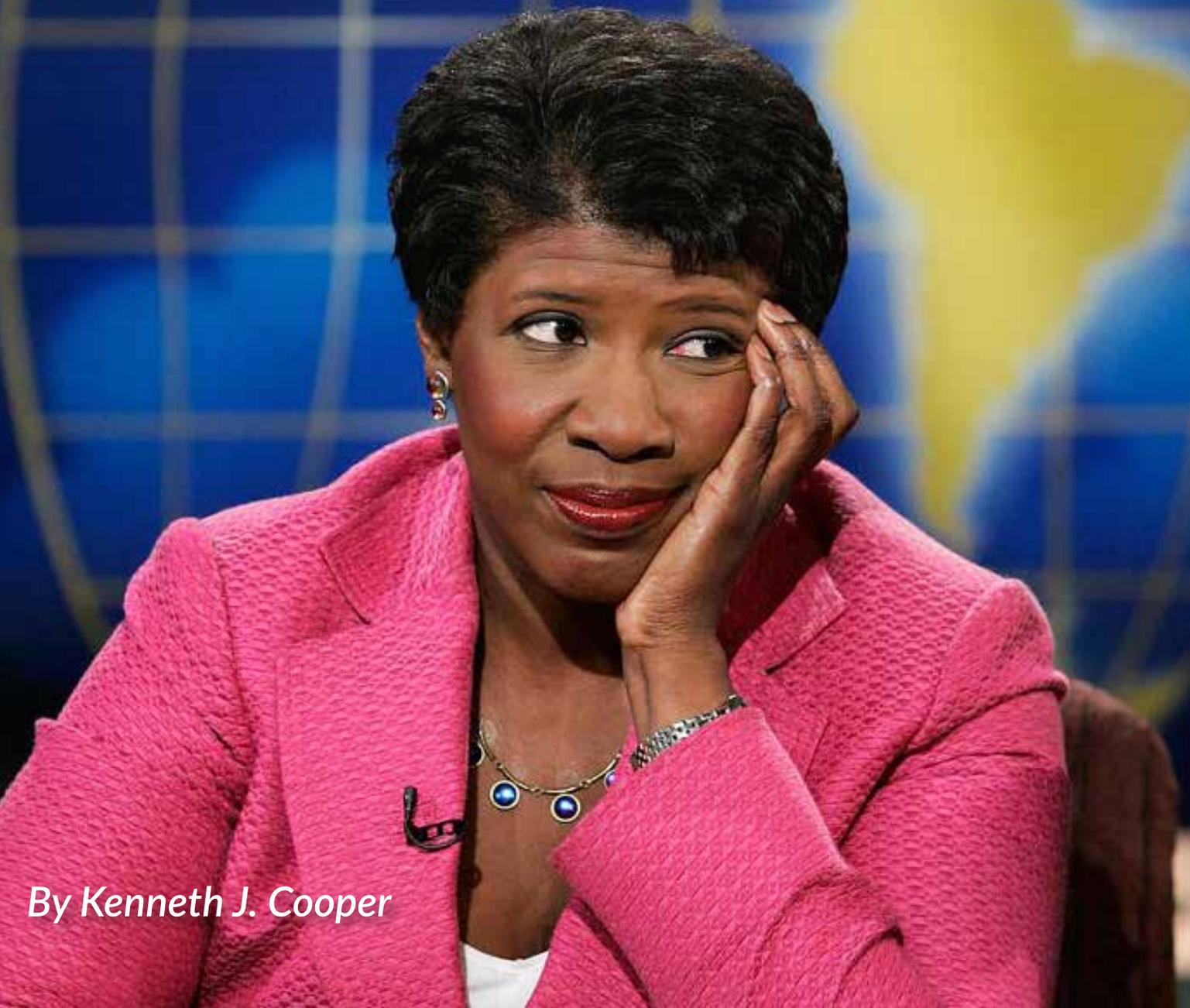
In the trip, he interviewed a nurse from the region who channeled the people of her country. "It's a Sunday. People are going to church. People are praying, and I really do believe that what has sustained the Haitian people over the hundreds of years of, in many cases, lots of misery, is their faith and their hope. And it is that that has allowed them to not be wiped off the face of the earth."

They were words that encapsulated what should never be forgotten when covering Haiti. It is, without a doubt, a nation filled with natural beauty and residents that mirror such beauty in their spirit and resiliency.

\*\*\*

*Danny Garrett is a freelance writer based in Louisiana.*

THE SPIRIT OF  
*Gwen Ifill*  
LIVES ON



By Kenneth J. Cooper

**O**n tarmacs in snow-covered Iowa or New Hampshire, Gwen Ifill would emerge from a candidate's plane and spot one of the few black journalists covering the 1988 presidential campaign. She always offered a smile and a warm greeting in moments of genuine professional camaraderie. She was glad to see a fellow black journalist, especially in what were then two of the whitest states in the country.

That campaign, when she covered Jesse Jackson and Pat Robertson for The Washington Post, was Ifill's debut in reporting on national politics. The subject would remain a passion and specialty in a 40-year career that culminated in her work as a correspondent at the White House for The New York Times and Congress for NBC, moderator of two vice presidential debates and co-moderator of a presidential one, and co-anchor of the "NewsHour" and moderator of "Washington Week," both on PBS.

Ifill, who died in November at age 61, sought out nontraditional roles for women and African-Americans in journalism. At The Washington Post, she once expressed interest in covering defense because at the time it was a beat few women, or African-Americans for that matter, covered.

In 2004, she became the first black woman to guide a vice presidential debate, between John Edwards and Dick Cheney. Four years later, she reprised that role when Joe Biden and Sarah Palin squared off.

After she took over as moderator of "Washington Week" in 1999, she changed the cast for the weekly roundtable discussion among journalists. The guests had been mostly aging white men with white, if any, hair; she brought in more women who were younger. However, not many of her guests were African-Americans, which she blamed on news organizations for not assigning more black journalists to prominent beats in the

nation's capital.

In 2013, Ifill and Judy Woodruff became the first all-female anchor team on network television. Ifill's on-air interviews with newsmakers reflected her preparation — she always did her homework — and well-cultivated skepticism of opinions from all sides of an issue. "My job as a reporter," she explained, "is not to know what I think."

Another current that ran

*"The newspaper newsroom was a lonely place for women in general and black women in particular."*

through Ifill's career was her ability to develop mutually-supportive relationships with other journalists, especially black journalists. It did not matter how much experience they had, or in the case of aspiring student journalists, didn't have.

At Simmons College in Boston, she took a course in broadcast journalism from Sarah-Ann Shaw, the first black woman to be a TV reporter in the city and a stalwart of the Boston chapter of NABJ. (Shaw, a deep thinker, advised Ifill not to go into TV, because local news was shallow, in her opinion.)

As a student intern at the Bay State Banner, editor and publisher Melvin B. Miller had such confidence in Ifill that he assigned her to a big story in 1976: a protest over busing and school desegregation that bore the famed attack by young white thugs on a suited black lawyer with the staff of an American flag. The image of the assault by a Boston Herald American photographer won a Pulitzer Prize.

After graduating in 1977, Ifill started her career at the Herald American, where she covered the Boston School Committee,

then embroiled in the divisive politics of desegregation. She developed a professional friendship with Carmen Fields, a reporter at the competing Boston Globe.

"In those days, the newspaper newsroom was a lonely place for women in general and black women in particular. We would talk fairly often — boosting each other, comparing notes on newsroom politics," said Fields, a former Region I director of

NABJ.

In 1981, Ifill moved to The Baltimore Evening Sun and was put on the city hall beat. At the paper, she met fellow staffer Rick Berke, who went on to The New York Times and Boston Globe and became a lifelong friend.

While at The Sun, she served as secretary of the Baltimore chapter of NABJ, according to DeWayne Wickham, who was the chapter's president at the time.

"She was active in our summer high school workshop and our efforts to increase the ranks of blacks at The Sun and Evening Sun," recalled Wickham, a former NABJ president.

The Washington Post hired Ifill in 1984. She worked her way up from the metro desk, covering the Maryland suburbs, to a coveted spot on the national desk. For a time, she was the paper's only black national reporter and successfully advocated for the hiring of others to join the staff.

In the early 1990s, Ifill volunteered as a mentor and coach at the weekend journalism workshop for high school students organized by the Washington chapter of

NABJ. TaNoah Morgan was one of the students Ifill coached at the workshop.

"She was gracious, in that she made you feel important and that she cared. And it never mattered that I was 16, or just a kid," recalled Morgan, who later worked for The Baltimore Sun. "She always remembered me and made time for me, no matter what the issue was or how many years it had been since we talked. What more could a budding journalist want?"

In 1991, The New York Times succeeded in its second attempt to lure Ifill away from The Post and assigned her to the White House. She covered Bill Clinton's presidential campaign in 1992.

Ifill made her transition into broadcasting in 1994 when NBC recruited her to cover Congress. She had already begun appearing on the weekend public affairs shows of the networks, including "Washington Week." In 1999, PBS brought her into the fold for the final stop of her storied career.

Along the way, Ifill frequented the annual conventions of NABJ, participating in workshops, networking in hotel lobbies and hallways and reveling on the dance floor during the Saturday night parties.

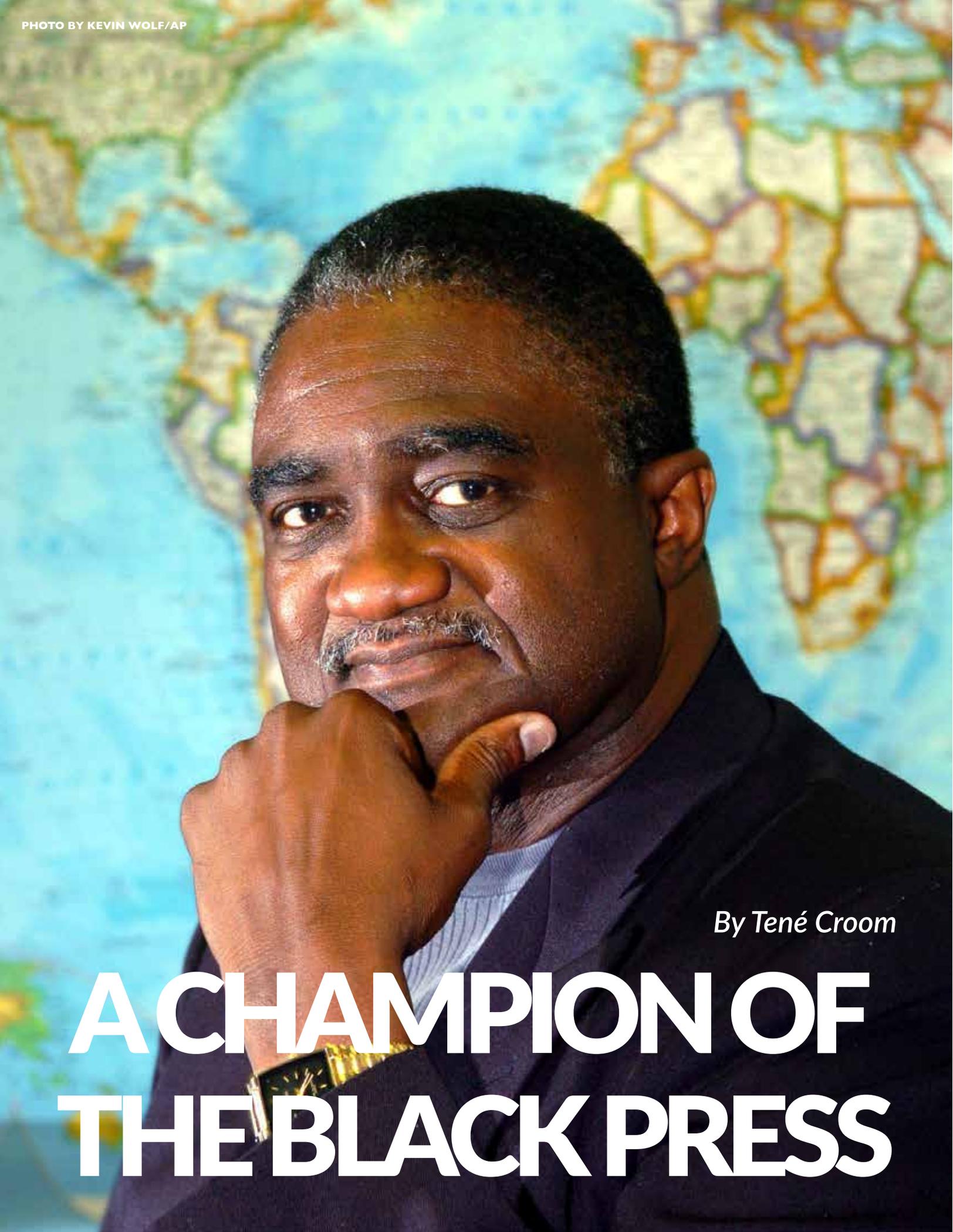
In 2012, NABJ inducted her into its Hall of Fame. That was among many awards and honors she collected, including a Peabody Award, a broadcaster's highest honor, for her coverage of the 2008 presidential campaign.

With her warmth, courage and will to pull along others as she pushed her way up, Ifill made many friends at each stop in her career. Colleagues, former colleagues, protégés, friends and relatives filled the Metropolitan AME Church in Washington, D.C., for her memorial service and funeral.

\*\*\*

*Kenneth J. Cooper, a Pulitzer Prize-winning reporter, is the editor in residence at WGBH News in Boston.*

PHOTO BY KEVIN WOLF/AP



*By Tené Croom*

# A CHAMPION OF THE BLACK PRESS

# Emerge editor was transformational journalist

**G**eorge Edward Curry, the “Dean of the Black Press,” died in 2016 after a heart attack at the age of 69.

It was his second heart attack.

Curry was a highly respected and accomplished journalist – the editor of the award-winning *Emerge* magazine and two-time editor-in-chief of the National Newspaper Publishers Association (NNPA).

Curry’s rich southern tone of voice came through when he spoke, a product of growing up in Tuscaloosa, Alabama. He was forced to learn early about helping to take care of his family when at the age of seven his alcoholic father, Homer Lee, abandoned him, his mother, Martha, and three younger sisters. His mother, a domestic, would later marry a second time to William Henry Polk, who drove a dump truck for the University of Alabama.

Curry stayed in the South for his higher education, graduating from Knoxville College in Tennessee.

Civil rights leader Rev. Al Sharpton, after hearing of Curry’s death, tweeted, “He was a giant and trailblazer.”

Curry also could be defiant, especially when challenged about his sometimes-controversial coverage of newsmakers. Who could forget the *Emerge* stories about Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas? One cover depicted Thomas wearing an Aunt Jemima scarf; another showed him as a lawn jockey for the far right. Curry felt his magazine was speaking truth to power, writing that

the covers “were effective because in the minds of many Blacks disgusted with Thomas’ voting record, that’s exactly what he is. And we had the temerity to say it.”

Editors of *Jet* magazine wrote in an obituary that “Curry was largely thought of as an unapologetic steward and champion for the Black press and frequently expressed the need for it in the civil rights narrative.”

His NNPA column carried by more than 200 Black newspapers was hard-hitting. On Aug. 10, 2015, he wrote, “The 50th anniversary of the signing of the Voting Rights Act fell on the same day that Fox News hosted two Republican presidential debates (August 6). But the landmark legislation was never mentioned by the questioners nor the candidates. And we know why ... with the help of most of the Republican politicians currently running for president, voting rights have been steadily rolled back in recent years.”

You might say Erick Johnson, when writing in the *Chicago Crusader* about Curry’s death, channeled the esteemed journalist in his own prose, questioning how the mainstream media could lack a black voice as he was memorialized.

“Even on journalist George Curry’s obituary, *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post* and many daily newspapers still got the story wrong,” Johnson wrote. “While there were facts about his life, there were no comments from professionals at

Black newspapers – an industry that Curry dearly loved and fought for all of his life as the ‘Dean of the Black Press.’ ... As a journalist who asked a lot of questions, Curry always asked white America and its segregated newsrooms, ‘why?’”

In 2015, after reporting about and participating in the 50th anniversary of “Bloody Sunday” in Selma, Alabama, Curry had a heart attack. He wrote about his health scare and called on everyone to learn from it as he had.

“At the urging of ‘Uncle Mike’ Fauvelle of Setauket, N.Y., I am writing about my second close call with death, hoping that it, too, will prompt you to not only pay closer attention to your health, but be aware of the small signs of trouble and do something about it immediately if you sense something is awry,” he wrote.

Curry lived in Laurel, Maryland. In 1977, he founded the St. Louis Minority Journalism Workshop, a program for high school students to learn about journalism. In that same year he wrote “Jake Gaither: America’s Most Famous Black Coach.”

He is survived by his partner, Elizabeth “Ann” Ragland; his mother, Martha Brownlee; two sisters, Sylvia Polk and Susan Gandy; and son, Edward.

\*\*\*

*Tené Croom is co-chair of the NABJ Black Press Task Force and president of Tené Croom Communications.*

*As a journalist who asked a lot of questions, Curry always asked white America and its segregated newsrooms:*

# WHY?



**In January, NABJ President Sarah Glover, NABJ founder and former NABJ President DeWayne Wickham and Global Journalism Task Force co-chair Rochelle Riley met with Inés Ford Fernández, Ambassador for the Republic of Cuba Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the United States, in Havana, Cuba (pictured below). Wickham (right) led the delegation of journalists, students and representatives from Morgan State University on the historic trip through his Institute for Advanced Journalism Studies. In a photo taken by NABJ member Jackie Jones, Cuban poet Nancy Morejón (bottom right) talked with the delegation.**



# Nothing has changed for black male anchors

By Dorothy Tucker



**T**he plight of the black male anchor has gone unchanged in 25 years.

Pluria Marshall, of the National Black Media Coalition, wrote in 1992: "Black male anchors are in danger of being extinct."

At the same time, University of Missouri professor Vernon Stone, known for his research on blacks in the media, added that the "number of black males anchoring TV news is roughly proportionate to their representation in the TV news workforce, and that's about 5 percent."

Today, little has changed. Black men still appear to be an endangered species in the traditional TV news world.

A visual count from the websites of the six top commercial TV stations in New York in January 2016 showed a dismal number of black male anchors. Out of 149 anchors, reporters and weather forecasters in the market, there were seven black male anchors, roughly 5 percent of the workforce in the nation's top market.

In Charlottesville, Virginia, one of the smallest TV markets in the country (183) with three commercial TV stations, the numbers are even worse. Of the 70 on air talent, only two are black male anchors, according to a visual count of their websites. That's about 3 percent of the workforce.

Clearly these are just two examples. However, it's impossible to draw a true picture of black male anchors or even black male reporters in TV news because of a lack of research. We were unable to find any research from the media organizations, institutes or universities who have focused on this

group since the 1992 study.

Current data on minorities in the industry paint a more optimistic picture.

The latest RTDNA/Hofstra University Annual survey finds the minority workforce in TV news rose to 23.1 percent in 2015. That's up almost a full point from a year ago and is the second highest level ever in TV news.

At non-Hispanic stations, the minority breakdown is:

- 11.4 percent African-American — up from 11.1 percent
- 6.7 percent Hispanic — up from 5.9 percent
- 2.7 percent Asian-American — down from 2.9 percent
- 0.4 percent Native American — back up from 0.3 percent

## **WHY SO FEW BLACK MALE ANCHORS**

In the 1992 report, several news managers offered opinions.

Dwight Ellis, who at the time was vice president of human resource development for the National Association of Broadcasters, described the industry as one that did not embrace black men.

"Because of limited opportunities, many black males become discouraged and leave television news for professions with a better chance of advancement and a bigger paycheck," Ellis said. "That, in turn, diminishes the talent pool."

Gary Wordlaw, currently the news director at WVLA/WGMB-TV in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, was news director at WJLA in Washington, D.C., in 1992. Back then, he blamed the problem on a limited number of openings.

"Generally, anchors reflect the marketplace, and once an anchor establish-

es him or herself in a market, they just don't move that much, black or white," said Wordlaw.

Today, Wordlaw points to a shrinking industry with fewer jobs and black men choosing other careers.

"A lot are going into the high tech stuff," he said. "They're graduating and finding jobs where they can make the money. You aren't going to command the money in TV today like you did back in the day."

A former weekend anchor in a middle market station, who prefers to be anonymous for fear of hurting his job prospects, says frustration often drives black men and especially black male anchors out of the business.

"I'm still doing weekends," he said. "I'm still filling in, maybe I'm still doing mornings. The pain is the lack of promotion, the extra hours, going in on weekends and holidays thinking someone is going to give you a shot at the permanent spot and it never happens. You start to ask yourself, why am I suffering?"

The state of black male anchors and reporters deserves a closer look. Perhaps some regions of the country employ more black male anchors than others, smaller markets may have higher numbers than larger ones or vice versa, or maybe a particular broadcast company shows favor to black male anchors. More importantly, we need to find solutions to the problem.

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*Dorothy Tucker is NABJ's Vice President of Broadcast and a reporter for CBS Chicago. Follow her on Twitter @dorothyvbnabj.*



# REGION 2 POWERS UP THE WINDY CITY



**The joint Region II Conference and NABJ Media Institute on Finance attracted 225 attendees in Chicago in October 2016. The program included mentor sessions, drone journalism and digital training. The keynote address was given by Judge Greg Mathis, star of a reality TV court show.**

# POYNTER TRAINING THE NEXT DIGITAL LEADERS

**The inaugural class of the Poynter-NABJ Digital Leadership Academy gathered at the journalism think tank's St. Petersburg, Florida, campus in December 2016 to develop skills and strategies to improve their newsrooms.**



# ASKING THE HARD QUESTIONS AT THE MEDIA INSTITUTE ON LEGAL AFFAIRS



NABJ members took part in training at the Media Institute on Legal Affairs Sept. 24, 2016. Photos courtesy of The American Bar Association Criminal Justice Section.

## BRINGING BACK THE BASICS TO #NABJBASICS



Young journalists take part in one of NABJ's latest training seminars, the NABJ Basics Bootcamp in Birmingham, Alabama, Feb. 10-11, 2017.



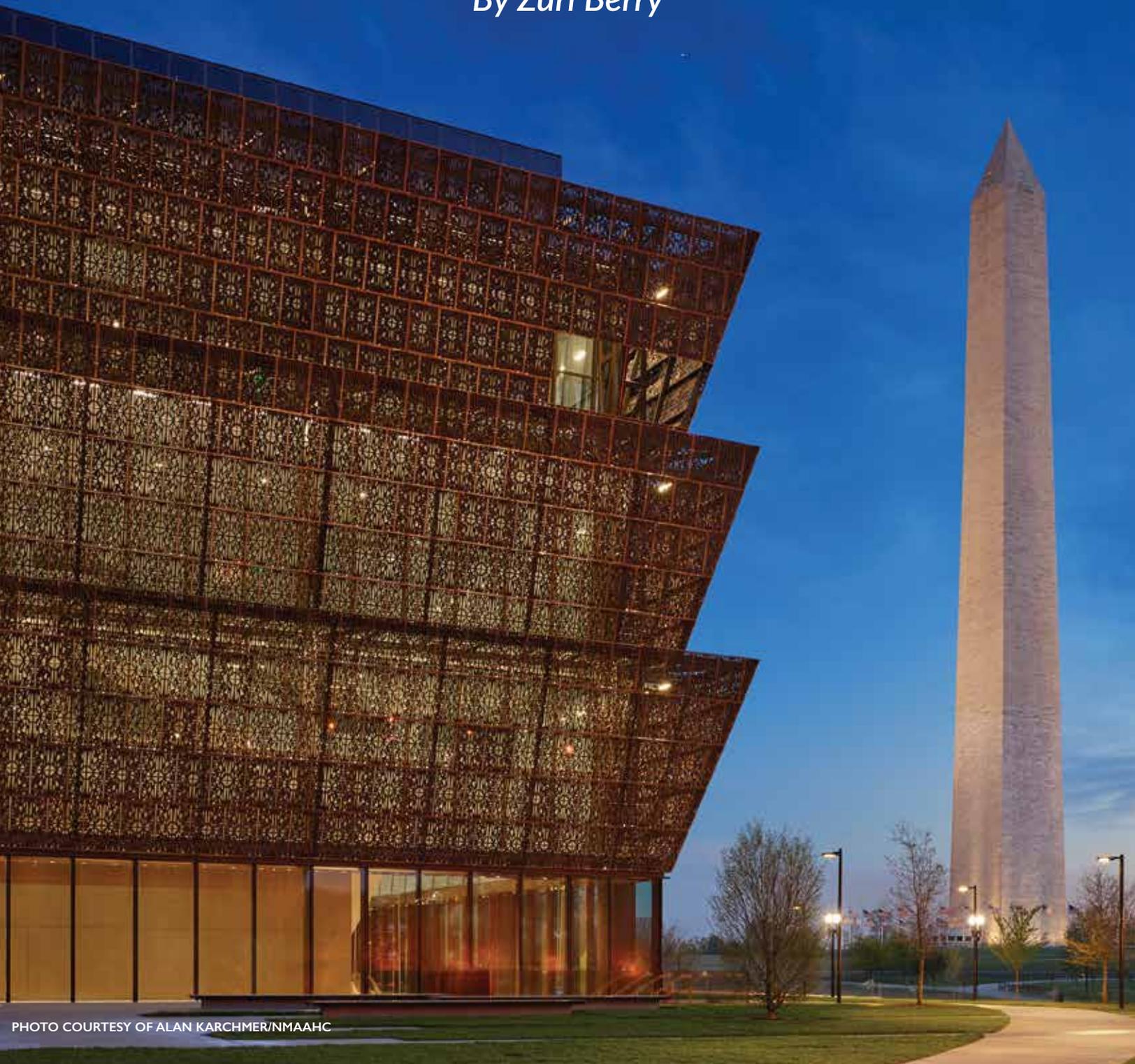
## TRACKING DIGITAL ADVANCES AT #BLACKTWITTER17

NABJ members attended the #BlackTwitter17 conference Feb. 25, 2017, at the City University of New York in New York City.



# Museum gets a piece of its spirit from black press

*By Zuri Berry*



In the newly minted National Museum of African American History and Culture, opened in September 2016 after a decades-long campaign to build support for its creation and 13 years following an act of Congress, the black press' contributions are substantial to the museum's collections and exhibits.

This is a different kind of museum. It is the only museum dedicated to the documentation of black life in America, black culture and black history. Its mission, in line and parallel with that of the black press, leans heavily upon journalistic institutions. There are more than 36,000 artifacts in the museum where the Smithsonian's 19th institution helps pay homage to pioneering black journalists and news outlets who championed their communities.

"That was one reason why we made sure that when we focused on 'Making A Way Out of No Way,' we focused on the press," said Michèle Gates Moresi, curator of collections at the museum and co-curator of the "Making A Way Out of No Way" exhibit, the primary exhibit where the black press is on display.

"That thematic exhibition was looking at the institutions, the organizations and the myriad of ways that African-Americans were basically, you know, forging American life despite

obstacles," Gates Moresi said.

The museum is peppered with the works of the black press, primarily through its photography, newsprint and magazine covers. The works and photos of famous abolitionists like Frederick Douglass are coupled with exhibits featuring namesakes of the Johnson Publishing Company, the Philadelphia Tribune and Black Enterprise. But there are also significant artifacts, including a linotype machine from the Chicago Defender, a printing plate and time clock from R.H. Boyd's National Baptist Publishing Board and a precious copy of the NAACP's *The Crisis* from 1918.

There's a lot for journalists to take in.

"[Journalists will] be pleased to see both the black press integrated throughout the museum as well as the callout for the role of the press as vital to these stories," Gates Moresi said.

The museum, Gates Moresi added, has not completed its mission either. After spending 10 years building out the current exhibits, the museum's curators are now in a period of reflection as they consider future collections and prominent individuals who have recently passed.

"As you can imagine, our priority was the development of the exhibitions and collecting around that. So now we're looking long-term for the permanent

collection. What are the stories that will be important for generations? What are the gaps? What were we not able to acquire? So, we're kind of in the midst of that planning. I can say pretty confidently ... it's a process. But the movers and shakers like (George) Curry and (Gwen) Ifill will certainly be among those people who we would be aiming to look at as well."

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*Zuri Berry is the editor of the NABJ Journal. He serves as the deputy managing editor for news and multimedia at the Boston Herald. Follow him on Twitter @zuriberry.*



*Photographic print of Robert Scurlock holding a camera ca. 1940; Collection of the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture, Gift of the Scurlock family*

## Shaping the narrative

By Autumn A. Arnett

The story of African-American history and culture cannot be told without also telling the story of the black press. In the words of Tené Croom, co-chair of NABJ's Black Press Task Force, "We have been shaping the community ... for decades and centuries."

For a time, the narratives of the black press and Black America were intertwined because there were no other outlets covering the African-American experience — only the black press carried the news, expressed the pain and outrage and joy and triumph of the black community.

"Our role has been to chronicle

and to reflect the ups and downs" of African-Americans, said John J. Oliver Jr., publisher of *The Afro-American* in Baltimore and Washington, D.C.

"There're so many lessons, there're so many things that you can see that the black press" recorded during key moments in American history, said Oliver. "Everybody was on the same level, because everybody felt the same level of pain and affront, and we made the affront national."

"Beginning in 1892, most comfortably, and more in depth during the first three or four decades of the 20th century, we were reflecting attitudes of the black community while at the same



*Paper cutter from The Baltimore Afro-American Newspaper (1900-1920) Collection of the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture, Gift of the Afro-American Newspapers*

CONTINUED ON PAGE 26



PHOTO BY JASSON MICCOLO JOHNSON

# After contentious election, the highlights and lowlights for black journalists

By Wayne Dawkins

**A**t least a dozen black journalists played prominent reporting and analytical roles in one of the oddest and most contentious U.S. presidential elections of the 21st century, culminating in the election of Republican businessman Donald J. Trump, who defeated Democrat Hillary Clinton, the former secretary of state, U.S. senator and First Lady.

For nationally recognized black journalists, the campaign and election were a mix of highs and lows, including The New York Times' executive editor leading investigations of financial and sexual scandal allegations against Trump; a direct question to Clinton during the NABJ-NAHJ convention that kept her trapped in a private email quagmire; the revelation of debate moderator Lester Holt's personal political affiliation; and CNN's Don Lemon enduring

a belligerent black sheriff from Wisconsin during an interview.

Oh, and during a Sunday talk show, a GOP pundit said she wanted to "wring the neck" of a black newspaper editorial writer sitting next to her.

At one point, the plight of black journalists and pundits covering the 2016 election was mocked on Comedy Central's "The Daily Show" hosted by Trevor Noah. The five-minute segment included a clip showing Lemon interviewing Milwaukee County Sheriff David Clarke during the Republican National Convention, which devolved into a menacing rant by the black man in blue. In another clip, Morehouse College professor and CNN pundit Marc Lamont Hill sat stunned as Fox News anchor Bill O'Reilly told the public intellectual he "kinda looked like a cocaine drug dealer." Seconds later, Hill deadpanned that O'Reilly resembled "a

cocaine user."

At times, campaign analysis expanded beyond disparaging words to threats of bodily harm. Stephen Henderson, the Detroit Free Press's Pulitzer Prize-winning opinion writer and the 2014 NABJ Journalist of the Year, was a guest on NBC's "Meet the Press" in March 2016 when he had the following exchange with Republican pundit Mary Matalin:

**HENDERSON:** *There's also a substantial credibility problem here. I mean, you have Republicans saying, 'Trump is not one of us,' and yet a lot of the things that he's saying are said in coded language by other Republicans. [House Speaker] Paul Ryan said, 'This is not a party that preys on people's prejudices.'*

*And yet, you can think of lots of examples of Republicans doing exactly that. This goes on all the time in coded ways. Trump is saying*

some of these things more explicitly. And that makes them, you know, uncomfortable too.

**MATALIN:** No, it doesn't make me uncomfortable; it just makes me want to choke you [laughter] because it's ridiculous and a creation of Trump. Because conservatives do not consider themselves bigots or homophobes or misogynists, OK? This is not a race race, OK? Let's not go there.

**HENDERSON:** I think it is. I mean, I think there's no question that what he [Trump] is doing is appealing to race. And Republicans have done that for a long time.

Dean Baquet, who in 2014 was named the first black executive editor in the history of The New York Times, stayed largely out of the public eye until he became the subject of criticism from MSNBC host Joe Scarborough on his show, "Morning Joe." Two days after Trump's victory, Scarborough said Baquet, in August, announced that The New York Times' job was to defeat Trump. Baquet had said no such thing, and a week later Scarborough said he "misspoke" and apologized for misreading a news account. Over the course of the election cycle, The New York Times published noteworthy exposés of Trump, including bombshell reports that the business magnate had likely not paid taxes for nearly 20 years and damaging allegations by a handful of women that he had groped them and other sexual misconduct.



New York Times executive editor Dean Baquet

Meanwhile, Clinton was dogged by reports that while serving as secretary of state in the Obama administration she kept a large volume of email communications on a private server in her home, a possible violation of the law. Clinton repeatedly acknowledged the server was a mistake, yet she managed to keep the embarrassing story alive by parsing her answers, as she did during a Fox News Sunday interview a week before the NABJ-NAHJ convention in

Washington.

Clinton agreed to speak to the joint convention of journalists of color on Aug. 5. She had not given a news conference in months and the convention of more than 3,000 attendees, most of whom were working journalists, was an opportunity to answer questions and provide clarity on campaign issues. During a Q&A segment, Clinton apologized for her use of the private email server again, reported McClatchy News Service, and the candidate added that

*"This is the problem with the media. You guys took everything that Donald Trump said so literally. The American people didn't."*

she might have "short-circuited" during the Fox News Sunday interview.

"I have said during the interview and on many occasions of the past months that what I told the FBI, which he [Director James Comey] said was truthful, is consistent with what I have said publicly," Clinton said.

The video of Clinton speaking to NABJ-NAHJ conferences attendees was looped on all cable and network newscasts because the candidate resumed limited press appearances. (Trump was invited to address the convention, too, but his campaign declined.)

At the Republican National Convention in late July, Lemon interviewed Clarke, the Milwaukee County sheriff, who was a keynote speaker. Clarke said he had predicted the fatal shootings of Baton Rouge police officers and accused Black Lives Matter demonstrators of inciting the lethal violence. However, Clarke refused to answer follow up questions, and when Lemon thanked him and closed the interview, Clarke said, "They [Black Lives Matter] teach vile and vitriol in the name of virtue."

Post-Labor Day, as the presidential race kicked into high gear, journalists who received a lot of face time and provided substantive reporting and analysis included Nia-Malika Henderson of CNN (a former Washington Post political writer); Errol Louis of Time Warner Cable NY1 News and Abby Phillip of The Washington Post.

Just before the fall presidential debates, Trump complained that the moderators were all registered Democrats and therefore would be biased against him. NBC's Lester Holt was moderator of the first of three debates. Just before the battle, news accounts revealed that Holt, the 2016 NABJ Journalist of the Year, was in fact a registered Republican.

The late Gwen Ifill, co-anchor of "The

NewsHour" on PBS and moderator of "Washington Week," moderated a spring Democratic primary debate between Clinton and Vermont U.S. Sen. Bernie Sanders, but took leave in May because of illness. She returned to co-anchor with Judy Woodruff coverage of the political conventions. Six days after the election, Ifill, 61, died from a yearlong battle with cancer.

[READ MORE ON IFILL'S LEGACY ON PAGE 10]

Indeed, the election was bizarre and

bruising. Trump captured 304 electoral votes, yet he is the fifth president to lose in the popular vote. Clinton's popular vote margin surpassed Trump's by more than 2.8 million.

The tone of the campaign moved NABJ President Sarah Glover on Nov. 11 to issue a statement.

"It was a long and often contentious election that required considerable attention to detail and the very best reporting," Glover wrote. "I know many of you are fatigued, and covering the campaign may have had an impact on you as working journalists, media professionals or students. I want to extend an NABJ hug to members and hope you all catch up on badly needed rest."

Five days later, on Nov. 16, 15 journalism organizations, including NABJ, urged the soon-to-be president to respect the 300-plus-year American tradition of press freedom.

Since Trump's inauguration Jan. 20, 2017, he and his staff have created several obstacles for some media organizations trying to cover the administration, from refusing to call on them at White House briefings to blocking their access to briefings altogether. As he attempts to repeal the Affordable Care Act, build a southwest border wall to block immigrants, and strip or weaken business and environmental regulations, the challenge for journalists — and especially black journalists — will be intriguing.

Consider former Trump campaign manager Corey Lewandowski's curious critique of the media during a Dec. 1 forum at Harvard's Kennedy School: "This is the problem with the media. You guys took everything that Donald Trump said so literally," reported The Washington Post. "The American people didn't."

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Wayne Dawkins is a professor of professional practice at Hampton University Scripps Howard School of Journalism and Communications.

# A NEW SOCIETY INVESTIGATIVE

By Benét J. Wilson



The Ida B. Wells Society for Investigative Reporting has been created to train and bring more black journalists into a beat that has been historically hard for them to break into.

The Society, launched in August 2016 at NABJ's joint convention in Washington D.C., was founded by Nikole Hannah-Jones, staff writer at The New York Times Magazine; Corey Johnson, a former staff writer at The Marshall Project, who recently joined the Tampa Bay Times; Ron Nixon, a Washington correspondent for The New York Times; and Topher Sanders, a reporter for ProPublica. Other board members include The Atlantic's Ta-Nehisi Coates, Pulitzer Prize-winning investigative journalist Melvin Claxton, Emmy Award-winning reporter Renee Ferguson, Hank Klibanoff, director of the Georgia Civil Rights Cold Cases Project at Emory University and Lawan Hamilton, an executive producer at Scripps Howard's Washington bureau.

The society is named after the famous investigative reporter and journalist who was among the earliest black publishers in the United States. Wells became co-owner and editor of the Memphis Free Speech and Headlight in 1889 and used it as a platform to investigate lynchings in the South.

Hannah-Jones said the idea for the society came after the founders attended the Investigative Reporters and Editors (IRE) National Institute for Computer-Assisted Reporting (NICAR) conference in Atlanta in

March 2015.

"We all looked around and made a comment that we were basically the entire black contingent at the conference," she said.

It was something the group had noticed after years of attending investigative reporting conferences, said Hannah-Jones.

"We decided we would start an organization because we understood the particular obstacles and barriers to becoming investigative reporters," she said. "No existing journalism organizations were particularly addressing that need. We appreciate the National Association of Black Journalists and all that it does. We're also members of IRE and appreciate what it does. But the two groups weren't meeting the particular needs of black investigative reporters, so we decided to step into that void and stop waiting for other organizations to do something about it."

Wesley Lowery, a Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist for The Washington Post, said he immediately signed up for the association because of the journalists involved. Along with NABJ, he says it's incredibly important to support organizations that focus on underrepresentation.

"Investigative teams often are among the only groups in modern newsrooms routinely afforded the time and resources to do the type of deep, incubated reporting that can upend systems that are failing the public," Lowery said. "Because of that, investigative reporters have the unique opportunity to speak out and demand accountability on the behalf of people of color whose voices and concerns may otherwise go spoken yet unheard."

"As we continue to discover the depths to which inequities are baked into the foundation of our nation," Lowery continued, "it is more important now than ever that there is a diverse set of storytellers choosing investigative targets informed by the black and brown American experience."

One of the goals of the organization is to count the number of black investigative journalists there are in the U.S.

"Investigative reporters are a very specialized group," Hannah-Jones said. "We know black journalists are underrepresented in newsrooms, but there is no count. That's actually one of the things that we're hoping to do as an organization — try to get some sense of that number."

For black reporters, it's not just about considering a career as an investigative journalist, said Hannah-Jones.

"Like most things, it's much easier to imagine yourself doing something when you've seen an

ILLUSTRATION OF IDA B. WELLS BY LISA WALDSCHMITT

# FOR BLACK JOURNALISTS

*"We decided we would start an organization because we understood the particular obstacles and barriers to becoming investigative reporters."*

example of it from someone who looks like you," she explained. "And it's very rare to see a black person in that position. Investigative reporting is considered the premier spot at any news organization."

Journalists spend a long time doing investigative stories, and they're very expensive to do, said Hannah-Jones.

"Those of us who are investigative reporters have to fight really hard to get into those positions, since we weren't groomed the way other investigative reporters have been."

Hannah-Jones's first job as a reporter was doing shorter-term investigations.

"I was always interested in accountability reporting, making public records requests and looking at data — just on a much smaller scale. But I ended up just having to do what a lot of journalists do have to do, which is working on bigger projects on my own," she recalled. "I was squeezing in the time to work on them and then trying to write a couple of investigative pieces to catch the attention of my editor. It was a long process."

Steve Engelberg, ProPublica's editor-in-chief, wanted to hire diverse talent, said Hannah-Jones. "So he gave me a chance. Until then, there was no one who had ever seen me as a prospect for being an investigative reporter," she said. "It's pretty common. We have the ability often to do much better work than what we are allowed to do or are given the opportunity to do."

Who should join the Ida B. Wells Society?

"I don't feel we have an ideal member. We look for those who are already journalists who have been working for a couple of years and are ready to tackle bigger projects," said Hannah-Jones.

The Society wants to offer a range of trainings that will reach the novice journalist, along with

the veteran journalist looking to add new skills, said Hannah-Jones.

"As we know, there's a lot of newsrooms that are not paying for trainings anymore. And if they do pay to send journalists to training, it's often a very select group," she said. "We are trying to democratize that by offering low-cost or free access to high-quality training to those who otherwise would not be able to afford it."

The first training was held October 21-22, 2016, at North Carolina Central University in Durham. For \$25, attendees received training from the four founders in areas including accessing public records, developing news apps and interactives and writing compelling investigative narratives.

Kirstin Garriss, a broadcast journalist at Time Warner Cable News in Charlotte, signed up for the training after she heard about the society at an NABJ mixer during the convention in Washington, D.C.

"There's not enough people with these skills, especially among those of color, and I wanted those skills," she said.

The trainers didn't just give a PowerPoint and send attendees on their way, said Garriss.

"I learned about free websites and resources that most people don't know about. I also got free one-year membership in IRE, and that is priceless," she said. "I felt they gave us a real investment when they pulled out their black book of skills and shared them because they wanted us to get better."

The Ida B. Wells Society is currently being run by four full-time journalists.

"We understood that the first year out we weren't going to be able to offer members a ton of things," Hannah-Jones said. "So we didn't want to charge for memberships until we really felt we were up and running at full capacity and that members could really see the value. We also wanted to get the word out and generate interest."

The founders are happy to work with anyone who wants to help the organization, said Hannah-Jones.

"We are going to deliver on what we promised we'd deliver. And we're going to be twice as good, which also happens to be our motto," she said.

Five years from now, Hannah-Jones hopes that the Ida B. Wells Society will have a track record of placing talent in newsrooms.

"We don't want to hear that 'we'd love to have your diverse investigative reporters,

but just can't find the talent.' We are trying to take away that excuse," she said. "We want to take away that excuse by saying that we know what these people can do. We have trained and mentored them and they are ready to meet the challenge."

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*Benét Wilson is a freelance aviation journalist and owner of Aviation Queen. She is also NABJ's vice president for digital and a board member for the Online News Association. Follow her on Twitter at @benet4nabj.*



ILLUSTRATION OF NIKOLE HANNAH-JONES BY LISA WALDSCHMITT



# Lessons from Claire Smith

By Zuri Berry

It is the highest honor bestowed on a journalist who has covered Major League Baseball with skill and longevity. Now, after 67 honorees, the Baseball Writers' Association of America has recognized Claire Smith with the J.G. Taylor Spink Award, given to a journalist "for meritorious contributions to baseball writing." Smith is the first woman to receive the award and fourth black journalist to be enshrined in Cooperstown, N.Y., at the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum, joining Wendell Smith, Sam Lacy and Larry Whiteside. She will receive her award during Hall of Fame weekend ceremonies in July 2017.

In a banner year, she will also be honored by The Jackie Robinson Foundation with a ROBIE award for lifetime achievement and by the Negro League Baseball Museum.

Smith, a news editor at ESPN who has previously earned NABJ's legacy award, shared some lessons from the beat with the NABJ Journal.

**Journal:** *What are some of the habits that younger journalists should have who want to emulate the achievements of somebody such as yourself?*

**Smith:** "Younger journalists should recognize that when they're dealing with the athletes, they're dealing with often kids that are fresh out of college, or in the case of baseball, kids that never went to college. And to never assume that they understand what we do, that they understand what our purpose is. A lot of the conflict comes because the athletes assume that we are an extension of the public relations department on their team and therefore they get bent out of shape if it isn't completely positive or glowing. ... In quiet moments, it really behooves them to explain what we do. Why we do what we do. And to explain the working

relationship that we're there, not as a part of their team, but as a part of our team. We're journalists."

**Journal:** *How do you pitch covering baseball for young journalists of color, especially as we see fewer and fewer journalists of color covering the game?*

**Smith:** "I definitely pitch baseball as a sport that will help you develop your writing skills because you are definitely on a daily basis given an opportunity to write about character, personalities and stories that go way, way beyond balls and strikes. And the reason is there are so many games, that you just can't write a game story. There's so many avenues for readers and watchers to get the score, to see what happened, that by the time you go to print, or go on air, the game has already been seen or read about. And it's practically old news. So you have to be so creative. You have to almost invent on a daily basis a new way to catch attention.

"And how do you do that? You do that by really getting into the marrow of the team that you cover, to really look inside the seams, inside the athletes to see what makes them tick, to see what makes an organization work."

**Journal:** *What advice do you have for young female journalists who are still grappling with a very male-dominated industry and are trying to make their way in the business?*

**Smith:** "I've had some very good friends who I cried inside for because I watched them fight every fight and react to every slight and I watched them be torn apart by that inwardly and outwardly.

"My advice would be to fight the fights that are worth fighting and shrug off the ones that you think that you can live with because you're bigger and better. If you can walk in a clubhouse and do your job, and ignore the tiny people, ignore the people that really, really at the end of the day, just don't matter, aren't worth a damn and aren't really stopping you from doing your job with dignity and professionalism, ignore them. Because, if you can do that, you've won. You really have won.

"My father told me something. He was referring to what African-Americans all learn in this country. He said you have to always prove what you aren't before you can prove what you are. I learned rather quickly that as a female reporter that that really applies to us as well. You walk into a clubhouse and you have to immediately shatter stereotypes and certain low expectations or insulting expectations, if you will. People assume you know nothing about the sport that you're covering. You have to prove what you aren't. You're not husband shopping or worse. And then, at first it was insulting, and then I went back to my rule one, and then it got to be fun by just showering people with knowledge.

"I know baseball. I can ask these questions and watch the faces before me change. And watch the respect, if you will, start flowing from not only the players that I'm speaking to, or the managers or coaches, but also the peers, to my right or left. And then I get to prove who I am, as opposed to what I'm not.

"So use that. Use it. Shatter those stereotypes. And have some fun doing it. Use it as a positive and just go in there and knock 'em out with your knowledge and your expertise and your drive to be the best at what you do."



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time trying to ignite direction without dictating,” Oliver added. “At the same time we were uncovering — by simply disclosing — what various aspects of our culture existed, but also focusing on threats.”

Croom said the role of the black press was more than just a vehicle to carry information to African-Americans who, in the early days of the black press, were mostly living in rural southern communities and not big cities. It was a tool to help organize movements and change the course of history in the nation.

“It was the sounding board, it was also the rallying cry,” she said. “By getting on the radio and being able to have activists, they were able to organize on the radio and the newspapers to say ‘we shall overcome’ and ‘no more.’”

People were made “stronger through their voices being served,” Croom said.

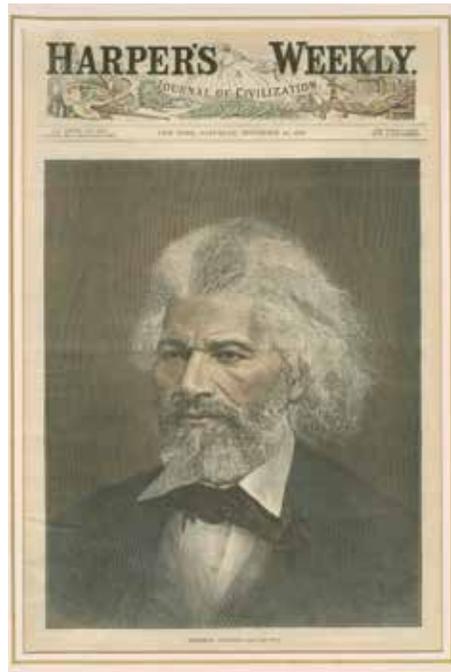
“I think that things happen because of the black press being informative, and I think because of us being informative, we were able to precipitate understanding, responses” from the nation at large, said Oliver.

Take, for instance, presidential elections.

“We did a series a couple years ago in celebration of the second Obama inauguration by republishing the articles of our coverage [of past presidential inaugurations]. Each week, it was a different presidential inauguration, and each week we talked about our position as covering each campaign, how we were wooed or we weren’t ... and what the immediate fallout of the results were. It shows a very interesting evolution,” recalled Oliver. “Those early years were tough.”

“We had the head of the AME Zion church, Alexander Walters, and he came knocking on the [Afro’s] door ... for purposes of encouraging the black community [to exercise] its powerful vote in support of Woodrow Wilson. Up to that point, no Democrat had given black citizens any thought ... so when Woodrow came knocking, we listened. We were flattered.”

The Afro editors at the time believed the promises that Wilson made would be good for the race and endorsed



Frederick Douglass featured in Harper's Weekly: Journal of Civilization in 1883.

him, only to be let down once he won the vote when he reversed decades of federal policy regarding integration.

“It was political trickery,” Oliver said. “We were absolutely bent over backwards with disappointment.”

And so it went, from presidential elections, to shedding a light on the daily lynchings and Jim Crow practices in the South, race riots and even cover-

*"It was the sounding board, it was also the rallying cry."*

age of black athletes that showed their humanity rather than portraying them as moral-lacking brutes. The black press has been there to give voice to the African-American experience. It was Ida B. Wells-Barnett's persistent coverage of lynchings in the South that is credited for forcing the federal government's hand on anti-lynching laws. And credit can be given to the Chicago Defender's coverage of Barack Obama, long before he was a candidate for U.S. Senate, for helping to propel the nation's first black president into office, according to author Ethan Michaeli, who wrote the book on the esteemed black newspaper.

Even after integration, and with an increasing interest from mainstream outlets on reporting on African-American history and culture, the black press remains one of the pillars of the community. But this has not come without challenges. Changes to the industry, including a shift to digital and a decline in traditional print advertising, have simultaneously made it difficult to keep the black press thriving and have created opportunities for different kinds of ownership. The growth of the internet means anyone can put up a property and cover the news — or share an opinion — but it also means more competition for advertising dollars and readers.

“There is so much opportunity today in owning our narrative and being able to distribute it by common and inexpensive means,” said Jarrett Carter Sr., founding editor of the HBCU Digest. “But the challenge remains in convincing an audience that is constantly exposed to mainstream content and marketing that there is value in independent media.

“Content which isn't entertainment or celebrity news is very difficult to sell to a big audience, and because of that, we have to be more strategic about what we write, how we market it and setting price points for advertising and subscriptions,” Carter added.

Oliver said as a collective, black publishers — like the public they serve — “can't afford to lose hope, because that's the thing that kept us strong.”

“We speak as a loud voice and we let people know that we object” when things aren't right, he said. “We've got to make sure that every time there's a misstep, we've got to scream. ... We've got to be loud, be consistent, and vigilant. Make sure that we don't let [anyone] get away with anything.”

As the nation transitions to a period of uncertainty, Oliver vowed, “I'm going to report every incident that I see or I'm made aware of so that we all can feel each other's pain more and so that the rest of the world can understand we're back in the battle.”

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Autumn A. Arnett currently serves as editor of Education Dive. She is also founding editor of Out of Bounds Magazine, and serves as president of XanJo Media LLC. Autumn can be reached via Twitter at @A2Arnett or at a2arnett.com.



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# PHILIP MERRILL COLLEGE of JOURNALISM

*Fearless Journalism*

# Adande is changing up the game

By Shauntel Lowe

**T**roll him on Twitter if you want to, say he hates your favorite team or claim LeBron James isn't clutch, but J.A. Adande doesn't have the time.

He's racking up points on ESPN's "Around the Horn," dropping columns for The Undeclared or planning classes at Northwestern University's Medill School of Journalism in Chicago. He's an associate professor and director of the new sports media specialization graduate program there.

And you? Well, now you're blocked.

"If you come at me and you're wrong... that's a block," Adande says. "I just don't have time in my life to deal with people who are just wrong."

These are the words of a journalist redefining busy after trading Los Angeles' sunny days for the Midwest's chilly nights to shake up his career and his life. Again.

"I didn't realize until afterward that so many things were preparing me for this," Adande, 46, says.

Twelve years teaching at USC. Nine years reporting for ESPN after stops at The Los Angeles Times and the Washington Post.

And "the best decision of my life," he says: undergrad at Northwestern.

It was 1992, and trolls weren't on Twitter but instead lurking under fairy-tale bridges and dazzling tweens with their neon-colored hair. Then, as now, Adande was making moves, learning the writing, reporting and networking skills that would carry him coast to coast, print to TV and finally back to Chicago to craft a 21st century sports journalism program for students who weren't even alive the last time he had homework due.

But don't let that framing make you label him old. Old school, sure.

"You have to be proficient and tech savvy in ways that you didn't have to before, but you still have to know the fundamentals," he says, adding that he's purposely maintaining his presence on ESPN and social media. "I don't want to be someone who says, 'We used to do this.' I'm an example of adapting."

It's that mix of get-off-my-lawn principles and Facebook fluency that Adande hopes will define this fledgling graduate program. Students in the sports media specialization will learn the nuts and bolts of reporting and digital storytelling in the classroom,



J.A. Adande is an associate professor and director of sports journalism at Northwestern University's Medill School of Journalism, Media, and Integrated Marketing Communications. (Photo courtesy of Northwestern)

go out into the field to cover live sporting events and hear from guest speakers and alumni mentors. NABJ member and Northwestern alumnus Michael Wilbon is one of the program's professors of practice, contributing to classes and events in Washington and Chicago.

Adande also wants his students to learn about marketing themselves, the business side of the industry and engaging on social media — the right way.

Reporting but not verifying, taking others' work without attribution or jumping to conclusions is "thoughtless and irresponsible," he says.

Gregory Lee, a past president of NABJ and its Sports Task Force, says many students aren't learning the right skills to be good journalists. They don't understand how to monetize content or navigate newsroom politics, he says, and many, particularly minorities, don't pick schools with sufficient resources to properly launch their careers.

But Lee, who is on the board of directors for the Sports Journalism Institute, which trains minority and women student journalists, says Adande has always given back to young journalists "tremendously," and his new role at Medill is an extension of that.

"The sports journalism community will be enhanced with his contributions," Lee says.

Adande says Medill's vast alumni network and dedication to providing students the best all-around training makes the yearlong graduate program worth the cost, with tuition around \$60,000. Wilbon and ESPN's Rachel Nichols and Adam Scheffer are just three of the high-profile media figures with the school on their resumes. There's also Ron Thomas, one of the co-founders of the

Sports Task Force, who built the Journalism and Sports Program at Morehouse College.

"Now you have to be a multimedia journalist, and I think going to a school like Medill that supports that and teaches you that can really enhance your career," Thomas says.

Adande, himself, is also a benefit, Thomas says.

"J.A. will be a living, walking role model for the black students who are there," he says, adding that white students, too, will gain by learning firsthand from a black journalist—something they may not have a chance to do in the almost entirely white press boxes of all major sports.

Adande hadn't announced his new role in time to recruit at NABJ's convention in August, so he's eager for the chance to in New Orleans this year. The crux of his pitch is that through this new program, he aims to put students in the best position to succeed in an industry increasingly difficult to make a living in.

That means bracing young journalists of color for a world hostile to people of their complexion and profession.

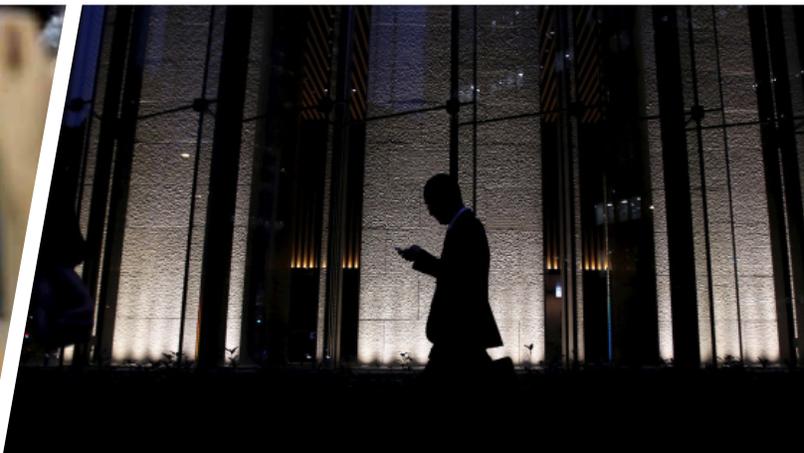
"Journalism is under attack," he says. "All the excellent reporting in the world doesn't have the impact that it used to."

Adande says he thinks of the pictures of young black girls trying to integrate schools in the 1950s amid hateful, angry mobs.

"You have to find the same level of courage they did," he says. "You might have to fight some of the same battles they did now. You have to be courageous."

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Shauntel Lowe is deputy editor for special projects at Bleacher Report. Follow her on Twitter @shauntellowe.



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# Curating A Legacy: The DeWayne Wickham Collection

By Maria Pitts Roberts



**D**eWayne Wickham has seen plenty in his nearly 40-year career as a journalist. Watergate. The crisis in Cuba. He has covered eight presidents. He has dined with Fidel Castro. He traveled with Nelson Mandela on his eight-city tour in the United States in June 1990.

Having amassed a prolific career, Wickham's path is a blueprint for aspiring journalists. From writing his syndicated weekly column to teaching the next generation of communicators and storytellers, he still serves as a mentor, inspiration and resource for students and colleagues alike. He still has stories to tell. Soon, you will be able to see how those amazing stories came to be.

Wickham is an NABJ Founder and former President (1979-1981). He also was a founder of the Association of Black Media Workers in Baltimore, one of three NABJ chapters that pre-date the founding of the association. He is the founding dean of the School of Global Journalism and Communication at Morgan State University in Baltimore, now in its third year, providing degrees in multimedia journalism with various concentrations. Morgan State is among a small number of historically black colleges and universities with a journalism school. In addition, Wickham, in conjunction with Morgan State and NABJ, led a delegation of professional and student journalists to Cuba in January 2017.

And now, Wickham has further cemented his legacy by donating selected works for a collection curated at the central location of the Enoch Pratt Free Library's African American Department in Baltimore.

The DeWayne Wickham Collection will include awards, tapes, interviews, correspondences, CDs and notebooks from past interviews during an esteemed career with outlets including USA Today, BET, CBS and others. He is the second journalist (the first being H.L. Mencken) to donate his papers

to the Enoch Pratt Free Library.

The desire to request his papers was years in the making. "Someone approached [former] librarian, Carla Hayden (currently head of the Library of Congress), about four years ago, suggesting that we request his documents to curate," said Vivian Fisher, Enoch Pratt's African American Department manager. "We thought it was a great idea and invited Mr. Wickham to the library to propose it. The Baltimore native was warm to the idea, with the condition that his documents be made available to everyone.

"He insisted that access not be prohibited," Fisher said. "We consider Enoch Pratt, 'the people's university,' so we knew it would be a great fit and a much welcomed addition to our African American Collections. We welcome everyone to see our collections."

Fisher also spoke to the magnitude of the collection. "This is an African-American man who wrote about what he saw socially and politically for decades, spoke his mind, and provided a wealth of information for all of us. This collection is virtually expanded diaries of what he experienced while reporting these stories," she said. "For students, regardless of academic affiliation or no academic affiliation at all, this is a look into the work of a journalist that has served significantly in bringing stories important to us to the forefront across different platforms."

Fisher's personal favorites from the collection? Wickham's extensive files while covering Cuba under the late Castro's rule.

"DeWayne is an amazing storyteller and it really shows in his works," Fisher said.

Enoch Pratt will make the DeWayne Wickham Collection available to the public in about two years.

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*Maria Roberts is the principal and creative director of RiaRob Media. Follow her on Twitter @RiaRob.*

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## **PHILANA PATTERSON**

Patterson was named Money Editor at USA Today in February 2017 after previously serving as the publication's interim Money Editor. Prior to her time at USA Today, she held positions at the Associated Press, Black Enterprise, Bloomberg and Dow Jones.



## **ELENA BERGERON**

Bergeron has been named Editor-in-Chief of portal site SBNation.com, overseeing the Vox Media outlet's more than 300 websites and video coverage. She previously served as executive editor at SBNation.com, Editor in Chief at Complex Media's TriangleOffense.com and as a staff writer at ESPN The Magazine.



## **JEFF BALLOU**

Ballou was elected President of The National Press Club in December by the club's journalist members. He will serve as the National Press Club's 110th president after he was inaugurated at the "Club of Champions" gala in January 2017. Ballou serves as a news editor at Al Jazeera Media Network. He is the first African-American male to be president in the Club's 108-year history.



## **LORI WALDON**

Waldon, Hearst Television's news director at KCRA-TV and KQCA-TV in Sacramento, was named regional director of news at the company in December 2016. She now has oversight of the news operations at Hearst stations KOAT-TV in Albuquerque, New Mexico, and KSBW-TV in Monterey, California.



## **BEN HART**

Hart has been named the news director at WISN 12 in Milwaukee. He previously served as the news director of WAPT in Jackson, Mississippi, and has held senior positions at KCRA and WDSU.



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