



# K A P P A T A U A L P H A NEWSLETTER

*National Society Honoring Scholarship in Journalism and Mass Communication*

Volume 32, No. 1, Fall, 2014

## Mendelson elected 43rd president

Andrew Mendelson assumed the presidency of Kappa Tau Alpha Sept. 1.

Jeff Fruit is the new vice-president. Keith Sanders continues as executive director/treasurer. The officers were elected by vote of the members of the National Council, which consists of chapter advisers and officers. They will serve through August, 2016.

Mendelson is associate professor and chair of the Department of Journalism in the School of Communication and Theater at Temple University. He has been adviser of the Edward J. Traves Chapter since 2002 and was the 2011 William H. Taft Adviser of the Year. His research explores the ways news photographs construct our view of the world, drawing on a variety of theoretical areas and methods. He has published more than 25 articles and book chapters, including in *Journalism and Mass Communication Monographs*, *the Journal of Communication*, *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly*, *Journalism History*, *Journalism Studies* and *Visual Studies*.

He has served as head of the Visual Communication Division and as newsletter editor for the CTM Division. He received his Ph.D. in journalism from the University of Missouri, where he was inducted into KTA in 1997.

Fruit is associate professor at Kent State University, where he was director of the School of Journalism and Mass Communication from 2002-2012. He also served as interim Dean of the College of Communication in 2009. He was the 2013 William H. Taft Adviser of the Year. He has more than 15 years media experience with daily, weekly and monthly publications in positions ranging from reporter to publisher. His teaching interests include media management, media literacy, audi-

ence analysis, reporting and journalism history. His research focuses on how technology has impacted journalism and the broader media marketplace. He is co-author of *The Training and Hiring of Journalists* with Lee B. Becker and Susan L. Caudill.

Sanders has served as executive director since 1991. He is professor emeritus at the University of Missouri, where he taught for more than 30 years.

The KTA Outstanding Service Award is named in his honor. He received the AEJMC Presidential award for Outstanding Service in 2008 and the 1987

Professor of the Year award from the MC&S Division. He was associate editor of *Mass Comm Review* from 1981-1991 and was on the editorial board of its successor, *Mass Communication & Society* until 2007 and the editorial board of *Journalism Monographs* for eight years. He served four years on the AEJMC Standing Committee on Research. At Missouri, he served as a department chair and as associate dean for graduate studies/research. He served as dissertation adviser for 32 doctoral students. He received his Ph.D. at the University of Iowa and was initiated into KTA in 1962 (Ohio).

## *Mindich, Pribanic-Smith latest to earn KTA Chapter Adviser Research Grants*

David Mindich (Saint Michael's College) and Erika Pribanic-Smith (University of Texas-Arlington) have won KTA Chapter Adviser Research Grants. They each will receive \$1000.

Mindich will study how James Gordon Bennett Sr. influenced the evolution from political party-supported newspapers toward independent journals and how that impacted the culture of the times. Bennett, Mindich suggests, was one of the most important journalists in U.S. history and obituaries about him in rival papers credited him with "creating the modern newspaper." Although Bennett has been the subject of numerous biographies, Mindich will take a different tack and produce a cultural biography.

Mindich has served 12 years as adviser of the St. Michael's chapter, of which he was the founder.

Pribanic-Smith will study the coverage of the 1944 Presidential Election,

what many scholars consider to be a turning point in American politics because of its predominant slavery platform and the way the major party candidates (James K. Polk and Henry Clay) handled the issue of Texas annexation. Some historians point to third-party candidate James G. Birney as the spoiler of Clay's election. His involvement in the race created a dilemma for editors of the major parties who adhered to the anti-slavery cause. Papers of all stripes resorted to a range of false accusations and forgeries in a desperate attempt to torpedo opposing candidates and opposing editors.

Pribanic-Smith has been adviser of the Texas-Arlington chapter for three years.

KTA has awarded 26 Chapter Adviser Research Grants totaling \$22,125 since the program began in 2002.. See [www.KappaTauAlpha.org/rules.html](http://www.KappaTauAlpha.org/rules.html) and [www.KappaTauAlpha.org/resgnt-03.pdf](http://www.KappaTauAlpha.org/resgnt-03.pdf) for rules and application forms. October 1 is the annual deadline for applications.

# Mellinger muses on *Chasing Diversity*

Gwyneth Mellinger won the 2013 Mott-KTA Research Award. Here she recounts how her winning book came to be.

The Frank Luther Mott Award is, in my estimation, the most significant book award in journalism and mass communication. As a result, I am both deeply grateful and humbled that *Chasing Newsroom Diversity: From Jim Crow to Affirmative Action* was selected for this honor.

In a competitive academic climate in which scholars are encouraged to spin off research quickly to tally publications and citations, the Mott Award is a standard bearer, placing a premium on detailed scholarship that has both substance and depth. Through its sponsorship of the award, Kappa Tau Alpha provides an important service to the disciplines of journalism and mass communication by reminding us that quantity of output is not the only measure of a scholar's impact and contribution.

I suspect that most recipients of this award would describe their honored book as a labor of love. Research-based scholarship should not come easily; passion must fuel the scholar's self-motivation and continually push the project forward. Regardless of the methodology, the scholar must believe the work represents a story that must be told — and must be told fully. Although finding a publisher and reaching an audience complete the trajectory, book sales are never an objective. The book becomes scholarly obsession.

*Chasing Newsroom Diversity* was that for me. The book traces the American Society of Newspaper Editors' 50-year engagement with race, gender, and other identities. The study is built upon the theoretical premise that the daily newspaper industry, represented by ASNE, had established the white, male, and straight journalist as a professional norm; however, when political sensibilities changed, following the movement for African American civil rights, the ASNE proposed to integrate its nearly all-white daily newspaper newsrooms. Beginning in 1978, with the founding of Goal 2000, the ASNE sought to bring the proportion of non-white journalists, then 4 percent, into parity with

the U.S. non-white population by the end of the century. *Chasing Newsroom Diversity* chronicles the ASNE's effort and failure to meet that objective and analyzes the initiative's trajectory.

My personal interest in the subject dates to my work for daily newspapers at the height of Goal 2000, when I watched editors attempt, often awkwardly, to diversify their newsrooms. Attendant to that experience is my longstanding fascination with the democratic paradox, in which the ideal of equality contrasts with the lived reality of inequality. American journalism, which is rooted in constitutional guarantees but historically has been a racially bifurcated profession, is a logical site for interrogation. For research to develop a self-sustaining momentum, it must resolve a tension that the scholar finds compelling, and I was compelled to tell this story.

The project required a substantial archive, one that covered five decades. The ASNE's own archives included board minutes, transcriptions of all of the sessions at the organization's annual conventions, and the continuous publication of a

monthly news-letter that included a fair amount of member discussion in the earlier years of my study. Those institutional records provided a foundation but were not sufficient for building a readable history of this scope.

Several editors who were active in the earlier decades of my study had donated it to research libraries. The book draws from 18 such individual and corporate collections. Similar archives were not available for the later decades, as editors who were still alive had yet to assemble a collection or were not likely to do so because they had not saved email correspondence. To gain primary source material for the later decades, I did 30 formal IRB-sanctioned oral history interviews with editors and newsroom diversity activists. This was an enormously time-consuming endeavor, but it provided an archive where none existed and made it possible to tell the story.

For those of us who work on single-author projects, scholarship is a solitary undertaking. A colleague may read and comment upon a chapter and we may present parts of the work at conferences, but for the most part, we work on faith, hoping that an audience will find meaning in the scholarship. We hope our work will enlighten the discipline and provide a point of departure for others' research.

For projects like *Chasing Newsroom Diversity*, the Mott Award is the ultimate validation, and I thank Kappa Tau Alpha for supporting this book.

*Mellinger is associate professor in the Department of Communication Arts at Xavier University.*

## **Chapter named for founder Dardenne**

The University of South Florida-St. Petersburg chapter has been named after the late Robert W. Dardenne, co-founder of the Department of Journalism and Media Studies.

An experienced journalist and a dedicated educator, Dardenne served as a department chair and an interim regional associate vice-chancellor. He spearheaded the creation of the KTA chapter and served as its first adviser.



## **The Kappa Tau Alpha Newsletter**

is published by

Kappa Tau Alpha  
National Honor Society  
School of Journalism  
University of Missouri  
Columbia MO 65211-1200

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