



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

*National Society Honoring Scholarship in Journalism and Mass Communication*

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## President's Column

### 'Best practices': recognizing inductees

The induction of students into Kappa Tau Alpha is a cause for celebration.

For our students, induction to KTA is public recognition of their academic achievement and superior scholarship. Induction also creates a union with their peers of similar high achievement across the country.

For faculty, KTA initiation reminds us that that the standards of excellence to which we teach our students to aspire are shared goals, as important to our students as they are to us. For administrators, KTA induction provides a tangible metric that students in their programs, no matter program size or scope, can succeed at a level that equals any journalism program in the nation.

And for parents of inductees, seeing their child initiated into a prestigious, selective, national honor society such as KTA is a source of pride, a testament to their child's talents and to a parenting job well done.

Not surprisingly, the induction events and the ways we celebrate new initiates are, for many chapters, KTA's most visible on-campus highlights.

For these reasons, how we choose to recognize our new initiates is important. What follows are a few ways that our 95 chapters celebrate our new initiates.

Many chapters have stand-alone initiation ceremonies that are distinct from other end-of-the-year student award and graduation events. These ceremonies come in many forms; some practices include: --recognizing each inductee individually (one chapter has students walk across a stage, where the chapter adviser places an honor cord around their necks); --inviting parents and family to attend a meal or special reception for initiates;

## *Broyles, Thiel-Stern win grants*

Sheri Broyles (North Texas) and Shayla Thiel-Stern (Minnesota) are the latest recipients of Chapter Adviser Research Grants.

Broyles will use her grant of \$1000 to develop baseline assessments of Cuba's advertising infrastructure and capabilities. She hopes to take advantage of the thawing of international relations and Cuba's growth of private businesses, due in part to recent official changes creating new categories of private employment. She thinks this is a unique time for such a study in a society on the cusp of a major transformation.

She will travel to Cuba to interview advertising professionals and gather for analysis examples of the output of Cuban advertising agencies and government organization advertisements. Research will be guided by several questions, including: What is the state of advertising today? How big is the industry? How is it changing? What are some of the issues facing Cuban advertisers?

She has served as adviser of the North Texas chapter for five years.

Thiel-Stern plans to study how young people use visual mobile technology to communicate and articulate identity.

She argues that, although they still use communication technologies similar to instant messaging, teens rely on social networks and mobile applications in order to carry out their instant messaging needs. The most increasingly popular "apps" are visual in nature--like Instagram and Snapchat. These allow users to shoot a photo with their phone and share it with their peers by posting on a site like Instagram or directly texting is to their friends.

She will use a combination of ethnographic practices, interviews and visual content analysis. The results should help mass communication scholars better understand today's media environment.

Thiel-Stern was awarded \$550 for her study. She has served as chapter adviser for three years.

KTA has awarded 24 Chapter Research Grants totaling \$20,125. The inaugural grants were awarded in 2002-2003. October 1 is the annual deadline for applications.

See [www.KappaTauAlpha.org/rules.html](http://www.KappaTauAlpha.org/rules.html) and [www.KappaTauAlpha.org/resgrnt-03.pdf](http://www.KappaTauAlpha.org/resgrnt-03.pdf) for rules and application forms.

## MTSU chapter named for Kimbrell

Middle Tennessee State University has named its chapter after its first department chair.

Henceforth, MTSU students will be inducted into the Edward R. Kimbrell Chapter of Kappa Tau Alpha.

"Professor Kimbrell has been recognized on numerous occasions during his academic career for his commitment to excellence in journalism education," wrote School of Journalism director Dwight E. Brooks in his nomination letter. Kimbrell was the first chair of the program and the

first dean of the College of Mass Communication. He was instrumental in obtaining funding for the Bragg Mass Communication Building. The School of Journalism annually honors his legacy of outstanding teaching with the Ed Kimbrell Teaching Excellence in Journalism Award.

Kimbrell earned BSJ and MSJ degrees from Northwestern University and a Ph.D. from the University of Missouri.

The School of Journalism faculty unanimously approved the name change in a Nov. 1 meeting.

# Minutes of 2013 National Council meeting

The annual meeting of the KTA National Council was held Aug. 9 at the Renaissance Washington, D.C. Downtown Hotel. Twenty-three advisers and one guest were present. Peter J. Gade (Oklahoma) presided. Former presidents Gil Fowler (Arkansas State), Joe Campbell (American) and Jane Singer (Iowa) were in attendance.

President Gade recognized immediate past president Campbell (American) and thanked him for his service and leadership in putting KTA on an excellent path to its second century.

Campbell reported that 35 people attended the KTA pre-conference event at the Library of Congress. They toured the Library, discussed its archives and research opportunities.

Gade congratulated Jeff Fruit (Kent State) on receiving the year's Taft Outstanding Adviser Award. He congratulated Maurine Beasley for winning the 2012 Mott-KTA Research Award for her book

*Women of the Washington Press: Politics, Prejudice and Persistence.*

He noted that James Scotton (Marquette) and Campbell had won Chapter Adviser Research Grants and that the University of South Florida-St. Petersburg had initiated its first class.

Gade led a discussion on how to improve acceptance rates among students invited to join KTA. Several good ideas emerged and he asked that additional ideas be emailed to him. He will update an existing list of suggestions and circulate.

The financial report and budget was presented by Keith Sanders, executive director. He noted that in 2012-2013 a two-year supply of certificates was ordered, which ballooned printing expenses but will save us money in 2013-2014. KTA had approximately \$42,345 in cash assets as of the meeting. The budget for the coming year was approved.

In his Executive Director's Report, Sanders first thanked Mott Research Award

judges Abigail Forestner (Northwestern), Fruit, Bruce Plopper (Arkansas at LR), Erica Pribanic-Smith (Texas-Arlington), Tom Schwartz (Ohio State), Judy Turk (Virginia Commonwealth) and Gade and Campbell. He noted that winner Maurine Beasley was a student of Mott's at Missouri and credits him with motivating her to pursue historical research.

Sanders reminded about the need to follow eligibility rules. Transparency in the process of following rules can distinguish legitimate honor societies from the ever-proliferating "bogus" ones.

Peter's proactive attempt to help advisers increase acceptance rates could not be more timely, Sanders said. Although KTA overall has not seen a significant drop in acceptances, many honor societies have. Simply getting the invitation to the student is becoming more problematic in an era of multiple email accounts. He emphasized that we need to do a better job of explaining why membership is valuable. The very top students are most at-risk because of the number of honor society invitations they receive.

## Enhancing new member inductions

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--having a distinguished speaker discuss the value of academic achievement;  
--creating a media presentation (e.g., video, Powerpoint) that features KTA, the chapter's history, photographs or images of new initiates and attempts to connect present to past.

Chapters also have hybrid ceremonies, where KTA induction is part of a broader student awards event or commencement. Some of these chapters routinely include a meal, refreshments, or speakers. The KTA initiation is part of the event program.

These efforts are supplemented in ways both standard and creative:  
--identifying KTA inductees during commencement ceremonies;  
--printing a list of inductees in the commencement program;  
--displaying plaques with the names of KTA initiates from each year in a permanent showcase in your building.  
--encouraging faculty to recognize new initiates in their classes;

--including honor society membership as a notation on student transcripts.

This is, of course, just a small sampling of how we celebrate our new initiates. There obviously is no "best way." However, there are many excellent ways.

So, I invite you to share how you recognize new KTA initiates.

This invitation follows a robust discussion at the annual business meeting about enhancing acceptance rates of students invited to join KTA. The intent is to share ideas and effective practices among chapter advisers so we can make the value of KTA more apparent to our students, administrators and colleagues.

Please send a summary of your best practices regarding a) enhancing acceptance rates and now b) recognition of new initiates to me at [pgade@ou.edu](mailto:pgade@ou.edu). I'll be compiling these in the upcoming months, and share them in the spring so you can consider them for your 2014 KTA events.

*Peter Gade, University of Oklahoma, is president of Kappa Tau Alpha.*



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refused to accept them for years. These interviews enabled me to document instances of sexual harassment and the impact of affirmative action as I moved into the books' last chapters.

I did not get down to business on the manuscript for this book, however, until 2010, when I told myself I simply had to complete my history before I got any older and resolved to start writing chapter two. By that time I had decided a chronological approach like Mott used was best – moving from Anne Royall in the 1830s to the present day. I toyed with the idea of a thematic or possibly cultural studies approach – chronology seemed so linear and somehow out of fashion – but I came back to it as the most straightforward way to structure my narrative. I also decided to limit the subject to women of mainstream, not alternative, journalism, although I hated to omit them. I hope another researcher will look in this direction.

Why did it take me so many years to reach this point? There was a multitude of reasons – I was teaching and advising fulltime, carrying out family responsibilities, writing journal articles based on my dissertation, co-authoring/editing a sourcebook on women in the media, etc. But the real reason was that I encountered the career of Eleanor Roosevelt, and she turned into both an inspiration to me for other scholarly projects and a stumbling block to working on my history of women journalists.

Since the Civil War days, women journalists have viewed coverage of first ladies as their own preserve, although in recent decades they have aspired to cover presidents rather than their wives. Much of the research that I did on Eleanor Roosevelt and her predecessors and successors eventually found its way into chapters three and four.

News of first ladies during the first two-thirds of the twentieth century ran on the women's pages of Washington newspapers. Reading them, I grasped the importance of social reporting in the careers of many women journalists and attempted to analyse the political significance of social activities in the capital. Once again I referred to Mott's *American Journalism* as I examined women's pages. Mott declared that "newspaper emphasis on woman-interest was not due to the 'emancipation' of the sex... but mainly to the growth of department-store advertising."

So I delved into the economics of content for women. This led to exploring the tempestuous career of Cissy Patterson, a publisher who captivated women readers with the *Washington Times-Herald* and turned it into a round-the-clock daily. Its purchase by the *Washington Post* in 1954 enabled that newspaper to dominate the morning field in the capital and eventually, under another women publisher,

Katharine Graham, rival the *New York Times* as America's leading newspaper

While I was involved with Eleanor Roosevelt projects, I continued to do interviews for this book and to locate additional archival resources on Washington women journalists. I am blessed to live close to the Library of Congress with its bountiful manuscript collections, including the papers of Bess Furman, May Craig and Ruby Black. A trove of papers besides those of Martha Strayer turned up at the University of Wyoming.

The Library of American Broadcasting at the University of Maryland College Park provided oral history interviews and facts about pioneer women in Washington radio and television for chapter six. I put in enjoyable

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hours with lots of secondary sources too. Many of the best-known television journalists – Lesley Stahl, Cokie Roberts and Andrea Mitchell, for example – have written entertaining and enlightening autobiographical accounts of their path-breaking experiences. I didn't expect them to talk to me.

Yet, I was able to persuade dozens of journalists, some well-known and others less so, to sit down for interviews. I reasoned that most of the higher-level individuals had been interviewed numerous times and already had said for the record what they were willing to say about personal gender-related issues. I got their material from secondary sources.

Of course, I realized few of the really "big names" in Washington journalism, particularly those in television, would be willing to fit interviews with an obscure journalism professor into their packed schedules. But some were, most notably Helen Thomas and Bill Kovach.

Thomas worked for United Press International for almost sixty years and was long considered the dean of the White House press corps. She gave me a lengthy interview in 1990, which I finally used in chapter seven on women still fighting for equity at the turn of the century. In it she prophesized, quite correctly, that an African American man would be elected president of the United States before a woman because, Thomas said, African Americans "have made bigger strides in politics."

Thomas personified the opening of Washington journalism institutions to women. She was one of the first women to join the National Press Club, the first woman member

admitted to the Gridiron club (the most exclusive group of Washington journalists, which finally agreed to take women in 1975, and in 1993 was elected its first woman president. She also was elected president of the White House Correspondents Association, which had refused to allow its women members to attend its annual dinner until President John F. Kennedy let it be known he would not go unless the women were included.

Kovach, former head of the *New York Times* Washington bureau and a well-known member of the capital's elite journalistic establishment, readily spoke about sex discrimination against women in the bureau during the latter part of the twentieth century. As I quoted him, "If a woman succeeded on a story that no one else had gotten, someone was always certain to say that she probably went to bed with [the source]." I think he agreed to the interview mainly because his wife and I are in the same exercise class.

I could have kept on interviewing people for several more years, but I finally realized I had to stop and write. As I reached out to younger women, stories of outright discrimination were replaced by tales of the difficulties women have combining journalistic careers with family life. Obviously women no longer must struggle against overwhelming odds to gain employment as Washington journalists.

For the last chapters, in particular, I ran into the problem of deciding whose names to include and whose to leave out. I eventually decided to rely on annual lists of Washington's most prominent journalists published in a city magazine, *Washingtonian*. The most remarkable thing about the lists: The relative scarcity of women's names, showing that at the top gender equality is a goal yet to be obtained.

The book ends on an ominous note – Will Katharine Weymouth, the granddaughter of Katharine Graham, "save" the money-losing *Washington Post* and, by extension, journalism as we know it in Washington? Recently the *Post* has been sold to Jeffrey Bezos, the head of Amazon, but Weymouth will remain as publisher at least for now. Quite likely, women will play key roles in expanding, transforming and redefining Washington journalism in the years ahead.

I remain enthusiastic about journalism history. As Mott said in the preface to *American Journalism*, individuals "look to history mainly for help in understanding present problems and for guidance in facing the future." I wrote this book to show how women have persevered in spite of obstacles to succeed as Washington journalists. They can be expected to make vital contributions to the new technological world.

*Dr. Beasley is professor emerita at the University of Maryland.*

# About *Women of the Washington Press*

(Maurine Beasley won the 2012 Mott-KTA Research Award. Here she describes how she researched and wrote the award-winning book.)

I cannot express how much I appreciated receiving the Kappa Tau Alpha book award named for Frank Luther Mott. In many ways my book, *Women of the Washington Press: Politics, Prejudice, and Persistence*, was written both because and possibly in spite of Dr. Mott. It was a book I dreamed of writing for years but was afraid I never would finish. I had difficulty deciding who to include and who to leave out, as well as challenges obtaining material and organizing it. Plus, I got diverted into study of a major historical figure, Eleanor Roosevelt, whose complex personality and activities still elude biographers. To have this book finally written and published and to receive the Kappa Tau Alpha award exceeds expectations and represents the capstone of my academic career.

Years ago when I was a scared transfer student from a teachers' college attending the University of Missouri School of Journalism, I watched Dr. Mott give guest lectures to the History and Principles of Journalism class. A natty dresser who moved around as he talked, he exhibited enthusiasm that almost overwhelmed me. Obviously he loved his subject matter, mainly the men who developed major American newspapers. As one of the relatively few women enrolled in the schools' news-editorial sequence in the mid-1950s, I doubted that I could ever get a job on a big city newspaper, but Mott's ability to enliven journalism history drew me into his field. I thought I could study about newspapers even if I couldn't work on them.

Mott impressed on the class his belief in the importance of newspapers as guardians of American democracy and what we talked a lot about in the 1950s – the American way of life. His scholarship awed me; Mott was the only journalism historian even to have won a Pulitzer Prize. With his emphasis on copious detail, which we were expected to remember, Mott presented a panoply of illustrious figures, most of whom he treated almost like saints.

Through a happy combination of circumstances, I landed a job as one of the relatively few women on the news staff of the *Kansas City Star* from 1959 to 1962. Another reporter there urged me to broaden myself by getting a master's degree from the Columbia University School of Journalism and helped me apply successfully. Since the subject had been so drilled into me at Missouri, I won the prize in journalism history for the class of 1963. The award included a handsome leather-bound copy of Mott's classic text, *American Journalism: A History, 1890-1960*, considered the definitive source for many years.

Subsequently, I worked at the *Washington Post* and enrolled at George Washington University at night to pursue a doctorate in American Studies. It took me ten years to finish, partly because I had a full-time job and partly because my original advisor told me he saw no need for a woman, or at least for me, to get a Ph.D.

Fortunately in my case George Washington faced legal difficulties on grounds of not hiring women and minorities when civil rights legislation took effect in the 1960s. Suddenly I got a new advisor, a wonderful, Harvard-trained African American woman historian who the university employed to comply with the law.

Dr. Letitia Brown, to whom I owe so much, suggested I look into women travellers from Europe to the United States in the nineteenth century. I was not particularly

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interested in the subject, but I did so want to graduate. I proceeded to the Library of Congress to track down women visitors to Washington before and after the Civil War.

To my surprise, I discovered that there had been a fairly sizeable number of women journalists in Washington in the nineteenth century. Dr. Brown encouraged me to pursue this subject. Suddenly I had a dissertation topic that I really cared about.

My new academic interest surprised my feminine colleagues at *The Washington Post*. When I told them I was reading about early Washington women journalists, the response was "What? We thought we were the first ones." It was then I realized how little women journalists knew of their own history and resolved to try to write about it.

As I worked on my dissertation, I consulted Mott's book time and time again, so much so that when I turned in the initial draft my former advisor, who had remained on my committee, sniffed and said, "This is a crib on Mott." I replied, quite heatedly, that it was not because I was piecing together material from Mott in a new way. I was attempting to use his masterful work as the basis of a feminist approach to journalism history.

My dissertation contained a large amount of original source material, focusing on women who set themselves up as nineteenth-

century Washington correspondents. I found unpublished papers pertaining to these women in libraries and archives in Massachusetts, Ohio, New York, and Boston as well as Washington. I discovered that as many as ten per cent of the correspondents covering Congress in the years in the 1870s were women, but that this number petered out in 1880 when rules governing press gallery admission were changed, effectively excluding those who were feature writers and social reporters.

I defended my dissertation in 1974 and graduated. I started to teach part-time at the University of Maryland College of Journalism and got a tenure-track job there the following year. I knew I had to publish. I asked an experienced professor if my dissertation could be published as a book. He answered, somewhat carelessly, "Oh, you have to bring it up to date."

Since I had stopped my narrative of Washington women journalists at 1900, that represented a tall order, but I started in. I learned that women had covered the suffrage campaign and as a result formed the Women's National Press Club in 1919, since the National Press Club, founded in 1908, was closed to them. Luckily a member of Women's National Press Club, who had worked on its unpublished history, graciously gave me access to her papers.

When my source died, her papers, along with other club documents, were placed in the archives of the National Press Club, which after an acrimonious election had voted to admit women in 1971. These papers belong to the Women's National Press Club Foundation, the successor group to the Women's National Press Club which merged with the National Press Club in 1985. For reasons unknown to me, the papers no longer are available to researchers. Paradoxically, the archives of the National Press Club itself are open and house the papers of some women members. I made considerable use of them in writing *Women of the Washington Press*. When I worked on the first four chapters, which cover the period from the 1920s through the 1960s, I wanted to use the Women's National Press Club material again, but I was not able to do so. Instead, I quoted from what I had published previously and supplemented it with some new material from Tulane University, which holds papers of an early member of the women's group.

Thankfully, the Women's National Press Club Foundation has put on the web its excellent, donor-supported oral history interviews with leading women journalists who described the hostility they experienced as women in a male-dominated profession that

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