

# AGENDA

Quarterly Newsletter of NFPW



## NFPW Code of Ethics

As a professional communicator, I recognize my responsibility to the public which has placed its trust and confidence in my work, and will endeavor to do nothing to abuse this obligation.

With truth as my ultimate goal, I will adhere to the highest standards of professional communication, never consciously misleading reader, viewer or listener; and will avoid any compromise of my objectivity or fairness.

***Because I believe that professional communicators must be obligated only to the people's right to know, I affirm that freedom of the press is to be guarded as an inalienable right of the citizens of a free society.***

***I pledge to use this freedom wisely and to uphold the right of communicators to express unpopular opinions as well as the right to agree with the majority.***

— Adopted in 1975 at the NFPW Conference in Sun Valley, Idaho

**We** pledge ourselves to it at the start of every official meeting. We recite it by heart and from the heart. We are a federation of professional communicators who believe it and incorporate it into our personal and professional lives. It is our Code of Ethics and our pledge to guard and uphold the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution. This issue of AGENDA, the NFPW quarterly newsletter, Vol. 87, No. 2, is dedicated to coverage of First Amendment contributed by our First Amendment Network Co-Chairs Marsha Shuler of Louisiana and Angela Smith of Texas and other NFPW members.

### *The First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution*

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.



## *President's Message: Looking back and ahead*

By Julie Campbell  
NFPW President

Every now and then, I am asked what NFPW is all about. You probably get such queries, too. My usual answer is that we are communicators working in, or retired from, every corner of the profession. I explain that the organization has deep roots in journalism and newspapers, but with the massive changes in those industries, many members have leaped into media relations, freelance editing and writing, consulting and so on.

If a questioner wanted more information, a look at the past year's issues of AGENDA and the E-Letter gives a more detailed picture.

For example, thanks to our affiliates, in 2024 we learned about such topics as launching a newsroom, collaborative journalism, weighing news vs. misinformation, and marketing sports. (We also had a good time visiting with our friends and colleagues at these affiliate events.)

Let's see, what else? We heard from historians and peers, content creators and famous authors. We gave scholarships, sponsored book festivals and celebrated our affiliates' 75th anniversaries. (I'm looking at you, Arkansas and New Mexico.)

We got around, too, with affiliate conferences at locations ranging from the Saugatuck Rowing Club in Westport, Connecticut, to the Platte River in Nebraska.

On the individual front, we published books and created podcasts. We won election to boards supporting a

variety of causes, and — beyond the 250 members who took prizes in our own communications contest — we garnered awards and acclaim from other organizations.

And we supported the First Amendment, with proof being the January 2024 issue of AGENDA — and the issue we are reading right now.

If a questioner needed still more evidence of what NFPW members are all about, I would point them to last year's slate of Communicators of Achievement:

Michael Clay Carey (Alabama Media Professionals) teaches journalism and has written a book about community journalism. Sharon Almirall (Colorado Press Women) points to her five decades in journalism and communications. Joshua Friedberg (Illinois Woman's Press Association) is an author and TEDx speaker. Our 2024 COA, Gwen White (North Carolina Press Club), is a past president of NFPW with a background in journalism, public relations, speaking and nonprofits. Heather Syverson (North Dakota Professional Communicators) exemplifies how to transition from TV news to communications consulting. We are lucky to have such role models in our midst. (For information on the 2025 COA nominations, see p. 6.)

My goodness. I started out pondering how to describe NFPW to someone unfamiliar with us. Look at what a quick survey of one year revealed. It's an impressive picture of which we should all be proud.

I can hardly wait to see what's in store for 2025.

## *Sunshine Week spotlights freedom of the press*

It's time to start preparing for the annual celebration of Sunshine Week, which is March 16-22 this year.

The observance happens during the birthday week of President James Madison — the primary author of the First Amendment of the U. S. Constitution.

During the week, we shine light on freedom of the press — a fundamental liberty to be protected. "We" includes journalists, civic leaders, educators, government watchdog groups and the private sector.

The groups focus on the importance of access to public records and open meetings — both essential to good government and the public's right to know.

Begin thinking now how you and your affiliate can mark this important week, whether it be writing an op-ed piece or a story about how access to records helped your community, or your affiliate hosting a program or panel discussion on the topic.

It is so important to let the sunshine in.

# PRESS Act stuck in committee

By Angela Smith  
NFPW FAN Co-Chair

The U.S. Senate has just a few weeks left to pass the PRESS Act, a federal “shield” bill the House passed with unanimous and bipartisan support in January. That same bill has been stuck in the Senate Judiciary Committee since then, pending a final vote for Senate passage.

If passed into law, the PRESS Act would ensure nationwide protections for journalists from being forced to identify or give up their confidential sources (except in emergency cases, such as preventing an act of terrorism).

The bill also grants other protections, such as limiting what records the government can secretly take from journalists or their email or phone provider that could identify sources — again with narrow exceptions for emergency threats. The act would bar the federal government from using subpoenas, search warrants or other compulsory actions against journalists to force disclosure of such information.

Lawmakers on both sides of the aisle have been pushing to pass federal protections for journalists. Already, 49 states and the District of Columbia have shield laws. Protections for journalists and their sources will become increasingly relevant in a second Trump term. In November, President-elect Trump posted on his social media site, Truth Social, in all caps, “REPUBLICANS MUST KILL THIS BILL.”

Press advocacy groups have expressed worries about Trump’s return to the White House, citing a record in his first term that included surveillance of and legal threats against journalists and news organizations.

The consequences of not passing this bill have been called serious and chilling. People will be hesitant to talk to journalists, harming and limiting the public’s ability to be informed about issues that affect them. Independent



Angela Smith

journalists and smaller media outlets might not have the legal or financial resources to fight governmental subpoenas for records. The PRESS Act would provide these outlets and independent journalists with the same blanket protections as mainstream media.

The PRESS Act has already garnered bipartisan support in the Senate, with Senators Ron Wyden, Lindsey Graham, Mike Lee and Dick Durbin as bill cosponsors. But the bill remains held up in the Senate Judiciary Committee, reportedly opposed by a small group of senators. As is the nature in Congress, a single opposing lawmaker

can hold up the process indefinitely.

Timing to bring this bill to the Senate floor is critical since there are only weeks to go before the bill expires at the end of the congressional session.

The Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press (RCFP) is leading a media coalition expressing strong support for the shield bill. In separate letters sent Oct. 8 to the Senate and U.S. House, the Reporters Committee and 108 news media and press rights organizations expressed support for the bipartisan shield bill.

The RCFP states in its letters: “The PRESS Act is a reasonable, common-sense measure to preserve the free flow of information to the public, as evidenced by its broad bipartisan support and the fact that 49 states and the District of Columbia have similar protections. All reflect the reality that the press cannot fulfill its constitutional recognized watchdog role without some safeguard for confidential source identities and sensitive newsgathering material.”

NFPW urges its members and affiliates to contact their Senate representatives to support the PRESS Act: (S.2074/H.R.4250), providing essential protections for journalists, their sources and the public’s right to know.

We need to make a stand.

# Access to public records key to citizen rights

**Marsha Shuler**

**Louisiana Press Women**

**First Amendment Network Co-Director**

Looking across the country, access to public records is increasingly getting harder.

The barriers take many forms:

- State legislatures providing for more exemptions to what information the public has a right to get.
- Costs skyrocketing to obtain the records.
- Passing laws under which records requesters can be legally punished.

It's all happening, and the trend only promises to get worse in 2025.

Fueling the push for records and the backlash from government officials are political partisanship, technological innovations, corporate data mining and frivolous requests, said David Cuiller, director of the Beecher Freedom of Information Act Project at the University of Florida.

The flood of requests have swamped usually under-resourced records agencies, he said.

Delays in getting requests filled are one problem. But there is growing sentiment among some government officials that the public does not need to know what they are doing or how decisions are made that affect their constituents' lives.

State legislatures are passing laws to restrict access to information.

In Louisiana, new laws allow governors to hide their schedules and security details, and local government officials to withhold records related to economic development negotiations. Legislators sought to deny records requests from out-of-state interests.



**Marsha Shuler**

New Jersey has a new law that authorizes agencies to sue public-records requesters they accuse of interrupting "government function."

Another provision would end the requirement for towns to pay attorney's fees in successful public records lawsuits. The move would make it prohibitively expensive for the public and news reporters to challenge local and state governments in court. The law would also allow officials to charge commercial interests as much as twice the costs of producing records.

In Utah, a new provision of its transparency law makes the calendars of elected officials secret. The question is, "What do they have to hide?"

Kentucky is trying to shield several types of documents from the public, including preliminary drafts of reports and email exchanges among officials.

In Michigan, the Detroit Free Press filed a lawsuit over excessive fees for the production of public records, claiming abuse of the Freedom of Information Act.

Access to public records is key to citizen rights guaranteed by the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. Media, governmental research and citizen advocacy groups managed to derail some efforts to deny records' access during 2024. But more proposed laws and regulations keep cropping up, requiring vigilance and activism on the part of all of us.

The fight goes on as the same forces continue efforts to undermine access to information.

Information is power, and it is important to hold the nation's officials accountable to the people.

Weakening public records laws is truly bad government.



**National Federation of Press Women**

# Unwarranted secrecy surrounds adult guardianship

By Léonie Rosenstiel  
New Mexico Press Women

If it hadn't been for whistleblowers going to the FBI, the principals of New Mexico's Ayudando Guardians and Desert State Life Management would still be stealing pension funds and court-mandated distributions from their indigent wards. More, that is, than the \$15 million they'd already taken when the feds closed those firms in 2017.

All but two states keep adult guardianship materials strictly secret. Often, a judge will forbid a journalist who manages to attend a guardianship-related hearing to publish anything about the proceedings. The public gets little to no data.

New York is one of only two states that allow substantive information to reach the public, hence all the knowledge we have about the Wendy Williams case.

I think a coalition of journalists working in all media and the families of victims might be able to lift, first the ban on access to guardianship records, after the death of the ward/protected person, and ultimately allow these proceedings to be open to public scrutiny all the way through. Doing that would prevent so many of the current abuses!

"We might have to pick a student with another interest. No one's interested in the First Amendment — or in the Bill of Rights — anymore," the foundation director said. He couldn't have told that to Netflix. That company's been fighting, for years, in Texas courts, over its right to use court records and other materials relating to adult guardianship.

In 2021, I published "Protecting Mama," describing systemic guardianship abuses. A New Mexico judge had slapped a gag order on me to prevent me from writing it. He'd agreed with my mother's former guardian that any such book would "embarrass" my mother (who had died as the ward of a court-appointed New Mexico guardianship firm in 2012).



Léonie Rosenstiel

More than \$1 million in legal costs and five years invested in court action finally got my mother's records released, so I could speak freely and use the documents. The Albuquerque Journal had filed an amicus brief that helped to lift the gag order. Journalist Colleen Heild and the Journal's editorial board also helped to enforce the public's right to know.

"Protecting Mama" has now won 25 literary awards. If anyone was embarrassed by that book, it certainly wasn't my mother.

An attorney recently told me that it might cost as much as \$50,000 and take five years to get one guardian-

ship-related document released from a "sequestered" case. What's happened to the public's right to know?

Let's teach everyone how important the First Amendment is to our wellbeing, as a society, and work together to ensure that guardianship records are automatically released from sequestration on the death of the ward. If the miscreants knew, going in, that their actions would be open to public scrutiny, either they would act differently or they would pick a different profession. Either way, the press and the public would both win.

*Rosenstiel, NMPW's vice-president, PR Director and Broad-sheet editor, was named NMPW's Communicator of Achievement in 2023 and Courageous Communicator in 2024. She has written, edited or contributed to more than 30 books and is forming a non-profit dedicated to educating the public about adult guardianship and the importance of the First Amendment in safeguarding our freedom.*



# 2025 COA title up for grabs

## *Nominations due by March 31*

By Karen Stensrud  
NFPW COA Director

Nominations for the 2025 NFPW Communicator of Achievement are open, and all nomination materials are due by Monday, March 31, 2025.

The award, NFPW's highest honor, is given to a member nominated by his or her state affiliate for achievement in the communications field and service to the affiliate, NFPW and the community.

Affiliate nominees for NFPW COA are recognized individually, with the winner and runner-up announced at the COA Banquet during NFPW's annual conference, slated this year for Sept. 11-13 in Golden, Colorado.

Karen Stensrud of North Dakota, herself a past national COA, is again serving as NFPW's COA director.

"We strongly encourage each affiliate to select a COA every year, recognizing individual achievement, and share it at the national level," Stensrud said. "Judging criteria balance both professional accomplishments and service, so any nominee has an excellent chance of being recognized as NFPW's national COA."

Nominees must be living members in good standing for at least two years in an affiliate and NFPW. To check on a member's status, email [membership@nfpw.org](mailto:membership@nfpw.org). A previous nominee can be named by an affiliate again, as long as he or she has not been honored as NFPW's national COA winner.

Nomination packets must be emailed to Stensrud at [nfpwcoa2025@gmail.com](mailto:nfpwcoa2025@gmail.com). The entry fee of \$60 covers COA expenses and corsages or boutonnieres for the

nominees to wear at the COA awards banquet. The COA director will provide the flowers. The fee can be paid electronically at [nfpw.org/coa](http://nfpw.org/coa) or by check made out to NFPW and mailed to: NFPW 140B Purcellville Gateway Dr., Suite 120 Purcellville, VA 20132. Payment of the fee must be made by March 31, 2025.

Watch email and NFPW publications for information. Nominees will be judged in four areas:

⇒ **Professional achievement** (50%) — All nominees should have high professional qualifications and achievements in their areas of communications (any field that has qualified the nominee for NFPW membership).

⇒ **Community service** (20%) — Each nominee should have made some impact on the world beyond his or her profession — some contribution to humanity. That impact or contribution may be through the profession or beyond it.

⇒ **NFPW service** (15%) — Since this is NFPW's highest award, each nominee should have been active in the national organization. This could include attendance at previous NFPW conferences, volunteering or giving presentations at NFPW conferences or other activities deemed by the judges to have been of service to NFPW.

⇒ **State affiliate service** (15%) — Each nominee should have made a definite and important contribution to his or her affiliate, as the state affiliates are important for carrying out the mission of NFPW.

The complete nomination packet, including rules, judging criteria and submission form can be found online at [nfpw.org/coa](http://nfpw.org/coa).

### Checklist of required information for COA nomination packet:

- ⇒ Official COA entry form
- ⇒ Brief summary in resumé-style list form of vital information divided among professional, community and NFPW/affiliate service (one page – 500 words maximum)
- ⇒ Narrative about the nominee (up to four pages – 2,400 words maximum)
- ⇒ Endorsements of the nominee (up to two pages – 1,200 words maximum)
- ⇒ Two samples (or excerpts) of nominee's work (up to two pages – may include copy excerpts, graphic images/ clips or digital links)
- ⇒ 150-word biography for AGENDA newsletter (will also be edited to 75 words for the conference program)
- ⇒ Color photograph of the nominee in jpg format, at least 300-dpi resolution

# NFPW Communicators of Achievement through the years

1957	Charlotte Groshell Paul	Washington	1991	Dorothy Steinmeier	Indiana
1958	Margaret Dixon	Louisiana	1992	Olga Carlile	Illinois
1959	Emma McKinney	Oregon	1993	Joan Burney	Nebraska
1960	Roberta "Bobbie" Forster	Arkansas	1994	Mary Rueter	Iowa
1961	No Award		1995	Jan Ingram	Alaska
1962	Agness "Aggie" Underwood	California	1996	Vivien Sadowski	Kansas
1963	Helen Waterhouse	Ohio	1997	Louise Seals	Virginia
1964	Olive Burt	Utah	1998	Marjorie Setter	Kansas
1965	Vada Carlson Rodridguez	Arizona	1999	No Award	
1966	Hortense Myers	Indiana	2000	Eva Marie Pearson	Arkansas
1967	Gladys Erickson	Illinois	2001	Jane Brandt	North Dakota
1968	Mamie Boyd	Kansas	2002	Kay Wood Bailey	Delaware
1969	Hilda Bryant	Washington	2003	Carole Eberly	Michigan
1970	Charlotte Schexnadyer	Arkansas	2004	Mary Kimbrough	Missouri
1971	Hazel Brannon Smith	Mississippi	2005	Ree Strange Sheck	New Mexico
1972	Marjorie Holmes	Virginia	2006	Betty Packard	California
1973	Ruth Carlton	Michigan	2007	Peggyann Hutchinson	Oregon
1974	Emily Ivanoff Brown	Alaska	2008	Cary Herz	New Mexico
	Katherine Graham	Dist. of Columbia		Clara Cartrette	North Carolina
1975	Virginia Driving Hawk Sneve	South Dakota	2009	Heloise	Texas
1976	Lois Watkins	Virginia	2010	Karen Stensrud	North Dakota
1977	Margaret Woolfolk	Arkansas	2011	Beth Miller	Delaware
1978	Kathy Piper	Colorado	2012	Cynthia Price	Virginia
1979	Dr. Joann Easley Arnold	Colorado	2013	Marianne Wolf-Astrauskas	Illinois
1980	Lynn Stewart	Louisiana	2014	Becky Funke	Kansas
1981	Faye Plank	New Mexico	2015	Barbara Gigone	Colorado
1982	Betzi Woodman	Alaska	2016	LorettaHall	New Mexico
1983	Ann McKay Thompson	South Dakota	2017	Randy Richardson	Illinois
1984	Marj Carpenter	Georgia	2018	Billie Travalini	Delaware
1985	Lois Lambley	Nebraska	2019	Eileen Wirth	Nebraska
1986	Joanne Zerkel	Illinois	2020	Sandy Michel Nance	Colorado
1987	Kay Kennedy	Alaska	2021	Sherri Burr	New Mexico
1988	Jean Wiley Huyler	Washington	2022	LuAnn Schindler	Nebraska
1989	Donna Hunt	Texas	2023	Marilyn Saltzman	Colorado
1990	D. J. Cline	South Dakota	2024	Gwen White	North Carolina

**NFPW Education Fund  
wants to be your charity  
of choice**



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NFPW Education Fund, a 501(c3) organization  
140B Purcellville Gateway Drive  
Suite 120  
Purcellville, VA 20132

<https://www.nfpw.org/education-fund>



## The buzz about 2025 conference tours in Colorado

By Karen Petersen  
Colorado Press Women

An exceptionally long and beautiful Colorado autumn had Colorado Press Women buzzing with excitement about hosting the 2025 NFPW Conference in Golden, Colorado, Sept. 11–13.

Inspired to share the best of colorful Colorado, conference planners have been busy translating ideas into action with a focus on pre- and post-conference events.

The CPW team has secured a venue for the opening reception, which will take place at the Foothills Art Center’s historic Astor House location in downtown Golden.

With its mission of creating stronger community through art, FAC’s management was immediately receptive to hosting a group of professional communicators from across the country. By offering a substantial discount on the site rental fee, FAC became the first major sponsor of the conference.

Along with teeing up the conference, the reception at FAC will cap off two days of pre-conference tours curated to showcase Colorado’s culture through history and the arts.

On Tuesday, Sept. 9, CPW will host a day of discovery in Denver, beginning with a guided tour of History Colorado Center in the heart of the city. After lunch at the Art Hotel’s chic Fire restaurant, attendees can tour the Denver Art Museum or explore the other galleries and shops in the surrounding Golden Triangle Creative District on their own.

Tuesday’s adventure will wind down with a happy hour hosted by CPW member Donna Bryson, whose avant-garde home in a converted power plant is an art gallery in its own right.

On Wednesday, Sept. 10, early-bird conference goers will have an opportunity to explore Golden and the surrounding area, including Buffalo Bill’s Museum and Grave, Red Rocks Amphitheatre, and the town of Golden.

*(Continued on page 9)*



(Continued from page 8)

A visit to Colorado in September is not complete without venturing into the Rockies, and the post-conference tour will offer the unique experience of doing so by train just as the aspen are beginning to turn gold. CPW is mulling two options.

The first is a round-trip Amtrak train trip from Denver's Union Station to Glenwood Springs, including an overnight stay at the historic Hotel Colorado and a soak in the world's largest hot springs pool at Glenwood Hot Springs Resort. Option 2 is a day trip to Georgetown by bus, complete with a narrow-gauge train ride on the Georgetown Loop and lunch on the lake. Whether folks want to browse the local shops or try their hand at gold panning, the historic mining town of Georgetown will not disappoint.

Thinking of arriving early or staying late to explore the "Next Frontier" with your NFPW and CPW friends? If so, shoot us an email at [info@coloradopresswomen.org](mailto:info@coloradopresswomen.org) to let us know which options pre- and post-conference tour options interest you most.

Pricing and registration information for the tours will be available online early this year. Preliminary information on conference programming will be featured in the next dispatch from Colorado.

*Karen Petersen became a member of NFPW in 2010. She chaired Colorado Press Women's high school communications*



*contest for several years, was named their Communicator of Achievement in 2021, and now serves on the board as secretary and as co-chair of the 2025 NFPW Conference.*



# Contest directors stress deadlines, rule changes

By Helen S. Plotkin

2025 NFPW Professional Contest Director  
Arkansas Press Women

With 2024 behind us, now is a great time to make your final selections and submit your entries for the 2025 NFPW Professional Communications Contest. Submitting your entries by the early deadline will save you a one-time \$25 fee charged on the first entry submitted after noon on Jan. 29.

Meeting the early deadline gives the affiliate and At-Large contest directors more time to review the entries and contact you if they spot problems.

Contest deadlines for 2025 include:

⇒ **Early Bird Deadline, January 29, 2025 (noon in your time zone)** A one-time \$25 fee will be assessed to all entrants after this date. **Note:** The Early Bird Deadline listed in the fall AGENDA was incorrect. Jan. 29, 2025, is correct.

⇒ **Book Final Deadline, February 5, 2025 (noon in your time zone)** Due to the extended time it takes to judge book categories, all book entries must be entered by this date.

⇒ **Final Deadline, February 19, 2025 (noon in your time zone)** All remaining entries must be entered by this date.

Now is also a good time to review the contest Categories and Requirements document (see on next page) and pick the best categories for your entries. The categories and requirements have been updated for the 2025 competition, so new and longtime entrants are both encouraged to review them carefully before submitting their entries.

Most changes are minor alternations to improve clarity. Watch for instructions that specify how many examples of your work to include, phrases such as “one-page

statement required,” and the all-important “Judges will consider,” which lists the criteria judges follow to rank the entries.

Check out the new opportunities to enter the contest. You’ll find new categories or sub-categories in

Books, Photography, and Collegiate/Education. (See sidebar for details)

## NFPW’s High School Communications Contest

NFPW’s High School Contest, sponsored by the NFPW Education Fund, is accepting entries now. Visit the High School Contest [webpage](#) to learn more and please encourage high school students you know and their teachers to enter.

⇒ **Work published between Feb. 1, 2024 and Jan. 31, 2025 is eligible to compete in the 2025 High School Communications Contest.**  
⇒ The High School Contest has only one deadline: Noon on **Wednesday, Feb. 19, 2025.**



## Questions?

Address questions about the contests to your affiliate contest director or to the At-Large and national contest directors listed below:

⇒ At-Large Professional Contest Directors Marsha Hoffman and Monica Springer, [atlargeprofessionalcontest@nfpw.org](mailto:atlargeprofessionalcontest@nfpw.org).

⇒ NFPW Professional Contest Director Helen S. Plotkin, [professionalcontest@nfpw.org](mailto:professionalcontest@nfpw.org).

⇒ At-Large High School Contest Director Gwen Larson, [atlargehighschoolcontest@nfpw.org](mailto:atlargehighschoolcontest@nfpw.org).

⇒ NFPW High School Contest Director Teri Ehresman, [highschoolcontest@nfpw.org](mailto:highschoolcontest@nfpw.org).



# NFPW COMMUNICATIONS CONTEST

DEADLINE: JAN. 29, 2025 Full Contest Rules: [www.nfpw.org/professional-contest](http://www.nfpw.org/professional-contest)

## Changes in 2025 professional contest categories, requirements

**Category 4:** has been renamed Editorial/Op-Ed and the text has been revised to clarify the difference between the two.

**Category 7:** Specialty Articles – text revised to make clear that articles published *only* on your *personal* social media accounts are not eligible.

**Category 7.M.** – Specialty Articles/Health includes a broader definition of Health and removes reference to COVID.

**Category 10:** Publication Written by the Entrant – text revised to direct Annual Reports to Category 51. Report.

**Category 11:** Fiction for Adult Readers – A one-page statement, previously recommended for this category, is now required.

**Category 12:** Non-fiction – sub-category 12.E. – Creative Non-fiction added.

**Category 15:** Category name changed from Short Stories to Short Form Literature and sub-categories added: 15.D – Flash Fiction and 15.E. – Flash Nonfiction.

**Category 21:** Photography – Information on how photos may be edited has been updated and new sub-category added 21.D. – Photo Illustration

**Radio/TV categories 27-32** – Producers and editors have been added to the list of those who can enter several categories in this section.

**Category 35.** Personal Website – Request for a one-page statement added to category requirements.

**Category 36.** Podcast – Revisions clarify what to submit and who is eligible to enter.

**Categories 46-49.** PR Programs and Campaigns – Text added to make clear that a program or campaign may not be entered in more than one category.

**Category 50.** Audiovisuals – has been moved from the PR Programs and Campaigns section to the Public Relations Materials section of the contest.

**Category 62** in the Collegiate/Education – PR Tactics has been replaced by Public Relations, Social Media, or Recruitment/Involvement Campaign.

# New History Committee names inaugural members

Meet the members of the new NFPW History Committee. As they begin their work, they provide suggestions and food for thought about preserving the history of NFPW, from the individual affiliate to the national level. Please [email\\_history@nfpw.org](mailto:email_history@nfpw.org) with any of your own thoughts and questions about the topic.

Thanks to Wendy Plotkin's interest in the importance of NFPW's history, we announced the creation of the History Committee at the 2024 conference and in the president's column of the summer 2024 issue of AGENDA. Subsequently, between a call for interested members in the E-letter, and Wendy's contacts, we assembled this lineup. Meet the History Committee.

**Julie Campbell** here. While I've spent my entire career in communications, my B.A. and M.A. are in history. (The family joke is that during childhood vacations, my parents stopped at every historical marker along the way, so it was no surprise that my brother and I both majored in history.) I've edited two states' historical journals, one in Arizona and one in Virginia. Some of my best friends, as they say, are archivists and librarians. And so, my suggestion to affiliates is to seek out your local historical agency — be it state, city or county — to house your records. For example, my affiliate, Virginia Professional Communicators, enlisted the Library of Virginia, the state agency, for that vital task. [Here's the description of our collection.](#) It's a good feeling to know our records are in safe, professional hands and are available not only to our members but also to researchers.



**Eva Marie Pearson.** I'm a 48-year member of Arkansas Press Women and a life member of NFPW. I served as NFPW historian under six presidents — from Marj Carpenter to Vivien Sadowski and Donna Penticuff. It was my good fortune to collect information on all milestone members during this period of time for use in the NFPW program, and prepare and distribute certificates. I also continued the



oral history project with intensive interviews with each of these NFPW presidents. Before my 35-year career in journalism, I was a social studies teacher, teaching world, American and Arkansas history. During my tenure as NFPW historian, I encouraged affiliates to create and add to their histories each year. Some did; most didn't. I will continue to encourage affiliates to make an effort to record their histories and to find a permanent place to store them, so that they don't get tossed.

**Paula Casey:** As an NFPW member since 1977, I have appreciated the remarkable women who founded this organization. NFPW did not shy away from supporting the Equal Rights Amendment in the '70s and '80s. We have been visible and vocal in our support for the First Amendment. My area of expertise is the 19th Amendment, when women WON the right to vote. Nobody gave it to them. It is important to understand history and how it shapes present circumstances. The 250th anniversary of the U.S. is in 2026 known as "America250." We want to help NFPW and its affiliates make our history accessible and available. Every affiliate has a great story to tell. The History Committee will help tell those stories.



My name is **Danielle Teigen**, and I'm a member of the North Dakota Professional Communicators. I've loved history since I was a child, and I parlayed that interest into writing two non-fiction history books about Fargo. I'm a firm believer in the importance of documenting and preserving history for generations to come, and I'm excited to be part of this effort to share the rich history of NFPW and our affiliates. I'd encourage all affiliates to be thinking about how our committee can help you do just that, and be sure to reach out to us with any ideas or questions you may have.

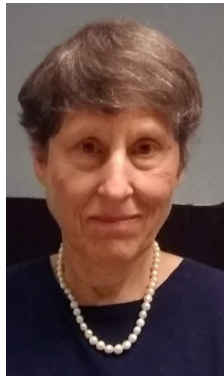


*(Continued on page 13)*

# New History Committee . . .

(Continued from page 12)

**Wendy Plotkin.** I obtained a “mid-life” Ph.D. in U.S. and urban history from the University of Illinois at Chicago after working as an urban planner in Massachusetts. I taught U.S. history at Arizona State University from 2003 to 2009, advised the faculty on incorporating digital tools into their teaching and authored several articles on the influence of digitization in the historical profession. I retired to Conway, Arkansas, in 2015 to be close to my brother and sister-in-law, Richard and Helen Plotkin, members of Arkansas Press Women (APW). I’ve been a member of APW and NFPW since 2021. I served as APW’s historian for three years, digitizing a portion of APW’s records and creating a database structure. These records and additional research introduced me to the 150+ women who launched APW. For the 75th anniversary, I wrote an article about APW’s founder, Roberta W. Fulbright (mother of Sen. J. William Fulbright) and created a 2024 APW 75th Anniversary Calendar. In the process, I became aware of difficulties and challenges facing all NFPW affiliates seeking to preserve and publicize their histories. And so I turned to NFPW to establish a committee to investigate solutions.



**Noël-Marie Fletcher.** I am a journalist/author in Washington, D.C., and NFPW member at large.

I also am active in National Press Club and Daughters of the American Revolution. My nonfiction books are about history and focus on women, journalists, World War II and the Southwest. My latest book is a first-ever look at the incredible role journalists (especially women war correspondents) had in the first and the most famous Nazi war criminal trial. My book is called “Reporting the Nuremberg Trials: How Journalists Covered Live Nazi Trials and Executions.” (Read about it in the Fall 2024 AGENDA.)



Writing this, I learned how little journalists, especially women, have kept and written about their history, what they witnessed and how their work contributed to society. I also learned the struggles I encountered in the 1980s in a male-dominated profession were much worse for the trailblazers I came to know as mostly unsung women war correspondents.

We can all help change this oversight about women journalists in history, and the History Committee will be looking at some ways and sharing them through our NFPW publications.

## In remembrance . . .

### Illinois Woman’s Press Association

Bonnie McGrath, described as “beyond curious,” died Dec. 22, 2024.

A member of IWPA for more than 15 years, McGrath had been a prize-winning journalist, an attorney, a one-time telephone repair worker, an arts supporter and mom to daughter Molly.

More than two decades after earning bachelor’s and master’s degrees in the field of public health, she

earned a law degree from John Marshall Law School in 1993. Her support and guidance were instrumental in shaping Project Onward, an inclusive Chicago arts studio where she served as a board member.



### Submitting obituaries

Please remember to notify NFPW Historian [Amy Geiszler-Jones](#) of the deaths of affiliate/NFPW members so NFPW may recognize those individuals in AGENDA, the E-Letter and at the annual memorial service during the national conference.



# National Federation of Press Women

# Affiliate and Member News . . .

## Arizona At-Large

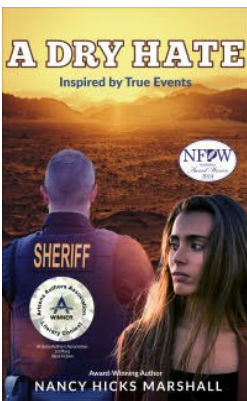
Nancy Marshal's 2023 novel, "A Dry Hate," has won two awards for best fiction in 2024: National-ly with NFPW and statewide from the Arizona Authors Association. This book has both a page-turning story-line (fiction), and the inspiration of real history.



"At first I thought the awards were merely for good writing, but now I believe they were both awards in support of the First Amendment and our freedoms of speech, press, assembly and peaceful communication with our political leaders as well," says Marshal.

Many scenes involve First Amendment issues: 1) the nighttime jailing of two journalists for a minor misdemeanor to expose abuse of power; 2) the arrest and jailing of the legal director of ACLU for — you have to read it to believe it; 3) the jailing of four activists for clapping peaceably in a public meeting — the list goes on.

Real cases cited include the jailing of 200 young Black citizens who — even the police agreed — were demonstrating peaceably. But more than that: guidelines (at the end) on



how to spot propaganda, which may be "free speech" but untrue.

Plus: a detailed definition (in the back) of various forms of power abuse, and an analysis and example of what constituted political abuse of power in the early 21st century.

Yet, within it all, you'll feel compassion for the obvious "good guys" and some characters you may not like to start with.

Nancy has been a member of Arizona Professional Writers and the Arizona at-large affiliate and NFPW since 2021.

## Illinois Press Woman's Association

Author and food/travel writer Carrie Steinweg had two December book signings for "Unique Eats and Eateries of Indiana," published by Reedy Press.

Steinweg's book takes you all over the homey Midwest state for a melting pot of cuisines and dining experiences, giving insight into the stories behind the businesses, the buildings and the recipes.

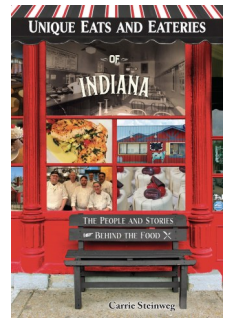
From the sandy shores of Lake Michigan to rolling hills of southern Indiana are small towns, larger cities, historic county seats and charming communities offering all kinds of cuisine. From house-made fried bologna in a nostalgic gas station-turned diner to premium Wagyu raised down the road exclusively for its res-



taurant patrons and everything in between, you'll find something for every palette.

The Hoosier State is known best for its official state pie (sugar cream pie) and its unofficial state sandwich, the breaded pork tenderloin. You'll find both throughout the state, but each place you try it is a little different. A secret ingredient, a non-traditional cooking method or an extra personal touch by the cook can make every experience of tasting the same food an awakening.

Enjoy some wonderful food in some one-of-a-kind places. Dine in the Indiana Dunes just steps from the water or on a rooftop with a stunning view of the Chicago skyline across Lake Michigan. Have a pint of beer and a sandwich in a craft brewery housed inside a mansion built for one of the nation's most beloved car manufacturers. Fill up on a hearty "garbage" breakfast in a spot that only seats a dozen customers. Get a taste of the Caribbean and some Bob Marley vibes in a laid-back lakeside cafe. Have some famous fried chicken in Northern Indiana's oldest restaurant in a historic inn. Experience fine dining in a newly repurposed bank turned boutique hotel with hints of Indy's racing history. Have chili dogs with a glass bottle of Coke at an iconic coney stand — the oldest one in the country. Dine '50s style on



*(Continued on page 15)*

By Cathy Koon  
AGENDA Editor

The leading cause of death among my son's age group is suicide; 67 percent are divorced fathers who are denied custody of their children because our so-called justice system almost always rules that children are better off with their mothers.

I've never actually checked the accuracy of that statistic, but now I have to live with it. My 42-year-old son, Tyson Rex, took his own life a week before Christmas, leaving behind three sons. He didn't leave a note, and he left behind the three most important people in his world — Korbin, 18; Grayson, 8, and Kaeden, 4.

The mental health crisis in this country is epidemic. It can be seen in so many sectors — gun violence, crime, abuse, homelessness, bigotry, anti-Semitism, high school drop-out rates and more.

I beg you to seek help if you or someone you know is struggling with self-image, depression, financial crisis, even the "blues": **Dial 988.**



Send AGENDA submissions to [cathykoon1952@gmail.com](mailto:cathykoon1952@gmail.com)

## Is a TikTok ban a threat to the First Amendment?

*(From NYT Magazine)*

**No.** China has a direct line of access to American data through TikTok, making the app a national security threat. "The motive of the legislation is not to limit speech, but rather to protect Americans from data privacy violations by China," Dace Potas of USA Today writes.

**Yes.** The national security argument is based on speculation of what China could do, not what it is doing. "The free flow of information — good and bad — is exactly what separates us from countries like China," Trevor Timm writes for The Guardian.

## *Affiliate /Member News . . .*

*(Continued from page 14)*

a barstool or in your front seat after your meal is delivered by carhop.

### **New Mexico Press Women**

Léonie Rosenstiel, vice-president of New Mexico Press Women, reports that her book "Protecting Mama" (first published in 2021) has now won 25 literary awards and her book "Legal Protection" (2024) has just garnered its first two. Both "Chicken Soup for the Soul" co-creator Jack Canfield and the new executive editor of The Albuquerque Journal, Jay Newton-Small, will appear March 21 at the NMPW annual conference, as part of her panel "Creating a Multi-media Guardianship Community." Newton-Small is also slated to be the conference's keynote speaker.

# NFPW Leadership Directory

## 2023-25 ELECTED OFFICERS

### President:

Julie Campbell, Virginia

### Vice President:

Debbie Miller, Arkansas

### Secretary:

Kristin Netterstrom Higgins, Arkansas

### Treasurer:

Karen Stensrud, North Dakota

### Immediate Past President:

Karen Rowley, Louisiana

## APPOINTED BOARD

### Archivist:

TBD

### Communicator of Achievement Director:

Karen Stensrud, North Dakota

### FAN Co-Directors:

Marsha Shuler, Louisiana

Angela Smith, Texas

### Historian:

Amy Geiszler-Jones, Kansas

### Assistant Historian:

Mary Pat Finn-Hoag, Nebraska

### Hospitality and Protocol:

Catherine Petrini, Virginia & D.C.

### Parliamentarian:

Allison Stein, Missouri

### POPPS President:

Cecilia Green

### Professional Contest Director:

Helen Plotkin, Arkansas

### High School Contest Director:

Teri Ehresman, Idaho

### Presidential Advisers:

Marsha Hoffman, Iowa

Meg Hunt, South Carolina

Gwen Larson, Kansas

Cynthia Price, Virginia

### Publications Director:

Cathy Koon, Idaho

### Publications Assistant:

Jane Newton Falany, Alabama

### Web Director:

Cate Langley, NFPW Executive Director

### 2025 Conference Co-Chairs:

Gay Porter-DeNileon and Karen Petersen, Colorado

## Ad Rates for AGENDA

- Full / Page 8.250 x 10.625 = \$50
- Half / Page 8.250 x 5.175 = \$30
- Half / Page 4.063 x 10.637 = \$30
- Quarter / Page 8.250 x 2.476 = \$15
- Quarter / Page 4.064 x 5.2 = \$15
- 1/8 / Page 1.875 x 10.563 = \$10
- 1/8 / Page 4.075 x 2.476 = \$10

Discounts are available for multiple runs of the same ad.

## NFPW Headquarters

Cate Langley, Executive Director

140B Purcellville Gateway Drive

Suite 120

Purcellville, VA 20132

Phone: 571-295-5900

[info@nfpw.org](mailto:info@nfpw.org)

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- Ads must be submitted in JPEG format, camera ready.
- Design and content of ads are the responsibility of the advertiser. The AGENDA editorial staff has the final say on whether ad content is appropriate.
- Payment must be made at time of submission.
- Payment by check should be sent to NFPW Headquarters, 140B Purcellville Gateway Drive, Suite 120, Purcellville, VA 20132.
- Payment can be made by credit card over the phone (571) 295-5900.