

# Wallace House Journal

Knight-Wallace Fellows and The Livingston Awards for Young Journalists  
University of Michigan

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Fall 2015

## Where the Fellowship journey comes full circle

30th Annual Graham Hovey Lecture

—By Greg Amante '16

It was a sunny, warm September afternoon; a perfect day for new beginnings.

A crowd gathered in the backyard of Wallace House for the 30th Graham Hovey Lecture, the annual event that kicks off each year's Knight-Wallace Fellowship. Among those in attendance was University of Michigan President Mark Schlissel who welcomed us, the incoming 2015–16 class of Fellows, into the “intellectual and academic breadth” of this unique community.

There are 20 of us in this year's class. We occupied the first two rows of a tent erected to shield the audience from the late summer heat. Like a proud parent, Fellowship director Charles Eisendrath asked each of us to stand and introduce ourselves.

We are a diverse group. We have come from as far as Istanbul and as close as Chicago. As each of my colleagues stood to present themselves, I couldn't have been more proud to be among this impressive class, accomplished professionals who have left their homes, their jobs, some even their families for the promise of what they hope will be one of the richest years of their lives. And on this afternoon at Wallace House, the hearth of this Fellowship, all of us got a glimpse of where this transformative year can take us.

As Charles introduced this year's featured speaker, he also welcomed home one of the Fellowship's own. Just eight years ago, NPR Global health reporter Jason Beaubien was a Knight-Wallace Fellow. He has traveled the world reporting on health issues and today he returned to Wallace House to speak about the “great conundrum in global health:” how will the world handle the next deadly epidemic? Beaubien argues that we “probably won't handle it



As the recipient of the Knight Fellowship in Medicine/Health Sciences Reporting, Greg Amante '16 seemed the likely fellow to re-cap Jason Beaubien's lecture.

very well.” He knows. He's seen it first hand.

He shared a sobering story of when, in July of 2014, he traveled to West Africa to report on the early stages of the Ebola outbreak. He flew to Sierra Leone and after much difficulty found a driver willing to take him to the “epicenter” of this deadly outbreak.

Upon arriving to a makeshift medical compound, Beaubien said he immediately felt the weight of this crisis. Paulo, a representative from the World Health Organization, rushed out to greet him with a frightening request: please allow the medical workers to use his vehicle to empty the hospital's overflowing morgue. At that moment, Beaubien said, he knew the global response to the Ebola outbreak was “falling apart.”

From a Knight-Wallace Fellowship, to the epicenter of an Ebola outbreak and back to Ann Arbor to tell his story, this was just part of

Beaubien's remarkable journey.

Today marked the beginning of our journey. It's not a break in our careers, but rather a bridge. A bridge, we as a group, will cross together and that promises to lead us as journalists and professionals to better days. Perhaps to our best days.

Charles has consistently encouraged each of us to *dream big* while here at Michigan. Today at our new home called Wallace

House we took the first steps toward those dreams and got a glimpse of where that path might lead us. To watch the lecture, go to <http://www.mjfellows.org> ▶



KWF Director Charles Eisendrath, Hovey speaker Jason Beaubien '07 and Dr. Mark S. Schlissel, President of the University of Michigan, posed with the traditional Hovey bowl following the lecture. President Schlissel welcomed incoming fellows to the University and hosted a reception following the lecture.



# From the Head Fellow

— By Charles R. Eisendrath '75

## ON THE ROAD TO A NEW EXIT

Interstate 75 connects my life in Ann Arbor to another, very different existence at a cherry orchard in northern Michigan. The house is 115 years old and has been touched by five generations of us. Inside and beyond, in the woods and fields, stuff and changes accumulate. Such things mark what you've done and what you haven't; what things people in your gene pool accomplished with reminders to try some. Such explorations are part of what I suggest to incoming Fellows, a sort of internal inventory-taking.

So as I found myself driving through life's higher numbers in bumptious good health, 75 came to take on special significance. As that birthday approached, it became a sort of road sign. I had been traveling north and south on I-75. Maybe E-75, October 9, 2015, should signal Highway Eisendrath leading to life beyond Wallace House. The numbers worked in the way journalists prefer in anniversaries: 40 years at

the University of Michigan, 35 running the Livingston Awards, 30 directing the Fellowships.

What made me take the turn leading to retirement from all three, however, did not come until late last summer. I don't like leaving important things undone, and until then, the Livingston Awards had been neither strongly embraced by the University, nor had it garnered endowment. At the awards lunch in New York last June, however, President Mark Schlissel told the winners, "I look forward to hearing about your accomplishments and to coming back many times in the future to join in celebrating the future of journalism."

In August, a longtime donor sent the first of checks to total \$1 million for endowment. Suddenly, I felt confident that the Livingstons were firmly on the way to permanence at a University I've loved for a long time.

Unsurprisingly, the decision to make of this revelation came at the farm, surrounded

by all those reminders. That's where such things happen.

But still, why leave a job I've been lucky enough to more-or-less design? Fair question. Again, it's the numbers. Pride in having tried to guide journalists to as satisfying a life as I've had runs deep. How much could I add in a few more years? By contrast, although every job has brought enormous pleasure, Wallace House way above all, jobs have always dominated my life. The only chance to explore what I might do without one is right now. I'm well aware of what I advise Fellows in such situations.

Hence, taking the exit off the big road I've known so well to smaller ones I think may lead to intriguing places with Julia, my lifelong road-trip navigator and the copilot of our lives together. Many, I hope, will lead to you. ▶



# GAME CHANGER IN THE BIG HOUSE

## Fellow's project prompts signing of national anthem for the deaf

— By Larry Lage '15

University of Michigan Law Professor Sherman Clark took a sip of tea and said what was happening in my life reminded him of Robert Frost's "Two Tramps in Mud Time," and recited this part of the poem: "My object in living is to unite my avocation and my vocation," Clark said as he stared across a table of a restaurant in downtown Ann Arbor. "As my two eyes make one in sight. Only where love and need are one, and the work is play for mortal stakes, is the deed ever really done for heaven and future's sakes."

Amen. My deed is not done, but I'm proud of the progress that has been made on my mission to create a platform to give Deaf people fair access to the news by delivering current events in American Sign Language (ASL). This mission was put into motion when Charles Eisendrath challenged me during the spring of 2014, when I was interviewing to be a Knight-Wallace Fellow, to put together my experiences as the son of deaf parents with 20 years in journalism. My quest can't stop and won't stop even as I juggle my roles as a sports writer for The Associated Press, a husband and father.

The AP is working with me to explore the possibilities of creating a platform to bridge a news-literacy gap that I believe exists with the deaf and hard-of-hearing community, an isolated part of our population that has been overlooked for too long. No one is giving this underserved group current events on a regular basis in ASL, which is a distinctly different language than English. That is a problem. I have come up with some potential solutions, though there is still a lot of work to do in order to prove the concept and create a sustainable platform and business model. Paul Cheung, AP's interactive and digital news production director, and I took advantage of a great opportunity last



Kalib Jones, a student with the Michigan School for the Deaf, signed the national anthem prior to the Michigan vs. Northwestern football game earlier this season.

Photo courtesy of Michigan Photography

spring to develop the idea at MediaShift's Collab/Space innovation workshop in New York.

Closer to home, I'm happy to report that the University of Michigan is now a leader and perhaps the best at providing deaf people, including my father, access to the national anthem before the Jim Harbaugh-led Wolverines take the field at the Big House. Thanks to a meeting I had with Athletic Director Jim Hackett during my fellowship, I connected people at the university with a contact at the Michigan School for the Deaf and one of its students has signed the anthem before each home game. ▶

*Note: The University of Michigan Council for Disability Concerns presented Larry Lage with a Certificate of Appreciation at its annual James T. Neubacher award ceremony held earlier this fall. Lage was recognized for his work in developing a news platform for the deaf and hard of hearing community.*

## Wallace House in D.C.

Livingston Awards for Young Journalists Outreach Event  
Knight-Wallace Fellows Meet-Up

**"Guards with Guns: Are America's Security Guards a Safeguard or Hazard?"**

2015 Livingston winners Shoshana Walter and Ryan Gabrielson discuss the findings of their Center for Investigative Reporting series on the haphazard system of lax laws and weak screening standards for armed security guards.

David Greene, host of NPR's "Morning Edition" and Livingston Judge, will moderate the discussion.

Thursday, January 14, 2016, 6:30 p.m.

Panel - Livingston Award winners followed by a Knight-Wallace Fellows D.C. reunion

Knight Conference Center at the Newseum

555 Pennsylvania Avenue N.W., Washington DC, 20001

Please use Freedom Forum Entrance on 6th Street.

For more information, email [rileyml@umich.edu](mailto:rileyml@umich.edu)

Please RSVP to <http://Newseum.rsvpify.com>



# Writing workshop conjures images of fireflies

—By Travis Holland

Since 2008, I've been teaching creative writing at Wallace House, working with visiting Knight-Wallace Fellows, and every year we begin our first class together by introducing ourselves. We go around in a circle, we say our names. We talk about where we're from, our professional

in the mind, bright as those fireflies we once chased in the summer twilight when we were children, flash and go dark, then flash again as you chase after them. Every September, a new group of Fellows: new faces, new names. This never changes, though the names do.

up—to me, to each other. They connect the story to their own lives, which is what the best stories do, I think, and in doing so, they begin to understand one another in a new way, a deeper way. I see it happen every year. It's as if they're introducing themselves again, as if we're all re-



*This year's class has been able to take advantage of the beautiful fall weather and held some seminars in the back yard of Wallace House.*

work, what we hope to get out of the class. It's a common enough ritual in academia, a way of breaking the ice, and one the Fellows are already well-acquainted with. These are the first tentative steps we take together in what will be a year-long journey, and while I try my best to remember every student's name that first day, it's always a struggle. I've taught high school history and I've taught English to college undergrads, and now I teach creative writing to professional journalists, and that struggle to immediately remember a roomful of names has remained a constant challenge. Names are like fireflies, in a way. They flash

Our introductions done, I hand out the first short story we'll be discussing, Edward P. Jones' "The First Day," and the next Friday we meet again, this time out on the patio behind Wallace House. Septembers in Ann Arbor are a wonder: cool bright days, high blue skies. Falling leaves tick down, and the sound of children playing floats over from Angell Elementary. Which is fitting, since Jones' story is about a child on her way to her first day of school. We discuss her journey, and as the Fellows talk, as they listen to one another talk, something quite simple and quite extraordinary happens. They begin to open

introducing ourselves. At the end of class I hand out more stories, and a week later we find ourselves together again, talking, listening. In its quiet, steady way, the year moves on.

I always make a point of telling the Fellows I teach that my workshop is for them. Not for me, not for the University, but for them. I don't take attendance. I don't give midterms. There is no final exam, no grade. The Fellows are free to read the stories and try the writing exercises I hand out, just as they are free not to. They've spent years building their careers—as journalists, as editors, as photographers—they know

deadlines backwards and forwards. They know the grind and they know what hard work is. It's what got them here, and what they'll likely return to once the year is over. They've earned this time in Ann Arbor for themselves and their families, this opportunity to look up from their hectic lives as journalists and, if they want, read a short story by Edward P. Jones or

Alice Munro or Ha Jin. Or even write their own story, or memoir, or that novel they've always planned to write, hoped to write. I want to help them do that, in whatever way I can. Time, too, can be as elusive as a firefly, I've learned: Here and gone so quickly. Before you know it, it's November, then January, March, April.

And what are we left with? After all those

short stories—the ones we've read, the ones we've written; the writing exercises, the workshops. What do we really know that we didn't know before?

We know each other. Not just as names, though the names stay with me, but as individuals, as friends. ▶

## Writing workshop on the flip side

Pleased that Travis Holland agreed to submit an article on what it is like to conduct the writing workshop from his vantage point, we wanted to provide a complete picture. Several Fellows were asked to share what the writing workshop meant from their perspective. See the responses below:

My fellowship year was filled with amazing trips and experiences, but quiet Fridays with Travis in our writing seminar was maybe the most impactful. His guidance and mentorship helped me find confidence in my voice as a writer. The work I started with him has turned into the foundation of a memoir that will be published in the spring. All of us Fellows are lucky to have Travis in our corner.

— Amy Haimerl '13

Fridays at Wallace House during Travis' workshop is like the magic hour in the afternoon when the light is golden and the world more vivid than usual. Travis enables an open and creative environment that challenges participants to take their writing to new places; by the end of the year we each had something in our hands to be proud of and goals for the road ahead.

— Sarah Robbins '12

Travis's workshop allowed me to flex different writing muscles that newspaper reporters—trained to stick to actual facts—aren't used to.

What? We get to make shit up? That took some getting used to. Ultimately, I was able to write a feature-length screenplay, based on a true story about a U-M doctor—but with plenty of fiction woven in. Now, back to my reporter reality, I've taken what he taught us about scene setting, character motivation and dialogue and put it to use in my more narrative features.

— Tracy Jan '15

The workshop was an encouraging environment to develop a writing life away from journalism's deadline-driven limitations.

— Laura Tillman '11S

When I arrived in Ann Arbor, I hadn't done any fiction writing since college, even though it had been my passion all through my youth. Travis's workshops reignited that flame. He struck just the right note between high standards and compassion for our literary struggles. Back home, inspired, I wrote a memoir.

— John Hill '09

Travis' writing workshop made me want to cover my naked body in ink and roll around on blank paper.

— Stephanie DeGroot '09



The Writing Workshop was one of my favorite classes. Travis has a talent to navigate, with his modulated voice, through amazing stories and authors and unveil what is behind the craft of writing, while giving us an understanding of storytelling techniques. It is an open space for creativity. Even though English is my second language and it was challenging, I felt comfortable sharing a draft and getting useful input... all among friends.

— Maria Natalia Ortega '15

Until I worked with Travis, I'd never had a chance to take my writing seriously. He's such a great teacher, and lovely soul besides; I feel really lucky to have gone through the workshop with him at the helm.

— Tracie McMillan '13

"Yeah, maybe one day I'll give fiction writing a try" is a thought I had for awhile before arriving in Ann Arbor. How lucky that "one day" collided with the great gift of Travis's tutelage. He always came armed with the perfect questions, critical comments—and perfectly chosen (and collated) stories to share.

— Rachel Dry '13





# Our Great Geniuses



**Adam Allington '12** has been awarded a journalism fellowship at the University of Chicago to study, and report on, the economics of aging and work. The fellowship is a collaboration with NORC (National Opinion Research Center) and the Associated Press.



**Raney Aronson-Rath** (Livingston Award Regional Judge) has been named executive producer of "Frontline," the PBS documentary series. Her appointment is the first leadership change in the program's 32-year history. She formerly served as deputy executive producer.



**Robin Avni '89** recently became part of the University of Washington School of Communication faculty. She will teach two courses in the Communication Leadership Graduate program for the 2015–16 academic year. She was also appointed full time as Associate Professor of Design at the Cornish College of the Arts focusing on user experience design, design research and social media.



**Christopher Baxter '16** received the national Heywood Broun award from the Newspaper Guild-Communication Workers of America in Washington, D.C. His winning story, "A Death Turns Into a Mystery" was published in the Newark *Star-Ledger* as an eight-page special section and appeared online as an interactive multimedia presentation. It included a database on every arrest-related death in New Jersey during the past decade. The award honors one jour-

nalist each year for outstanding reporting that helps "right a wrong or correct an injustice."



**Eve Byron '99** took a new position as the communications specialist for the National Institute on Money in State Politics (aka FollowTheMoney.org) after 30 years as an investigative reporter in Colorado and Montana. At the nonpartisan, nonprofit Helena-based organization, her job is to reach out to reporters and give them tools to look into campaign contributions to both individuals and to ballot measures.



**Suzette Hackney '13** has joined the staff of *The Indianapolis Star* as a columnist and community engagement editor. In addition to her weekly column, she will be a member of the editorial board and work to expand public outreach.



**Markian Hawryluk '13** joined the *Houston Chronicle* as a health reporter. He previously covered health for the *Bend Bulletin* (OR) and spent 10 years as a health policy reporter in Washington, D.C. for various health care publications. Hawryluk was recently presented with two awards by the Association of Health Care Journalists. He took first place in the Public Health category for "The Risks of Home Birth" and was awarded third place in the Investigative category for "Too Risky to Transplant." Both pieces were published in the *Bend Bulletin* (OR).



**Alfred Hermida, Ph.D '05** became the director of the University of British Columbia Graduate School of Journalism. Prior to accepting the three-year position in June, he was an associate professor.



**Billy House '97** joined Bloomberg News in December as a congressional correspondent. Previously, he was senior congressional reporter for the *National Journal*.



**Rona Kobell '09** was named one of the 28 "women greening journalists" by the National Audubon Society last spring. It is part of the society's Rachel Caron awards and is among the most prestigious conservation awards in the country.



**Frank Lockwood '05** is the politics/Washington editor for the *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette* in Little Rock, Arkansas. He was formerly the religion editor.



**Alec MacGillis '11** joined ProPublica in April as a political reporter covering politics, government and influence in Washington. MacGillis joined Slate earlier in the year and prior to that he was with The New Republic, covering national politics. He also was with *The Washington Post* for five years.



**Vince Patton '04**, a producer for Oregon Public Broadcasting, was part of the team that received an Emmy award from the Northwest Chapter of the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences for Environmental Program/Special: Oregon Field Guide.

In addition, he was recently honored in the 2015 Society of Professional Journalists (SPJ) Northwest Excellence in Journalism Contest. He was awarded first place in the Daily Print and Online for Environment and Science Reporting category for "Wild Horses in Crisis."



**Amy Resnick '07** was promoted from executive editor to editor-in-chief of *Pensions & Investments*, a Crain's publication. A veteran financial journalist, Resnick previously worked as Americas editor of IFR magazine, a Reuters publication that focuses on capital formation. Prior to that, she was editor-in-chief of *The Bond Buyer* for 10 years and worked there for a total of 15 years.



**Laura Starecheski '14** is a reporter and producer for Reveal. Before assuming that position in May, she reported on health for NPR's Science Desk, was on staff at NPR's "State of the Re:Union" and freelanced for "The World," "Latino USA" and elsewhere.



**Aisha Sultan '12** was awarded a Senior Journalist Seminar Fellowship by the East-West Center. The program is intended to enhance media coverage and elevate public debate, specifically concerning U.S. relations with the Muslim world. She also received the Asian American Journalists Association National Journalism Award for Print Excellence and The Society of Features Journalists awarded her first place for

General Commentary Portfolio among newspapers the size of the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*.



**Holly Yettick '04** directs the Education Week Research Center, which produces standalone studies as well as analyses for *Education Week* and special reports such as Quality Counts. Yettick began working at Education Week in 2014 after earning a Ph.D. from the University of Colorado at Boulder's School of Education. She completed a postdoctoral fellowship at the University of Colorado at Denver's School of Public Affairs.



**Bernice Yeung '16** was part of the winning team awarded The Al Neuharth Innovation in Investigative Journalism Award from the Online Journalism Awards administered by the Online News Association. The winning piece, "The Dark Side of the Strawberry," was reported for The Center for Investigative Reporting. ▶

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\*Includes gender identity and gender expression

## Stephen Henderson Introduced as New Regional Livingston Judge



**Stephen Henderson**, editorial page editor for the *Detroit Free Press* since January 2009, is the newest member of the Livingston Awards Board of Regional Judges. He is a graduate of the University of Michigan and a former editorial page editor of *The Michigan Daily*.

Henderson has been a reporter, editorial writer and editor at *The Baltimore Sun*, the *Chicago Tribune*, the *Lexington (Ky.) Herald-Leader* and the Knight Ridder Washington Bureau, where he covered the U.S. Supreme Court from 2003–2007.

His work has been honored with more than a dozen national awards, including the 2014 Pulitzer Prize for commentary, the 2014 Scripps Howard Award, the 2001 ASNE writing award for editorials, several National Headliner Awards and two Sigma Delta Chi prizes. He was also the National Association of Black Journalists' pick for Journalist of the Year in 2014.

Henderson also hosts a daily radio show, "Detroit Today," on WDET, Detroit's public radio station and is host of the weekly talk shows "American Black Journal" and "MiWeek," both on Detroit Public Television. ▶





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## Wallace House editing suite now open for business



*Jeff and Melinda Fager (pictured at the 2015 Livingston Awards Luncheon in New York) were the impetus to get the renovations underway.*

### JEFF & MELINDA FAGER EDITING SUITE 2015

Jeff and Melinda Fager’s generous donation helped realize the dream of creating an editing suite in Wallace House. The newly renovated rooms are nearing completion and this year’s class of fellows will be among the first to reap the benefits. The plan is to offer the space and tools to combine video, audio, photography, writing, editing and producing capabilities for Fellows as they work to improve multi-media skills.

Fager, executive producer of *60 Minutes* and former chairman of CBS News, occupies the seat on the Fellowship board previously held by Mike Wallace. Mike (AB ’39, HLLD ’87) along with his wife, Mary, donated the funds in 1992 for the purchase of Wallace House, establishing a permanent home for KWF and the Livingston Awards. While serving as headquarters for the programs, the primary function is to provide a large, cozy house to embrace the “fellowship” part of the program, available any time, any day. ▶

## Get the Word Out

Call For:  
*Applications*  
*Entries*  
*Nominations*

Knight-Wallace Fellows  
 Livingston Awards for Young Journalists  
 The Richard M. Clurman Award

Deadline February 1, 2016  
 For young, mid-career and seasoned  
 journalists

<http://www.mjfellows.org>  
<http://www.livawards.org>



*Teresa Frontado '15 conducts the inaugural interview in the Wallace House Editing Suite.*