

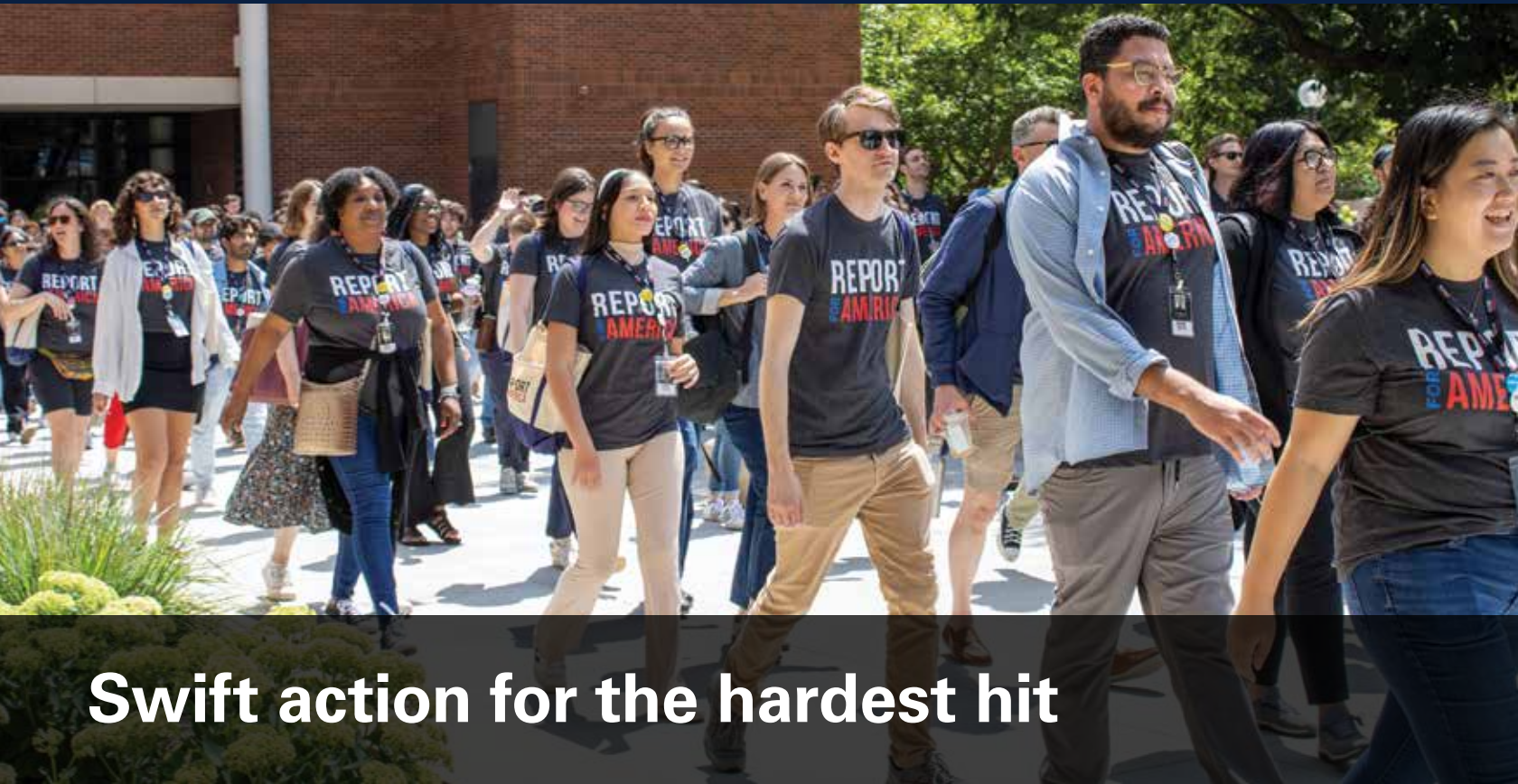
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Swift action for the hardest hit

By Rachel Rohr '19

Rachel is vice president of program development at Report for America, a national service program that places journalists into local newsrooms to report on under-covered issues and communities.

Like the Knight-Wallace Fellowships, Report for America runs on a tight programmatic cycle. We had selected our 2025-26 corps members and our program year had started when Congress voted to rescind funding for public media in July. About 20% of the local newsrooms Report for America has supported since 2018 are public media stations. We reached out across our network to find out who was hardest hit.

In Alaska, one of our alumni at Alaska Public Media helped direct us to two urgent situations.

KRBD, a station in the southeast city of Ketchikan, was about to hire reporter Hunter Morrison when 37% of its budget evaporated. The small newsroom typically has a news director and one reporter covering a region that includes a busy tourist and fishing community as well as Alaska's only Native American reservation. Not being able to fill the vacant



Above: Report for America corps members from across the country.

reporter position would leave 20,000 people without essential local news coverage.

At KOTZ, a one-person newsroom above the Arctic Circle in Kotzebue, the station's board and leadership told the news director, Desiree Hagen, that they would have to close the radio station within a year. In addition to serving as the news director, Hagen is the only reporter at KOTZ, which receives 41% of its funding from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting.

Most of the stories Hagen covers involve weather alerts, Indigenous cultural programming, and news on issues such as road closures, subsistence meetings, and essential hunting and fishing information — updates vital for a community where 60% to 80% of the diet depends on harvested wild food. Shutting the newsroom would cut off the primary local news source and safety information for approximately 10,000 people, most of whom are Alaska Natives.

We accepted Hagen and Morrison as corps members. Instead

CONTINUED ON BACK COVER

The 38th Graham Hovey Lecture

Inside the Firings and the Future of the Federal Workforce

Q&A with Andrea Hsu of NPR

By Lynette Clemetson '10

Andrea Hsu is the labor and workplace correspondent for NPR, focusing on the evolving dynamics of work in the United States. As a 2012 Knight-Wallace Fellow, Hsu studied innovative approaches to health care awareness. She returned to Wallace House in September to deliver the 38th annual Graham Hovey Lecture. Before the event, Hsu spoke with Lynette Clemetson, director of Wallace House.

Clemetson: You started as a labor and workplace reporter during the COVID-19 pandemic, and the job was shaped by the pandemic. What was the focus of your beat when you started?

Hsu: It started out as a temporary stint, filling in on the business desk in the fall of 2020, when a lot of office workers were working from home. Their offices had closed, and many schools were also closed. Working parents were figuring out what to do with their children. At the same time, there were the essential workers who had to keep things going — people working in grocery stores, hospitals, nursing homes and factories. It was a period of upheaval for all different types of workers.

When did it shift from being pandemic-driven to being focused on the federal workforce?

Not until this year. In fact, covering the federal workforce had never been part of my beat. Before January of this year, I think I had done maybe three stories on the federal workforce: one about the rollback of telework in the government, and two about federal employee unions.

But sometime between the election and the inauguration, a memo went out to staff announcing that I would be covering the federal workforce. This was a surprise to me! And then, as soon as Trump took office on January 20, he began signing executive orders that laid out huge changes for the federal workforce, and that took over my beat.

So were federal workers expecting change?

There were ideas from Trump's first term that he reintroduced. Some of them were in Project 2025. Still, it was the speed at which this all happened that was surprising to people. On January 28, eight days after the inauguration, an email went out inviting almost the entire federal workforce to resign. More than 2 million people got this email. There was a lot of confusion over whether the offer was legal or if it was even real. Shortly after that, in the middle of February, federal agencies started firing probationary employees en masse. Those were mostly people in their first or second year on the job, fired supposedly for performance reasons, even though many had stellar performance reviews.

I was really struck by how worried these people were, not just about their own job security, but about what would happen to the work they were doing.

My colleagues and I began getting all kinds of messages from federal workers — emails, LinkedIn messages, and mostly Signal messages. Many federal workers were scared to speak out but were very willing to send screenshots of communications they were getting as they tried to make sense of what was happening.

The public messaging was that it was about cleaning out waste in Washington. Who were you hearing from?

The people contacting me were from all over the country, largely not in Washington. In fact, 80% to 85% of federal workers don't live in the Washington, D.C. area. That often comes as a surprise to people. I was hearing from people in Georgia, Utah, Alaska — all over the country.

What did you learn from that flood of messages?

I was really struck by how worried these people were, not just about their own job security, but about what would happen to the work they were doing. These are people who feel a deep sense of responsibility to the public.



The first public event of each academic year is the Graham Hovey Lecture, named in honor of the director of the fellowship program from 1980 to 1986. Alumni, university and community members filled the Wallace House garden to hear Andrea Hsu and join a robust Q&A.

I imagine some of their jobs are not visible to the general public at all.

Yes. For example, one woman worked for the USDA Agricultural Research Service in Logan, Utah. She was a Ph.D. scientist, and her job was helping alfalfa farmers in Washington state. She was helping them manage pests in their alfalfa fields. The farmers she was working with grow alfalfa for seed, which is then used as feed for the U.S. dairy industry, which supplies our milk. The reason the government pays a researcher like her to be out there helping these farmers is that her work is seen as critical to America's food supply. I heard from many people like this who took the time to explain these things to me.

What will the reductions look like by the end of this year?

According to the U.S. Office of Personnel Management, by the end of December, the federal workforce will be down roughly 300,000, to about 2.1 million employees. So that's about one in eight federal workers out by the end of the year. Many of those leaving are people with a lot of experience, so there is worry about the loss of institutional knowledge.

What are you watching going forward?

The push by the Trump administration to turn much more of the federal workforce into "at will" employees. The administration has argued that the president needs to be able to remove those who are unwilling to help him fulfill the promises he made to the American people. Currently, only about 4,000 federal employees, out of more than 2 million, are political appointees who serve at the pleasure of the president. The rest enjoy civil service protections, designed to give the federal government stability and continuity through changeovers in administration. Upending this system would really change the nature of the federal workforce. Ultimately, this will come down to the Supreme Court to decide.



Reflections from our fellowship trip to the Balkans

By Joseph Sywenkyj '25

I arrived in Ann Arbor from Ukraine with my family in August 2024 to begin my Knight-Wallace Fellowship. Air raid sirens wailed as our train pulled out of Kyiv. Days later, I was attending a seminar on Michigan politics and wondering, “What am I doing here?”

By spring 2025, when my cohort set off for three countries of the former Yugoslavia — Croatia, Bosnia and Serbia — I had mostly adapted to life without war. I was looking forward to learning how other war-torn European societies had attempted the difficult transition to peace and democracy.

We began our trip in the Croatian coastal city of Dubrovnik, where we were welcomed by our guide, Bosnian photojournalist Ziyah Gafic. We toured a hilltop museum that chronicled the 1991 siege of Dubrovnik and visited photographer Wade Goddard, who ran a gallery dedicated to war photography. I had studied images of the Balkan wars as a young photographer, but to view them well into Russia’s full-scale war against Ukraine was something entirely new. My wife wept as I fought tears and tried to comfort her. It was like looking in a mirror.

Politicians, journalists, activists and religious leaders in Sarajevo helped us understand how selective memory, language and old animosities are harnessed to spark violence and war. Many guest speakers had warnings to share. Aida Čerkez, who was the Sarajevo bureau chief for the Associated Press during the war, recounted the mass denial before the Serbs began their 1992 attack. She cautioned: “Try to resist the denial, so you

Fellowship travel to the former Yugoslavia included a moving visit to photographer Wade Goddard’s gallery in Dubrovnik, featuring powerful images from the 1990s Balkan Wars.

can recognize it in time to react. ... You cannot save the world. But what you can do, privately and professionally, is position yourself toward the problem.”

The most haunting part of our trip was visiting Srebrenica, where Bosnian Serb forces murdered more than 8,000 Bosnian Muslims, most of them men and boys, while United Nations peacekeepers failed to act. We toured the cemetery and memorial center with curator Azir Osmanović, who survived the 1995 genocide at age 13. He told us more Bosnian Serbs deny the genocide today than they did in the 1990s. As a Ukrainian, I took note of the work we must do to commemorate the victims of Russia’s war against us in the years ahead.

We then traveled to Belgrade, the capital of Serbia, where I was surprised to feel a sense of hope. Our guide, Serbian photojournalist Marko Drobnjakovic, introduced us to courageous investigative reporters and election observers. And we observed peaceful, student-led protests against corruption, which had spread throughout the country. We were witnessing history in action.

I remain inspired by the people we met, working tirelessly to heal wounds of war and develop more open, accountable and democratic societies.

Joseph Sywenkyj is an American photographer of Ukrainian descent who has lived and worked in Ukraine for 20 years.

Livingston Awards Ceremony Highlights

On June 10, 2025, we gathered for the 44th Livingston Awards ceremony to celebrate the 2025 winners in local, national and international reporting. Hosted by Audie Cornish, Livingston Awards judge and CNN anchor, the ceremony served as an inspiring reminder of the role the awards play in supporting the work of young reporters, building future newsroom leaders and promoting civic engagement through powerful storytelling.

The 2025 Livingston Award winners recognized at the event were Jessika Harkay of The Connecticut Mirror for excellence in local reporting; Sydney Brownstone and Esmey Jimenez of The Seattle Times and KUOW Public Radio for excellence in national reporting; and Nicole Sadek of the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists (ICIJ) for excellence in international reporting.

Editor and media executive, Norman Pearlstine, received the Richard M. Clurman Award, which is presented annually to a veteran journalist who has played a pivotal role in supporting and guiding the careers of younger journalists.



Clockwise from top left: Livingston judges, Michigan supporters and journalism VIPs turned out to honor the 2025 Livingston Award winners; Audie Cornish, CNN anchor and Livingston judge, hosted the ceremony; Livingston judges gathered with the 2025 Livingston Award winners. Seated left to right: Jessika Harkay, winner for local reporting; Sydney Brownstone and Esmey Jimenez, co-winners for national reporting; and Nicole Sadek, winner for international reporting.





Stepping up with focus and resolve

By **Lynette Clemetson '10**
Director of Wallace House

This is my 10th academic year as director of Wallace House. Over the years, among the key benefits I tout when speaking to journalists about our programs is the university as refuge, a sturdy port in the ever-turbulent storm that is the journalism industry.

As the last academic year came to a close, that didn't feel like something I could continue to promise with any degree of confidence.

The Trump administration was targeting universities around the country, threatening colossal funding cuts and issuing demands that reached into governance, hiring, admissions and academic freedom. The University of Michigan discontinued its strategic diversity plan. Some departments were scrubbing websites of words and phrases that could draw government retribution. It was unclear whether international students — our own international Fellows included — would be granted entry to the United States.

The threats and absurdities haven't gone away. The people in our extended Wallace House network — journalists, scientists, scholars, policy and legal experts — are prime targets in the strategic attempt to weaken institutions and consolidate presidential power.

Yet in the face of numerous obstacles, campus this fall still brims with possibility. The harsh realities of a raw and hostile national landscape are being met with expressions of creativity, collaboration, innovation, active listening, welcome and compassion. There is a tangible focus and resolve across departments and faculty, in student activities and community events that offer an ever-present reminder of what makes the University of Michigan special.

As our new Knight-Wallace Fellows move through the intellectual bounty of the fall semester, I am reminded time and again that the qualities that drew me here as a Fellow and that infuse my enthusiasm for outreach as director are no less true now than they have ever been.

The excellent work of alumni also reminds me that the

dedicated journalists who Wallace House has helped to develop and empower over five decades are well-positioned to meet the moment.

And so this issue of the Wallace House Journal is built around resilience. Not naiveté or blind optimism. But the kind of clear-eyed focus and mission-driven leadership needed to respond to the multiple serious challenges we face with fortitude and vision.

We've all witnessed our share of feckless leadership over the past several months, from media executives and university presidents who somehow believed that cowering and capitulating might provide them protection. But from our perch at Wallace House, each week we're seeing inspiring evidence across our network of people stepping up boldly with both short-term assistance and long-term resolve.

In these pages, you'll read stories of our colleagues reaching across organizations to lend financial, editorial and strategic support; about collaborations to build community-level trust and cross-border accountability; and about journalists pairing with scholars to rescue data essential to the work of both. We can all draw strength from these vignettes — and hopefully also ideas.



The class of 2026 Knight-Wallace Fellows kicked off the fall semester with a campus tour, including a stop at The Cube.

If after paging through, you feel inspired to reach out to a Knight-Wallace Fellow you haven't spoken to in a while, or one you have never met, a Livingston Award winner you applauded, a faculty member whose research you've been wondering about, a board member you struck up a friendship with, or an engaged community member you had a great conversation with at one of our events, go ahead and reach out. Check in.

That's what networks are for. This is an exceptional one — and its members are not in retreat.

Editor's note: Authors who are former Knight-Wallace Fellows have their fellowship year included in their byline.

RISING TO MEET the Moment

Why we keep reporting

By **Seema Mehta '19**

Seema is a political reporter at the Los Angeles Times.

I've covered politics at the Los Angeles Times for nearly two decades, and I cannot recall a more challenging time to do this work. The nation is deeply polarized. Many voters believe the mainstream media is fake news and won't talk to us, making it harder to tell stories that reflect the viewpoints of all Americans. It seems impossible to keep up with the firehose of news coming out of the White House, including many policies that disproportionately affect Californians.

The ICE raids that began in Los Angeles in June and the ensuing deployment of the National Guard on the streets of the nation's second-largest city are prime examples. In the early days, my colleagues and I wrote about the chaos that was violently unfolding amid one of the largest immigrant populations in the U.S., the legalities of the efforts, the administration's justifications and Democrats' opposition.

In the midst of an avalanche of breaking news, I heard about a veteran who had self-deported to South Korea.

Sae Joon Park legally immigrated when he was 7 years old and grew up in Los Angeles, becoming part of Southern California's skateboarding and surfing scene in the 1980s.

After graduating from high school, Park joined the Army and was deployed to Panama in 1989 as the U.S. tried to depose the nation's de facto leader, General Manuel Noriega. Park was shot twice, honorably discharged and awarded a Purple Heart.

Park said he spiraled into addiction as he sought to self-medicate his PTSD, leading to drug convictions and prison time. He eventually sobered up, moved to Hawaii and raised



Seema covering the 2016 Republican Convention in Cleveland, Ohio.

two children. Every year, Park was required to check in with federal officials and show that he was employed and sober.

During his most recent check-in, Park was about to be detained and deported, but immigration agents placed an ankle monitor on him and gave him three weeks to get his affairs in order and self-deport. He is not allowed to return to the United States for 10 years. He worries he will miss his mother's passing and his daughter's wedding.

I spoke with him two days after he left the United States. He remains in South Korea.

Park's saga is not uplifting. But it is a reminder of the importance of our work and motivation to keep doing it, to show the real-world impacts of decisions being made in the halls of power. People are willing to speak to us during the most harrowing moments of their lives, and we are privileged to be able to share their stories.



Game over? Not a chance.

By Margaret Low

Margaret is CEO of WBUR in Boston and serves on the Wallace House advisory board.

For those of us in public media, it is most definitely *game on*. At WBUR, we declared as much in a full-page ad we ran in the Sports section of The Boston Globe earlier this fall — paid for by trade, of course!

Massive cuts to federal funding for public media amount to a loss of at least \$1.6 million for our station, this year and in the years ahead.

It's a real blow and we're already feeling it. We've always gotten half our federal dollars in October. That check didn't come this year. There will be stations across the country that will shutter and many public media organizations will have to downsize. In some communities, people will be left without a single source of trustworthy news.

But I love the energy and the competitive spirit in that ad. As journalists, we'll continue to do our work without fear or favor. No matter what is happening to us. It's our job to understand and reflect the real concerns of people in this country with reporting that is fact-based and impartial. Reporting that goes beneath the surface to cover the most consequential issues with rigor, boundless curiosity and respect.

Boston is my hometown, and having lived in many American cities, I know it's a very special place. I want us to show the rest of the country that we're united in our belief that independent journalism makes a difference for our community and for our country.

We serve so many people who trust us to tell the truth and to tell it well. That includes more than 7 million people across the country who listen to our two national shows every week — "Here & Now" and "On Point." People who hear us on the radio, visit WBUR.org, subscribe to our newsletters and podcasts, and those who come to WBUR's CitySpace for all the wonderful events we produce.



This is an extraordinary time to be documenting what's happening in our city and our country. Things are moving so quickly and we get to capture what it means to people in the middle of it — the real impact of the Trump administration's policies. Like our reporter Martha Bebinger, who profiled a mother in New Hampshire trying to figure out how she'll get puberty-blocking hormones for her kid. Or the story Simón Ríos reported about a man who was brought to this country as a baby from a Thai refugee camp. His family had escaped the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia, and now he's seeking asylum because ICE wants to send him to Cambodia — a place he doesn't know at all.

With all these critical stories to tell, I honestly believe we're made for this moment. I have lots of optimism left in the tank, plenty of steel and stamina and a relentless belief in the importance of the work we do. My colleagues and I feel a profound sense of purpose. We're at a perilous moment for journalism. It's a moment that demands the very best of us.

Never let a good challenge go to waste

By Thomas Zurbuchen

Thomas served as NASA's head of science from 2016 to 2022. He is now a professor and director of ETH Zurich | Space in Switzerland. He previously served on the Knight-Wallace advisory board.

It was June of 2022, and I was in a windowless room at the Space Telescope Science Institute near Baltimore with a handful of people who, like me, shared responsibility for running the world's biggest, newest space telescope. The instrument had started working a few months earlier, after it completed a sequence of deployment maneuvers that seemed miraculous to anyone who understood the complexity of the operations.

The moment seemed to dilate time. A handful of stars spangled the foreground and behind them: near cosmic infinity. Thousands of galaxies studded an inky celestial well, a gathering of shapes and colors contained within a patch of space no bigger than a dust grain on an outstretched hand.

The photons from those galaxies had traveled through the universe at the speed of light for many billions of years before they collided with this new eye in the sky — our ultimate miracle mission, the James Webb Space Telescope.

Three years later, the dreams and aspirations surrounding that mission have been obscured by nightmares and worries. NASA's science portfolio is facing its steepest cuts in decades. The proposed cuts in science for 2026 are 47% of the current budget with an overall proposed budget reduction from the current \$1.5 billion to \$487 million in 2026, the largest reduction in NASA history. The cuts would terminate 19 active science missions, including New Horizons, which has been exploring space beyond Pluto for nearly 20 years, plus a host of missions exploring Earth and all new astrophysics missions currently in development.

In response, I joined with the six other living former NASA heads of science in a joint letter to Congress opposing the cuts. It read in part:

"As former associate administrators responsible for managing NASA's science activities, we know firsthand the incredible talent and capability that our country has built and sustained in the space sciences and engineering over nearly seven decades, and the severe consequences such an indiscriminate cut would impose on the extraordinary U.S. accomplishments and future initiatives."

Never let a good challenge go to waste.

For this, and every other challenge we face, we must redirect our anxieties. How can we turn our current challenges into long-term strength? I have two observations that may help us move forward.

First, in times of geopolitical stress, astrophysics can look like a luxury. After public lectures, I am often asked: Why fund space science when people struggle to meet basic needs? My answer is simple: History shows that cutting fundamental science means losing out on the technologies and industries that drive growth, security and resilience. Science is about unlocking opportunities for tomorrow and solving problems we don't even know yet.



Second, big science depends on unsung heroes. Every Webb image rests on decades of effort by instrument builders, engineers, project scientists and managers who solved the hardest problems long before the first data arrived. Yet our system mainly rewards those who publish results, not those who build the tools that make discovery possible. That imbalance must change for the community to be healthy and prosperous.

Now is the time to act. We must step out of our academic bubble and engage policymakers, industry and the public with a broader message: not just about wonder, but about the tools and capabilities that keep nations secure and economies strong. And within our own community, we must value not only the visionaries but also the builders. The future depends on both.

This lesson is not unique to science. During my time on the board of the Knight-Wallace Fellowships, I saw how journalism too is navigating crises of trust and sustainability. In times of polarization, journalists have been cast as "enemies of the people," and within the profession, attention often gravitates to big investigations at major outlets, while essential local and community journalism struggles to survive. Like science, journalism must both engage broader communities and confront its own feedback loops that can undervalue crucial, less visible work.

Astrophysics and journalism may seem far apart, but they share this truth: moments of challenge are also moments of opportunity. If we recognize and support not just the headline-makers but also the builders — whether they are telescope engineers or local reporters — we create resilience. And from resilience comes the possibility of renewal and of new opportunities.



Bending without breaking: resilience in academia

By Celeste Watkins-Hayes

Celeste is the Joan and Sanford Weill Dean at the University of Michigan Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy and serves on the Wallace House advisory board.

Last spring, as with every spring before it, my academic year culminated in commencement activities. Yet this year felt distinctly different. The familiar feeling of joy and pride was present, but it was accompanied by a palpable anxiety among our graduates, many confronting the uncertainties of a rapidly shifting policy landscape and a volatile labor market. Their questions leading up to graduation — about the role of public service, the diminished value of evidence-based policy solutions, and the seemingly intractable social problems they would face — were immediate and pressing.

In my remarks, echoed by Michigan Senator Elissa Slotkin in her keynote address, I emphasized the enduring value of resilience: the ability to bend without breaking, to navigate uncertainty with courage, and to approach the future with deliberate preparation and commitment to public service. The moment reminded me that resilience is essential not only for individuals stepping into their careers but also for the institutions that cultivate and sustain them.

Resilience has long been an animating force among colleges and universities, shaping not only their survival but their ability to thrive in the face of precarity. Many schools have historically navigated scarcity, systemic inequities across institutions and shifting societal expectations with creativity, determination and strategic foresight. Today, the landscape of higher education challenges even the most established and well-resourced universities. Recent federal lawsuits against Ivy League institutions, alongside sweeping cuts to critical research funding — including programs supporting lifesaving innovations — highlight the precarity of academic enterprises once assumed to be impervious.

Broadly, resilience can be understood in two interrelated ways. The first is toughness: the ability of groups or communities to cope with external stresses and disturbances (Neil, 2000), holding firm in the face of challenge. The second, drawn from material sciences,

is elasticity: the capacity to absorb energy when deformed and release it upon unloading, emphasizing adaptability — the ability to bend and pivot when circumstances demand, returning stronger or in a reimagined form (Campbell, 2008).

While these qualities may seem paradoxical — holding steady versus bending — they are mutually reinforcing, together enabling universities to navigate financial uncertainty and shifting political demands.

Resilient institutions pivot strategically, aligning initiatives with mission-critical objectives and focusing energy on what is foundational rather than desirable. Teaching remains a core purpose; providing access to students, particularly those from underserved backgrounds, is one of the most profound ways universities exercise public impact. At the same time, universities are bastions of innovation, anticipating societal needs while stewarding finite resources. Leaders must act as strategic investors and careful fiscal managers, making wise cuts while also making bold investments that seed the future of scholarship, public service and social transformation. This dual role requires discernment, courage and a willingness to embrace uncertainty.

It also demands cultural and moral commitment. When this academic year draws to a close, I anticipate offering similar reflections to our 2026 graduates — reminding them, as I did with our 2025 graduates, of the enduring importance of resilience, courage and purpose. In the meantime, I draw hope and energy from my students and colleagues, just as I have each fall, finding inspiration in their curiosity, dedication and unwavering commitment to the public good. Indeed, it is through this ongoing exchange — between the hopes and ambitions our students carry and the guidance and support of our institutions — that the future of higher education, and of public service, is continually forged.

The future of our profession: student journalism

By Samantha Henry '15

Samantha is editor of Nieman Reports, the flagship publication of the Nieman Foundation for Journalism at Harvard.

The Nieman Foundation for Journalism at Harvard — where I came to work following my Knight-Wallace Fellowship year — currently occupies multiple rings on the Trump administration's bullseye: We're a media organization, host to international journalists on U.S. visas and at the heart of the Ivy League.

Setting aside the very real consequences that President Donald Trump's actions have had on the university, from a media perspective, it often feels like a battle over who gets to control the narrative. Some outlets echo the administration's talking points: insisting the campus is rife with antisemitism and an unsafe environment for those who disagree with the liberal worldview. Others label Harvard heroic for pushing back against the administration's demands and view it as a symbol of strength in the face of relentless assault.

But the "heroic Harvard" narrative does not neatly accommodate the concessions the university has made — and may still make — nor does it account for the way Harvard's leadership largely stayed silent as the university's first Black woman president was fed to the congressional wolves.

The reality — as we should always try to emphasize in journalism — is much more complex and nuanced than the hero-villain narrative allows.

However, there is one sector of the media that has largely resisted these oversimplifications, and it gives me hope for



Samantha, wearing her Wallace House swag, standing in front of Walter Lippmann House, home of the Nieman Foundation.

PHOTO CREDIT: PETER CANOVA

the future of our profession: student journalism. Whether at The Harvard Crimson or outlets across the country that attend Nieman's annual student journalism conference, many have been covering developments on their campuses with nuance, bravery in the face of intimidation and an ongoing commitment to platforming a wide range of perspectives.

For example, when an international student at nearby Tufts University was forcibly detained by masked immigration agents — ostensibly for having contributed to an op-ed in the school's newspaper — The Crimson and other student outlets quickly published editorials in support of their student media colleagues.

"If publishing an op-ed can land a student in a detention center, then the freedoms of the press and speech are not just under threat — they are collapsing," The Crimson's editorial read, before urging its own university to take a stand. "In a world where an op-ed is grounds for deportation, democracy dies a silent death. Harvard must ensure it does not go quietly with it."

"If publishing an op-ed can land a student in a detention center, then the freedoms of the press and speech are not just under threat — they are collapsing."

Unexpected hope

By Christopher Baxter '16

Chris is CEO/president and founding editor of Spotlight PA, a nonpartisan, nonprofit newsroom producing investigative and public-service journalism for Pennsylvania. He received the 2014 Livingston Award for local reporting.



As I crisscross Pennsylvania, from the steel towns of the Mon Valley to the farm fields of Lancaster County, I encounter the same refrain: “We don’t know who to trust anymore.” The collapse of local news has left entire communities in information deserts.

National media feels increasingly disconnected from their daily realities, and the volume of social media is dialed so high that it’s easier to tune out the news than to find your way through.

Yet in these conversations — honest, sometimes uncomfortable exchanges about news, trust, the Constitution and our free society — I find unexpected hope.

When Spotlight PA launched in 2019, we made a radical bet: that rigorous, independent, nonprofit journalism could break through the noise. That in our communities, readers of varying political stripes hungered for reporting grounded in facts, not ideology. That transparency and accountability still mattered, even in an era of declining trust in institutions.

I’ve spoken to an entire room of Republicans cheering President Donald Trump’s second election, groups of Democrats looking for meaningful ways to raise alarm, and countless folks across this state who care less about politics and more about what’s best for their community.

And at every turn, Spotlight PA’s mission to produce truly independent, unbiased journalism is met with cheers. Why? Because the beauty of truly nonpartisan reporting is that it’s both nonpartisan and bipartisan — working in service to all people, wherever the truth leads.

But we are at a precarious moment. One of the greatest antidotes to our partisan times — independent local reporting — is in severe financial distress and requires greater investment from all of us.

This moment is not about Spotlight PA or any single news organization or journalist. It’s not even about journalism or the news industry itself. It’s about a free society, which depends on the free flow of information grounded in truth and reality.

If we lose that, we lose everything.

I recently had lunch with a staunch, pro-Trump Republican and highly successful business leader. We started with national politics, and it was sharply partisan. He criticized recent national media reporting as “psyops” and he made clear he supports the president and his policies.

But when we moved the conversation to his local community, the partisanship faded. He talked about working together for the good of all, seeking bipartisan input and creating forums for discussion. And we agreed that trusted, unbiased local news was essential.

Preserving knowledge

By Laura Santhanam '25

Laura is health editor at Mississippi Today.

For days after this year’s presidential inauguration, I stepped away from each interview I conducted with data archivists, librarians, legal experts, health researchers and political scientists feeling like I had attended a funeral. Federal datasets were disappearing from government websites — the kind of information that makes most people’s eyes glaze over, but that has provided evidence documenting the realities of climate change, health disparities, racial and gender inequities, for years, if not decades.



As a journalist who covers health, science and medicine, these data gave strength and purpose to the anecdotes my reporting uncovered, elevating individual stories and giving them context.

It helped that people passionate about preserving knowledge were scrambling to save datasets before they were digitally set ablaze, like a modern-day burning of the Library of Alexandria. Without those data, anyone with the loudest microphone — and the most power — could more easily level baseless assertions about vaccine science, rising sea levels or the economy.

A week after my Knight-Wallace Fellowship ended, I participated in a panel discussion hosted by the U-M Center

Nurturing innovation, adaptability and purpose

By Hayes Ferguson '99

Hayes is a clinical professor and director of the Farley Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation at Northwestern University.

As Northwestern University navigates steep cuts in federal funding and other financial challenges, the Farley Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation is more committed than ever to practicing what we teach: embracing flexibility, resilience and creative problem-solving.

We paused our Bay Area Quarter, in which undergraduates spend two months in San Francisco, immersed in startup and Big Tech culture. While it’s disappointing not to offer the popular program this year, it’s prompted us to focus more on innovation happening elsewhere, including in our own backyard.

This winter, we are launching a new class featuring leaders from early-stage companies and global enterprises that are harnessing artificial intelligence to transform their industries. Notable guest speakers include an executive from Chicago-based Tempus, which is applying AI in precision medicine for cancer care, as well as a representative from United Airlines, who will discuss leveraging AI for predictive maintenance, baggage tracking and more.

We continue to offer our acclaimed NUvention classes, where cross-disciplinary student teams seek to solve problems in a range of industries, from media to health care. Among the NUvention class projects that have turned into real-world ventures is Lilac, which has raised \$300 million to develop lithium extraction technology to power clean energy.



Alumni are stepping up to offer support. One donor is interested in catalyzing tech innovation in journalism, which of course is close to my heart. As a result, we’re exploring an initiative that would enhance the work we already do with the Medill School of Journalism.

Students are engaging not only to tackle complex world challenges, but also to prepare themselves for the rapidly changing job market in which the kinds of roles our graduates have typically landed — in consulting, banking, you name it — are increasingly hard to find, and far from secure. Launching a new business today therefore seems less risky, relatively speaking. And that’s good for innovation.

I am inspired by our students’ determination to learn not just how to succeed as individuals, but how to make a difference more broadly. As we persevere through uncertain times, there is reason for optimism: by nurturing innovation, adaptability and purpose, we are preparing the next generation to thrive, no matter what the future holds.

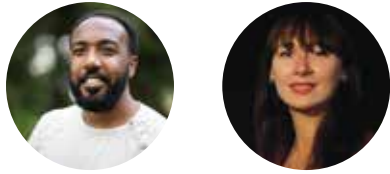
for Political Studies. By then, volunteer data rescuers were finding lost datasets. Many that resurfaced had been compromised. Variables had been stripped away that had once recorded racial and gender diversity of respondents.

Organizers booked a room at the U-M Institute for Social Research, assuming a couple dozen people would trickle in. The room filled to capacity with more than 80 people, with a few dozen more on Zoom. It was an inspiring act of collective will.

One of the gifts of the fellowship is the ability to meet and work with faculty. Josh Pasek, a political scientist who explores the intersection of politics, communication and misinformation, was on the panel with me, and he is passionate about steering efforts to save data and understand how to measure the truth going forward.

In June, the two of us traveled to the University of Southern California to share what we had learned with journalists in the Center for Health Journalism. Reporters in the program’s National Fellowship had launched six-month investigations into complicated health issues affecting their communities, and many hoped to rely on data to demonstrate their findings.

Josh and I shared strategies they could use as researchers and storytellers. We urged them to weave caveats that acknowledged the mishandled data, or where data was no longer being collected. We encouraged transparency with their newsrooms and audiences about what has been lost. We also stressed to this roomful of eager journalists that their reporting was more important than ever. At a time when our records are at risk, fearless reporting may be our one hope for shining a light on our world and the decisions that shape it.



Training newsrooms to serve immigrant communities

By Mazin Sidahmed '21
and Maria Arce '23

Mazin is co-founder of Documented, a nonprofit newsroom that focuses on reporting with and for immigrant communities.

Maria recently joined Documented as a program manager, leading national training and capacity-building work.

Documented is known for approaching immigrants through a circular journalism model. Rather than reporting on or about immigrant communities in New York City, we start by listening to and understanding their needs — an ongoing process that drives the entire editorial wheel. After receiving more than 100 requests from newsrooms nationwide wanting to learn about our approach, Documented thought it was time to start a training program.

Although conceived years earlier, the launch of our training program coincided with the recent ramp-up in targeting immigrant communities around the country. As a result, newsrooms are scrambling to cover changing policies and also connect with impacted communities.

We believe that the traditional linear journalism approach, in which reporters and editors decide what their audiences want, is obsolete. It is especially limiting when covering immigrant communities, because most reporters and editors making decisions hold a passport or work visa and have no experience with the critical concerns of the people they are covering.

We want to help journalists represent immigrants fairly, free from stereotypes and oversimplifications, providing journalism that helps them make informed decisions.

We believe that the traditional linear journalism approach, in which reporters and editors decide what their audiences want, is obsolete.

Last March, Carlos, a community member in New York, reached out with an urgent question: “Is it safe to attend my court hearing?” His friends warned him not to go, and his consulate offered no clear guidance.

We published an explainer on the consequences of missing court and an investigation, incorporating Carlos’ situation and expert sources. We made clear that we are not legal advisors or advocates. But pursuing a full and nuanced answer to Carlos’ question allowed us to address the needs of many immigrants like him.

The circular model’s success depends not on merely recruiting bilingual talent but also on partnering with bicultural thinkers who are part of immigrant communities and are trusted by them. At Documented, we employ a trusted community correspondent, and it was this person that Carlos shared his question with. This approach demands daily persistence, with trust as the bridge that enables us to provide the information our audience needs. It also calls for redefining roles and updating workflows to embed the circular model throughout the entire reporting process.

We are hopeful that newsrooms will step up and work with us to reimagine their approach and presence in people’s lives and neighborhoods, and that in doing so, both journalism and the communities they serve will emerge stronger.

Defunded, but not defeated

By Peggy Lowe '09

Peggy is an investigative reporter based at KCUR in Kansas City.

My time in the Knight-Wallace Fellowship, as it was designed to do, helped me write my second act. After years at a wire service and newspapers in Colorado and California, I decided during my 2008-2009 academic year at the University of Michigan to return to the Midwest, where I grew up, and move into public media. I wanted to trade the downward, depressing slide of newspapers

public media had stepped up while traditional print media was running away. Public media committed to creating new models to fill the geographic gaps, hiring more reporters and covering the middle of the country for national audiences.

Harvest has become a mighty force, now fueled by the connection of 23 stations, serving as a model for other reporting collaborations, such as the Kansas News Service and NPR’s Midwest Newsroom, both of which are based at KCUR.



But since the defunding of CPB, all of this reporting from the middle of America is in jeopardy. And that’s a shame. A listener who recently started donating to KCUR urged others to join him, saying our reporters showed up when other outlets failed to, and that the depth and accuracy of the reporting is “unmatched.”

“I get to hear interviews not just from local public officials I like, but also a lot who I disagree with, and always with fair but challenging questions,” the new donor wrote. “We need a lot more of that in society.”

While KCUR will be fine, thanks mostly to our generous hometown, many smaller stations that relied on the federal funding will close, diluting these well-built collaborations and

drying up this much-needed coverage from reporting deserts.

In spite of the crisis, I know public media will remain a force. Funders are coming forward, new business models are being built, and in the meantime, we continue to cover our communities with gusto. I remain committed to the goals I created as a Knight-Wallace Fellow — most importantly, doing investigative reporting on local issues with a focus on social justice. And I choose to believe what has become a mantra at KCUR: “Defunded, but not defeated.”

for the hope and growth I saw at NPR and its emerging collaborations.

I landed at Harvest Public Media, which was then just six Midwest stations based at KCUR in Kansas City and among the first regional collaborations launched with funding from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB). I helped build a startup focused on covering the changing world of food production, energy and climate change, health determinants and rural life.

What I didn’t anticipate was that my new job would land me at ground zero on the map of media deserts — those vast spaces where fewer and fewer communities were being covered with daily news. I was proud as hell that



Building trust through community collaborations

By Amy Maestas '17

Amy is director of the Collaborative Journalism Resource Hub at Montclair State University.

I'm motivated and inspired by the ongoing evolution of journalism in all ways, but especially collaborative journalism. At the Collaborative Journalism Resource Hub, where I am director, we are building on the success of journalism collaboratives in the United States. In the last six years, I've helped catalyze and support journalism collaboratives of varying sizes and in a variety of places. During my Knight-Wallace Fellowship, I studied how to inspire and lead innovation in news organizations amid constant disruption.

When collaboratives work, they can achieve what no single news organization could do alone. They include community and civic organizations in their work, which expands the reach of their journalism, fills gaps in coverage, builds trust and delivers storytelling in innovative ways.

In Dallas, a choral ensemble writes and performs songs based on Dallas Media Collaborative's stories about housing affordability and equity. In Wichita, collaborative partners host community fairs that include organizations focused on youth mental health. In Salt Lake City, young

people are creating zines to educate their peers about the shrinking Great Salt Lake — work led by the Great Salt Lake Collaborative. In fact, that same collaborative used their journalism to develop an education curriculum for fifth-grade public school students.

These examples illustrate how journalism collaboratives can orient around the needs of their communities and create a community-first value system. They contribute to the evolution of local information ecosystems; their journalism becomes more accessible and better represents people's lived experiences. When community members begin to see themselves reflected in local media, they often develop a sense of agency and are motivated to take action — and with it, often come changes in their attitudes toward local journalism.

In collaboratives, news organizations are no longer doing business as usual; they have adopted a mindset that lets go of traditional journalistic paradigms. They are building resiliency and the capacity to adapt to change and disruption. They have moved past the well-worn storylines about "resource-strapped" newsrooms or stories about how one ingenious person came to the rescue after the closure of a news organization.

These successes have not been easy. Working together productively and authentically is difficult. Being sustainable is even harder. But the list of journalism collaboratives is expanding, and the resources to support them are building. The Hub was just launched in January, but I believe we were created specifically for this moment.

News deserts and fewer watchdogs

By Tracy Jan '15

Tracy is a senior editor for ProPublica's Local Reporting Network, where she partners with local news outlets on investigative projects.

Headlines about the state of local journalism are bleak.

More than 3,000 newspapers have folded in the last 20 years. Of those that remain, private equity firms have stripped many of their investigative firepower. The number of news deserts is growing.

The result? Less-informed voters and taxpayers, and fewer professional watchdogs reporting on city councils, school

boards and state governments, scrutinizing power and uncovering malfeasance.

Those stakes have driven me to return to local journalism, where I began my career more than two decades ago covering the county courthouse and the sheriff's department at The Oregonian. I spent the last 13 years as a national reporter and editor for The Boston Globe and The Washington Post. When ProPublica offered me the opportunity to collaborate with local news outlets on investigative stories as a senior editor for our Local Reporting Network, I saw no more urgent mission.



Defending the right to report

By Kunāl Majumder '25

Kunāl is Asia-Pacific program coordinator for the Committee to Protect Journalists.



In April, as my fellowship ended, I felt an urgency to return to work. In my cohort of 18 Knight-Wallace Fellows, most of my peers were reporters, editors and producers. I was somewhat of an outlier, working on press freedom and the safety of journalists. That distinction itself reflects how the profession is changing: defending the right to report has become as urgent as reporting itself.

During the academic year that I spent at the University of Michigan, the global press freedom crisis only grew sharper. A record number of journalists were killed in 2024 — 125 by the Committee to Protect Journalists' (CPJ) count, most of that number driven by journalists targeted in Gaza. Last year was the deadliest year since CPJ began keeping track more than three decades ago.

Journalists today can no longer take their rights or safety for granted — not only in authoritarian countries or conflict zones, but even in democracies like my own India, or the United States.

In India, press freedom is under sustained pressure. Journalists face criminalization, misuse of security laws, and police investigations designed to intimidate them. Media capture has become a reality. Spyware and digital censorship, particularly on social media, add new layers of surveillance and silencing. Although fewer journalists are currently in jail compared with previous years, many continue to face criminal charges. The

harassment does not end with being released from prison, and the struggle to clear one's name is exhausting and unending.

The role of the United States in upholding free speech and press freedom has always been crucial. Yet in recent years, successive administrations have prioritized security and trade over democratic values. In 2024, journalists in the U.S. were arrested or detained at least 48 times. This year, the threats have grown even sharper, with incidents such as the arrest and deportation of reporter Mario Guevara; the visa cancellation of student journalist Rümeyşa Öztürk for writing an op-ed; multimillion-dollar media settlements that encourage self-censorship; and the shutdown of Voice of America and Radio Free Asia.

As I said in a TEDx talk during my fellowship, press freedom lies at the heart of all democratic freedoms. Attacks on journalists mark a democratic decline and rising authoritarianism, often justified under security or other pretexts. In India, for instance, anti-terror laws have been misused to try to jail journalists, including 2023 Knight-Wallace Fellow Masrat Zahra, who faced prison time for her reporting from Indian-administered Kashmir. She is currently in exile in the U.S.

At CPJ, my work revolves around documenting attacks, pressing for accountability and assisting those under threat. Safety training has also become central to this mission. During my Knight-Wallace Fellowship, I developed an augmented reality prototype with my fellowship classmate, Katie O'Brien, to help prepare journalists for hostile environments. The idea came from recognizing that risks to safety are no longer limited to conflict zones. The fellowship gave me space to imagine solutions. The world I return to demands action.

Since January, I have worked with reporters and editors from legacy publications like The Salt Lake Tribune and the Bangor Daily News, as well as nonprofit newcomers including MLK50 in Memphis, The Current in Savannah, Verite News in New Orleans and The Frontier in Oklahoma. We've examined how the nation's only Medicaid work requirement program is failing Georgians, how criminal justice laws championed by Louisiana Governor Jeff Landry are keeping people in prison longer, and how government programs meant to help low-income renters and homeowners contribute to Maine's homelessness crisis.

One of my favorite parts of the job is visiting reporters and their newsrooms to better understand their communities and the nuances of the issues they will be spending a year covering. I've listened to whistleblowers recount the

failures of Oklahoma's oil and gas regulators and toured oil fields to witness the resulting environmental damage. These reporting trips have made me a more effective editor, fueling questions that have helped the reporters sharpen their reporting goals and think even more ambitiously.

Visiting our partner newsrooms has also given me a fuller understanding of the new media landscape. There is promise in the startups that have sprung up to fill the holes left by shrinking or shuttered legacy papers.

Our partnership model demonstrates that the future of local news is stronger when we work together.

And so is our democracy.

We will not retreat

By Gerard Ryle '06

Gerard is executive director of the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists, which produced the Panama Papers, Paradise Papers and Pandora Papers.

I used to think the hardest part of journalism was prying loose facts others worked hard to conceal. And it is hard — buried documents, money routed through endless, shady paths, lawyers hired to bury the trail and corporate filings engineered to confuse. But over time, I've learned there's another challenge just as steep: getting the resources to do the work.

Around the world, journalism is shrinking at the moment we need it most. When budgets are slashed, investigative reporting, which takes the longest and costs the most to produce, is the first to go.

At the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists (ICIJ), we feel these pressures all the time. We've had to stretch every dollar further and dip into our reserves. But we've made a deliberate choice: We will not retreat. And we're finding ways to do more.

We see ICIJ not just as a newsroom but as part of a larger media ecosystem. And when that ecosystem is under strain, our responsibility is to strengthen it, not pull back. Even in these lean times, we've doubled down to help others survive.

We continue sharing the technology we built to handle massive data leaks. We resist the lone-wolf style of journalism by offering scoops to small newsrooms without the resources to find them on their own. And we keep training reporters so they can carry out this kind of work in their own countries and languages.

Just this year, we trained hundreds of journalists, from Argentina to Zimbabwe, on the secure, collaborative methods we created. The training took many forms: individual mentoring, small group seminars, onboarding sessions for new partners, full-semester courses at Dortmund University in Germany and presentations at major industry gatherings.

Strengthening other newsrooms fortifies the ecosystem. It's how we make sure investigative journalism can weather financial strain, adapt to new challenges, withstand political pressure and remain a force for accountability wherever it's practiced.

If this way of working sounds familiar, it should. It's the model we used a decade ago when the Pulitzer Prize-winning Panama Papers showed the world what happens when collaboration meets secrecy head-on. We brought together 376 journalists from 70 countries to produce the

biggest journalistic investigation the world had ever seen. Every project since — from 2017's Paradise Papers to this year's China Targets — was built on this foundation, evolving to take on ever more complex forms of secrecy.

The model we've built ensures no single government or institution can suppress the story.

Three factors keep this work going: the courage of whistleblowers who share information with us despite the risks; the grit of journalists who won't stop digging; and our belief that reporters working together can withstand forces working against transparency.



Our investigations led to the ousting of four world leaders and changed laws in more than 70 countries. They helped governments claw back billions in taxes and exposed hidden wealth on a scale the world had never seen. Along the way, we built a new model of journalism that others are now using, too.

The path to that impact runs through Wallace House. My fellowship in 2005-2006 provided the rare gift of time to think differently about how journalism could be done. I came to see that while traditional journalism has its place, collaboration across borders was needed to tell the biggest, most consequential stories.

Charles Eisendrath put my conviction to the test just a few years later with an invitation to apply to lead ICIJ. Charles was director of Wallace House and on the board of the Center for Public Integrity, which ICIJ was part of at the time. That call was a turning point, not just for me, but for the new model of journalism ICIJ would come to pioneer.

I've seen what happens when the truth gets out. Leaders step down. Loopholes close. And citizens are reminded of how free societies are supposed to work. The test now is whether we can equip the next generation to carry this torch and keep the truth alive.



Choosing civility

By Stephen Henderson

Stephen is founder and executive advisor to BridgeDetroit, and hosts "American Black Journal" on Detroit Public Television. He has served as a judge for the Livingston Awards since 2015.

We're definitely, assuredly, an unlikely pair.

Nolan Finley is a white conservative from the coal and tobacco fields of Kentucky and, since 1998, the editor of The Detroit News editorial page. I'm an African American liberal from Detroit, the nation's most industrial big city, and, when we met, I was leading the editorial page at the Detroit Free Press. People delighted in getting us together — on stage, on air, at dinners — just to watch us fight. Politics, culture, race, class — you name the subject and there is likely a conflict between us.

But for more than 18 years, we've also indulged an exploration of across-the-divide exchanges that are both rare and instructive. In talking about our lives, work, families, hopes and aspirations, we've gotten to know each other. We've done the work to understand where our bitterly disparate takes on issues came from. Most importantly, we've come to draw value from our disagreements — for what they tell us about each other and our perspectives, and what they tell us about ourselves.

In so many circles and on so many platforms now, Americans talk at each other and about each other — a take-no-prisoners verbal combat designed to obliterate those who see the world

differently. Five years ago, a Pew Research survey found that nearly 70% of Americans had no consistent interaction with someone who held opposite political views. Imagine what that number is today.

On this landscape, Nolan and I partnered on a project, "The Civility Book," which was released this spring. In it, we try to explain how, over nearly two decades, we've carved a different path. We avoid assumptions about each other. We set reasonable expectations about our encounters, we listen — really listen — to each other, and commit to staying in our prolonged dialogue, no matter how painful that might be.

We still argue, and even fight. After the 2024 election, we got into a row over immigration during a television taping. The argument got loud and had to be broken up by producers, who decided it was too awful to be aired. Nolan and I had a bit of a cooling-off period; I think we probably didn't talk for the next week or so. But we also don't let those moments define us or rip us from the work it takes to maintain a consistent dialogue. Soon enough, we were back at our civility work and back to doing other things together as part of our friendship.

In some ways, we aren't proposing anything more complicated than what any of us were taught in kindergarten. But in America today, it's elusive and even frowned upon. Civility is often viewed as capitulation or weakness, rather than a key to individual and collective strength.

We can do better.

Nolan and I, despite our differences, are proof.

STAY CONNECTED

Rising together: join our alumni community

With more than 900 Knight-Wallace Fellowship alumni, 180 Livingston Award winners and an esteemed network of board members, Livingston Award judges and Wallace House donors, you're a part of a vibrant community rising to meet today's challenges.

Join our private LinkedIn group to connect with this incredible network, share job opportunities, and showcase the important work you're doing.

Have news to share across platforms?

Wallace House is also on Instagram, Bluesky, Threads and Facebook. Connect with us on your favorite social media platform.



Log in to LinkedIn, then scan the QR code to join our alumni community.

ALUMNI UPDATE



Teresa Albor '94
Awarded the Aga Khan Award for Architecture, an international award given every three years to projects that set new standards of excellence in architecture, planning practices, historic preservation and landscape architecture.



Deborah Caldwell '94
Joined the 2025 Media Transformation Challenge, a Poynter Institute Executive Fellowship, where she is focused on building a sustainable future for Religion News Service (RNS).



Amber Hunt '11
Co-founded Grab Bag Collab, an egalitarian podcasting network.



Sarah E.T. Robbins '12
Returned to NPR as supervising editor for "All Things Considered."



Alberto Arce '18
Named editor-in-chief at Revista 5W, an independent Spanish-language narrative journalism and photography magazine.



Sylvia Colombo '14
Named columnist for Folha de São Paulo.



Rona Kobell '09
Joined The Baltimore Banner as their regional reporter.



J. Wynn Rousuck '80
Received the Dog Writers Association of America award for Best Book in the Fiction, Adult or Humor category for her novel "Please Write: A Novel in Letters."



Christopher Baxter '16
Honored as the 2025 News Media Industry Executive of the Year in Pennsylvania, as chosen by fellow media executives across the Commonwealth.



J. Lester Feder '21
Awarded an Excellence in Journalism Award by NLGJA, the association of LGBTQ+ journalists, for an essay published in The New York Times.



Arno Kopecky '17
Named national affairs correspondent for Canada's National Observer.



Angela Shah '07
Joined Houlihan Lokey as editorial lead for internal communications.



Michelle Bloom '19
Named senior marketing manager at the Digital Assets Council of Financial Professionals and The Truth About Your Future with Ric Edelman.



Sonya Nichole Green '17
Promoted within CBS News and Stations to assistant news director at CBS News Atlanta.



Michael Luongo '16
Selected for the Federal Boren Fellowship, where he will examine tourism redevelopment in the context of conflict and the role of travel media.



Delece Smith-Barrow '17
Named deputy health editor at Politico.



Leyla Boulton '95
Elected councillor for the City of London, while continuing to work at The Financial Times.



Samantha Henry '15
Named the editor of Nieman Reports, the flagship publication of the Nieman Foundation for Journalism at Harvard.



Harris Meyer '91
Won an excellence award from the Association of Health Care Journalists.



Nicholas St. Fleur '21
Named digital science editor at National Geographic. In his new role, he worked with Erika Hayasaki '22 as editor on her story about two NatGeo explorers' search for Cleopatra's tomb.



Maria Byrne '20
Joined The New York Times as a senior producer for "The Daily" news podcast. Previously, Byrne worked at The Wall Street Journal, where she and Kate Linebaugh '08 won the 2025 New York Press Club award for best podcast, "The Missing Minister."



Alfred Hermida '05
Awarded a 2024 Killam Faculty Research Prize by the University of British Columbia.



Simon Ostrovsky '22
Won the 2025 Religion News Association Award.



James Thomas '11
Named visual editor on the national desk at The New York Times. His Times article on skate culture was selected for The Year's Best Sports Writing 2025 anthology.



Donovan Hohn '13
Named acting editor of Lapham's Quarterly, leading the relaunch of the magazine's website and podcast.



Michelle Genece Patterson '02
Named executive consultant and producer at MindFire Productions.



Tim Wendel '96
Won the W.Y. Boyd Award for historical fiction from the American Library Association for his novel "Rebel Falls."



Sam Hudzik '13
Joined Community Legal Aid as an attorney representing tenants in Massachusetts Housing Court.



Josh Raab '24
Named senior manager at Google, leading social strategy for Google Chrome, Android and Google Play.

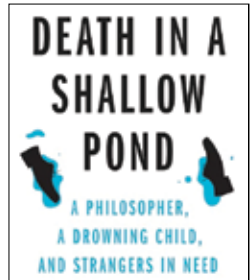


Katie Zezima '12
Joined The Atlantic as a senior editor after 11 years at The Washington Post.

ALUMNI SHOWCASE

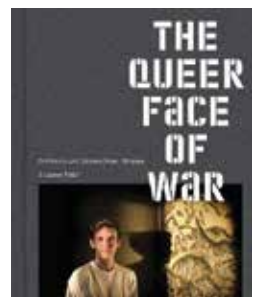
Discover the latest books, documentaries, music and podcasts from our Knight-Wallace alumni.

BOOKS



By David Edmonds '02
"Death in a Shallow Pond: A Philosopher, a Drowning Child, and Strangers in Need" is a fascinating account of Peter Singer's controversial "drowning child" thought experiment — and how it changed the way people think about charitable giving.

Published in September 2025



By J. Lester Feder '21
"The Queer Face of War: Portraits and Stories from Ukraine" is a collection of portraits and profiles capturing the many ways queer people can be vulnerable in armed conflict — and the many ways they feel especially called to fight.

Will be released in February 2026



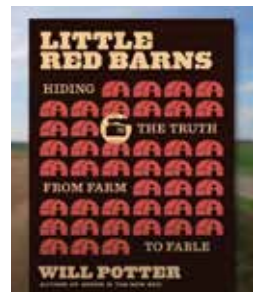
By Jill McGivering '10
"Daughter, Missing" is a gripping thriller about a mother's desperate race across continents to save her daughter, only to uncover a dark family secret and a vengeful stepson from her past.

Published in July 2025



By G. Pascal Zachary '89
"Someone Left the Cake Out in the Rain: Stories of Innocence Lost" presents 24 stories about well-intended, hopeful and flawed people who search the world for meaning and fulfillment.

Published in September 2025



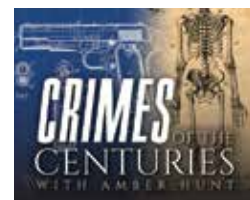
By Will Potter '16
"Little Red Barns: Hiding the Truth, from Farm to Fable" is the record of a harrowing journey from factory farms to international climate summits, from congressional hearings to neo-Nazi fascist groups.

Published in September 2025

MUSIC/PODCASTS



David Hanners '93
Hanners released an EP of original Americana music, "Llano Estacado."



Amber Hunt '11
Hunt hosts the podcast "Crimes of the Centuries," which enters its sixth season in February 2026, and "What If They're Wrong: After the Accusations," an investigative podcast.

SERIES



Aisha Sultan '12
Sultan produced and hosted a new mental health series, "Things We Don't Talk About," which delves into solutions for healing trauma and finding a path toward wellness on Nine PBS, a public media organization in St. Louis.



Barry Yeoman '95
Yeoman commemorated the 20th anniversary of Hurricane Katrina with the launch of an eight-part series "Still Here," in partnership with the multimedia arts project, A Piece of Mind. He interviewed 10 Louisianans who are working to preserve the state's wetlands, foodways, traditional farming practices and diverse cultures.

Help us meet the moment

In the past year, in addition to major gifts, we've been heartened to receive first-time recurring gifts from both Livingston Award winners and Knight-Wallace Fellowship alums — \$10, \$15, \$20 per month. These recurring donations help us to host events for students on campus, support journalists in exile and lead workshops at journalism conferences. They are as important to our mission as the major gifts that enable new initiatives.

Imagine what we could do if everyone in our expansive network used this QR code to give what they could.



DONATE

WEAR YOUR SUPPORT FOR JOURNALISTS

Get your Wallace House T-shirt!





RACHEL ROHR '19 continued from front cover

of our usual grants that cover 50% of reporters' salaries in the first year, we'll cover 100% of the reporters' salaries and benefits in the first year — something we've never done before.




We'll also assist the newsrooms with funding and sustainability strategy. And the reporters will be able to enjoy all the perks of being corps members. That includes mentorship, training, professional memberships and — perhaps best of all for reporters in rural and remote places — a supportive peer network of Report for America corps members and alumni.

As Desiree Hagen, who is deeply committed to continuing her work as news director and reporter, told us, "The funding prevents the voices of rural Alaska and the Arctic from going silent."



Rachel Rohr, vice president of program development at Report for America.

Call for Applications, Entries and Nominations

KNIGHT-WALLACE FELLOWSHIPS	<p>APPLY FOR THE CLASS OF 2026-2027 U.S. applications due February 1, 2026.</p> 
LIVINGSTON AWARDS	<p>ENTER WORK PUBLISHED IN 2025 Livingston entry forms due February 1, 2026.</p> 
RICHARD M. CLURMAN AWARD	<p>NOMINATE AN EXCEPTIONAL ON-THE-JOB MENTOR Complete the Clurman nomination form by March 1, 2026.</p> 

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