

# NEWS RELEASE

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## Press Association presents awards during annual convention

Ten newspapers receive top honors in annual contest.

The Oklahoma Press Association presented its Better Newspaper Contest Awards during the OPA Annual Convention, June 9-10, at the Skirvin Hotel in downtown Oklahoma City.

Also announced during the awards banquet were the recipients of the OPA H. Milt Phillips Award and the Oklahoma Newspaper Foundation's Beachy Musselman Award.

Receiving the H. Milt Phillips Award was Gracie Montgomery, co-publisher of The Purcell Register. The OPA Board of Directors selects the recipient of the Milt Phillips Award.

Gracie Montgomery and her husband, John D., purchased The Purcell Register in 1990. In 2005, Gracie Montgomery became the third woman to serve as OPA president. She and John D. were the first husband-wife team to have served as presidents.

She was a member of the original five-member panel of the Oklahoma Ethics Commission, appointed by Oklahoma Supreme Court Justice Marian Opala, and serves on The University of Oklahoma Chi Omega Housing Corporation.

Montgomery was inducted into the Oklahoma Journalism Hall of Fame in 2007.

Receiving the ONF Beachy Musselman Award was James Beaty, managing editor at the McAlester News-Capital.

Beaty has been recognized statewide and nationally numerous times.

In 2016, Beaty helped report and write a series exposing nepotism and other issues that led to the dismissal of the school superintendent. The series earned six state

and national awards, including a national SPJ first place In-Depth Enterprise Reporting Award, presented in Washington.

Beaty received a bachelor's degree in English education with a minor in journalism from East Central University in Ada.

He has been with the McAlester News-Capital since 1986 serving in a variety of positions including staff writer, area editor, senior editor and currently, managing editor.

The recipient of the Musselman Award is selected by the Oklahoma Newspaper Foundation Board of Trustees.

Winners of this year's Sequoyah Awards also were announced at the OPA Convention. In the daily divisions, winners were The Norman Transcript, Stillwater News Press and Tahlequah Daily Press. Sequoyah winners in the weekly divisions were The Purcell Register, Eufaula Indian Journal, Midwest City Beacon, Tri-County Herald in Meeker and the El Reno Tribune. Broken Arrow Ledger was named the Sequoyah winner in the sustaining member division, and The O'Colly at Oklahoma State University was the winner in the college division.

The Sequoyah Award, which is the highest honor in the OPA Better Newspaper Contest, is determined by the amount of points accumulated in the contest's 13 events: News Content, Layout & Design, Advertising, Sales Promotion, Advertising Series, In-Depth Enterprise, Editorial Comment, Personal Columns, News Writing, Feature Writing, Sports Coverage, Photography and Community Leadership.

Members of the Arkansas Press Association judged the 831 entries from 86 Oklahoma newspapers.

In addition to the 10 Sequoyah Award winners, 129 first place plaques were presented during the awards banquet. Newspapers receiving second, third or fourth place in the contest received certificates.

A complete list of winners in the 2016 OPA Better Newspaper Contest is available on the OPA website at [okpress.com/2016-better-newspaper-contest-results](http://okpress.com/2016-better-newspaper-contest-results).

The Oklahoma Press Association's Half Century Club inducted two new members at the convention: David Christy and Mike McCormick. The Quarter Century Club inducted 10 new members. This year's inductees are Brenda Brumbaugh, Donald Cooper, Raymond 'Newt' Collins, Casey Paxton, Karla Paxton, Valerie Praytor, Kary Randles, Amie Cato Remer, Brett Wesner and Kathy Young.

Several additional awards were presented during the June 9-10 Convention including:

- Editorial Sweepstakes Award, sponsored by ONG, presented to Wayne Trotter, Countywide & Sun in Tecumseh.

- Column Sweepstakes Award, sponsored by ONG, presented to Jeff Mullin, Enid News & Eagle.
- Daily Photo of the Year, sponsored by OGE Energy Corp., presented to Jason Elmquist, Stillwater News Press.
- Weekly Photo of the Year, sponsored by OGE Energy Corp., presented to Glen Miller, El Reno Tribune.
- ONF Joseph H. Edwards Outdoor Writer of the Year presented to Kelly Bostian, Tulsa World.
- Print Quality Contest award presented to Clinton Daily News.
- Digital Media Contest awards presented to The Journal Record (daily division) and GrandLakeNews.com (weekly division).

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