

# NEWS RELEASE

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## Press Association presents awards during annual convention

9 newspapers receive top honors in annual contest.

The Oklahoma Press Association presented its Better Newspaper Contest Awards during the OPA Annual Convention, June 15-16, at the Grand Casino Hotel & Resort in Shawnee.

Also announced during the two-day convention 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 Jeff Mayo, publisher of seven Oklahoma newspapers including Eastern Times Register, Eufaula Indian Journal, Henryetta Free-Lance, McIntosh County Democrat, Okmulgee Times, Sequoyah County Time and Vian Tenkiller News. The OPA Board of Directors selects the recipient of the Milt Phillips Award.

A 1990 graduate of Sallisaw High School, Mayo received a degree in community journalism from the University of Kansas in Lawrence in 1994 and his Juris Doctor from the University of Minnesota Law School in Minneapolis in 1997. He returned to Oklahoma in 2003 to help his parents, Jim and Becky Mayo, at the Sequoyah County Times and because he wanted to experience a greater connection to the community in which he lived.

Mayo served as president of the Oklahoma Press Association in 2013, following in the steps of his father, Jim, who was president in 1986, and his grandfather, Wheeler, president in 1944. The National Newspaper Association presented Jeff Mayo with the 2010 Daniel M. Phillips Leadership Award.

Receiving the ONF Beachy Musselman Award was Jeff Mullin, who has worked at the Enid News & Eagle for 41 years.

Mullin retired as senior writer in 2017, but still writes a Sunday column each week.

Mullin attended Oklahoma State University, working as a staff member for the Daily O'Collegian and graduating in 1975 with a degree in journalism. He briefly worked as a sports writer at the Manhattan (Kan.) Mercury before moving to Enid.

The first 17 of his 41 years at the News & Eagle were spent as a sports writer and then sports editor. He shifted to news in 1993, serving as news editor and associate editor before being named senior writer and resident columnist.

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

Winners of this year's Sequoyah Awards in the OPA Better Newspaper Contest also were announced at the OPA Convention. In the daily divisions, winners were The Norman Transcript, Weatherford Daily News and The Journal Record. Sequoyah winners in the weekly divisions were The Purcell Register, Wagoner County American-Tribune, Midwest City Beacon, Tri-County Herald in Meeker and The Edmond Sun. The Oklahoma Daily at the University of Oklahoma was the winner in the college division.

The Sequoyah Award, which is the highest honor in the Better Newspaper Contest, is determined by the amount of points accumulated in eight of the contest's 20 categories: News Content, Layout & Design, Advertising, Editorial Writing, Photography, Sports Coverage, Sales Promotion and Community Leadership.

The contest also included a Digital Media category in three divisions – dailies, weeklies and colleges.

For the first time, individuals were able to enter 11 other categories – News Story, Feature Story, Sports Story, In-Depth Reporting, Column Writing, Small Space Ad, Large Space Ad, News Photograph, Feature Photograph, Sports Photograph and Front Page Design.

Members of the Kansas Press Association judged the 1,566 entries from 81 Oklahoma newspapers.

In addition to the nine Sequoyah Award winners, 171 first place plaques were presented during the awards banquet. Newspapers and individuals placing second and third in the contest received certificates.

A complete list of winners in the 2017 OPA Better Newspaper Contest is available on the OPA website at [okpress.com/2017-contest-winners](http://okpress.com/2017-contest-winners).

The Oklahoma Press Association's Half Century Club inducted four new members at the convention: Harold Gleason, Joe Lansden, Tom Muchmore and Rod Serfoss. The Quarter Century Club inducted nine new members. This year's inductees are

Steve Bolton, Linda Craun, Chris Day, John D. Ferguson, Sherry Muchmore, Wilma Newby, Ted Streuli, Mike Tupa and Ellen Workman.

A new award in honor of the late Ray Lokey, longtime publisher of the Johnston County Capital-Democrat, also was presented. The 2017 Ray Lokey Memorial Award for Excellence in Reporting went to James Neal, Enid News & Eagle.

Several additional awards were presented during the June 15-16 Convention including:

- Editorial Sweepstakes Award, sponsored by ONG, presented to J.D. Meisner, Bristow News.
- Column Sweepstakes Award, sponsored by ONG, presented to Dorothy Ballard, Miami News-Record.
- 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 Kaylea Hutson-Miller, The Grove Sun.
- ONF Joseph H. Edwards Outdoor Writer of the Year presented to Kelly Bostian, Tulsa World.
- Print Quality Contest award presented to Clinton Daily News.

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