



K A P P A T A U A L P H A NEWSLETTER

National Society Honoring Scholarship in Journalism and Mass Communication

Volume 36, No. 1, Summer 2019
AEJMC Convention Issue

The Internet Trap wins book award

George Washington University Professor Matthew Hindman will be honored in Toronto this summer with the Frank Luther Mott/Kappa Tau Alpha Research Award for the best book on journalism and mass communication based on original research.

Hindman's 2018 book, *The Internet Trap: How the Digital Economy Builds Monopolies and Undermines Democracy*, explains the political economy of the internet, particularly the dominance of Google and Facebook and their impact on journalism and the public sphere.

The book also provides helpful insights for news organizations using digital media, said Holly Hall, president of the Kappa Tau Alpha national honor society and a contest judge.

"The work was a remarkable debunking of our assumptions of dynamics such as how



HINDMAN

web traffic works," said Hall, professor of strategic communication at Arkansas State University. "Overall, this is a useful guide/treatise for understanding the nature of the internet and the importance of our choices as we use and regulate it."

Hindman is associate professor of media and public affairs at The George Washington University. The book was published by Princeton Press. The award will be presented Thursday, Aug. 8, at the AEJMC/KTA awards luncheon in Toronto.

Frank Luther Mott, for whom the award is named, was a Pulitzer Prize-winning historian, educator and longtime leader of Kappa Tau

Alpha, the national college honor society for journalism and mass communication. The competition has been held annually since 1944.

Other finalists for 2018 were Melita M. Garza for *They Came to Toil: Newspaper Representations of Mexicans and Immigrants in the Great Depression* (University of Texas Press); Matthew Pressman for *On Press: The Liberal Values That Shaped the News* (Harvard University Press); and Ronald R. Rodgers for *The Struggle for the Soul of Journalism: The Pulpit Versus the Press 1833-1923* (University of Missouri Press).

The competition deadline for books with a 2019 copyright is Dec. 9, 2019. For more information and a list of previous winners, go to kappataualpha.org and click on Awards.

Allen named KTA adviser of the year

Soon after journalism Professor Chris Allen approached administrators at the University of Nebraska Omaha about creating a Kappa Tau Alpha chapter, the faculty voted unanimously to do so. Now, 15 years later, Allen is still serving as the Nebraska-Omaha chapter adviser.

This week, Allen will be honored as the 35th winner of the William H. Taft Outstanding Adviser award at the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication conference in Toronto. Allen said he is honored each year to induct journalism students who perform at the highest level.

"These are the very, very best students," Allen said. "And this award means something. To be a member of KTA means you have achieved at the very highest level and you are an exemplar of our industry."

Michael Hilt, dean of the College of Communications, Fine Arts and Media at UNO, has team-taught journalism capstone courses with Allen and said Allen is an exemplar himself.

"I witnessed firsthand how he helped our students understand the industry," Hilt said. "Beyond that, however, is how he helped them to develop as caring citizens in our society. For Chris, it was not just about succeeding in broadcasting nor any other career. It was about helping them succeed in life."



ALLEN

Not only does Allen teach in the classroom and as the general manager of UNO television, but he also works with U.S. and international students outside the United States. Since 2000, he has traveled with UNO students to London to teach "Global Media Communication"

and to visit different media outlets. He has also traveled to Afghanistan four times for a series of guest lectures and to work with faculty from two Afghan universities.

"It was perhaps the most rewarding teaching experience of my life," Allen said. "I learned so much from those students, probably more than I was able to teach them."

The work with Afghan faculty took him not only to Afghanistan, but also to India and the United Arab Emirates where he and colleagues met with teachers. As a Fulbright scholar, he has also taught at Sultan Qaboos University in Oman.

Allen received his doctoral degree from the University of Missouri School of Journalism in 1996. As a KTA adviser in 2010, he received a \$500 research grant. Allen used that grant to convert old television film of FCC hearings held in Nebraska in the 1960s to video to make them available for research.

Past Winners

The Taft Outstanding Adviser Award was inaugurated in 1985. Previous winners, most recent first, include:

Yong Volz, Missouri
Sheri Broyles, North Texas
Edward L. Carter, Brigham Young
Jeanni Atkins, Mississippi
Jeff Fruit, Kent State
Judy VanSlyke Turk, Virginia Commonwealth
Andrew Mendelson, Temple
Peter Gade, Oklahoma
W. Joseph Campbell, American
Margaret Patterson, Duquesne
Al Stavitsky, Oregon
Mark Popovich, Ball State
Jane Singer, Iowa
William Click, Winthrop
Karen List, Massachusetts
James Whitfield, Louisiana-Monroe
Tony Rimmer, Cal State-Fullerton
Sam Riley, Virginia Tech
Thomas Schwartz, Ohio State
Emmanuel Onyedike, Hampton
Gil Fowler, Arkansas State
Milt Hollstein, Utah
Luther Sanders, Arkansas at Little Rock
George Abney, Georgia
Marion Marzolf, Michigan
Whitney Mundt, LSU
Daniel Pfaff, Penn State
David Sloan, Alabama
Earl Conn, Ball State
Jack Sissors, Northwestern
William H. Taft, Missouri
Lucas Staudacher, Marquette
Quintus Wilson, Northern Illinois

IN BRIEF

KTA adviser lands book contract

Bill Cassidy, the Kappa Tau Alpha adviser at Northern Illinois University, used a \$500 grant from KTA in fall 2017 to study the coverage of gay and lesbian athletes in sports journalism.



CASSIDY

The research is part of a book project under contract with Palgrave Macmillan with the working title "Sports Journalism and Lesbian Athletes: Coverage of Coming Out Stories." Cassidy, an associate professor in the

Department of Communication, also is presenting a related paper at the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication conference in Toronto. "Is Anyone Surprised? How Journalists Frame the Coming Out of Women Athletes" was named a Top Three Faculty Paper in the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender & Queer Interest Group.

Legal scholar featured in podcast

Erin Coyle, an associate professor at Louisiana State University, used a \$1,000 KTA adviser research grant to travel to Cleveland to examine



COYLE

primary source materials related to the landmark Sheppard v. Maxwell free press-fair trial case.

Coyle shared some of her findings in a podcast for *Journalism History*, a scholarly journal published quarterly. The podcast is online at journalism-history.org/2019/02/05/coyle-podcast-a-carnival-trial-and-the-free-press/. She wrote "Turning Point: Balancing Free Press and Fair Trial Rights after Sheppard v. Maxwell," in the fall 2018 issue of *Journalism History*.

Kappa Tau Alpha to celebrate 110 years

The national honor society for journalism and mass communication will commemorate its 110th birthday at the 2020 Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication conference in San Francisco.

Kappa Tau Alpha, founded in 1910 at the University of Missouri, is the seventh oldest national college honor society.

Membership is by invitation only by one of the society's 96 campus chapters and is based solely on scholarship and character.

Journalism/mass communication juniors, seniors and graduate students must rank in the upper 10 percent of their class (based on overall GPA). Outstanding doctoral students also may be eligible, and chapters may set higher standards for membership.

Chapters are located at four-year degree-granting institutions accredited by the appropriate regional agency (e.g., New England Association of Colleges) that offer a major in journalism or mass communication. Kappa Tau Alpha is an accredited member of the Association of College Honor Societies, which is the coordinating agency for collegiate honor societies.



Courtesy of Miao Liu

Honoring excellence at Kent State

Jeff Fruit, third from left back row, poses with the spring 2019 Kappa Tau Alpha initiates from Kent State University. Fruit, the KTA national president from 2016-2018, has served as Kent State's adviser for 15 years. Only the top 10 percent of students are invited to join the national honor society. The Kent State chapter is named for Fruit.

Advisers awarded \$1,500 in grants

Why do some newspapers thrive in the digital marketplace, and what's the best way to communicate with students outside the classroom?

Two Kappa Tau Alpha advisers are working to answer those questions with the help of research grants from the society.

Professor David Davies, of the University of Southern Mississippi, received a \$1,000 grant in fall 2018 to help fund his research on the newspaper industry.

"The project will examine the common traits among these newspapers and offer lessons for the press in general," said Davies, a professor in the School of Mass Communication and Journalism.

Davies plans to analyze trends over the last 20 years in the newspaper industry. He will use the funding to conduct interviews at newspapers in Arkansas and Texas, as well as with the News Media Alliance in Washington, D.C.

The research builds on Davies' 2006 book, *The Postwar Decline of American Daily Newspapers*.

For her research, Nicole Kraft, of Ohio State University, received a \$500 grant to study using the messaging app Slack as an email replacement in journalism classes.

Slack allows students to communicate with faculty on an app that is accessible to laptops, desktops and mobile devices. The app can also be used for things like group projects with its ability to share files and data among members, as well as



DAVIES

KRAFT

other features.

"Millennials are not inclined to use email, and it creates a barrier to communication between students and faculty," said Kraft, an associate professor in the School of Communication at The Ohio State University.

Kraft collected survey data from her students at the beginning of the fall 2018 and spring 2019 semesters, and then taught the students how to use Slack. At the end of the semesters, 83% of the students said they would recommend Slack as a class communication tool. The data showed students felt using Slack instead of email enabled them to accomplish tasks more quickly (82%), improved class communication (88%), enhanced the effectiveness of their class communication (78%) and made it easier to communicate in class (88%).

Kappa Tau Alpha, the national college honor society for journalism and mass communication, conducts the grant program to provide research assistance to chapter advisers and to recognize their efforts to promote excellence in scholarship. The society has chapters at 96 universities.

Davies has served as adviser of the University of Southern Mississippi chapter since 2008, and Kraft has been The Ohio State University adviser since 2014.

Since KTA began the grant program in 2003, the society has awarded 34 grants totaling more than \$29,000.



The Kappa Tau Alpha Newsletter is published by:

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