



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

National Society Honoring Scholarship in Journalism and Mass Communication

Volume 38, No. 1, Summer 2021
AEJMC Convention Issue

Bearing Witness While Black wins Mott

As Allissa V. Richardson watched the Black Lives Matter movement develop in July 2016, she knew she had to help create a historical record of the activists' work to fight oppression.

"As a journalism studies scholar, I was astonished to see how many times African Americans bearing witness with smartphones had the ability to shift mainstream media narratives," said Richardson, an assistant professor of journalism at the University of Southern California Annenberg School.

What began as her doctoral dissertation is now an award-winning book. Richardson will receive the Frank Luther Mott/Kappa Tau Alpha Research Award on Aug. 5 for *Bearing Witness While Black: African Americans, Smartphones and the New Protest #Journalism*. The award will be presented as part of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication's annual convention, which is being held virtually. The following day, she will receive the 2021 James Tankard Book Award during AEJMC's general session.

The Mott award is named in honor of Frank Luther Mott, Pulitzer Prize winner, educator and longtime leader of the Kappa Tau Alpha national honor society. The Mott award honors the best research-based book about journalism or mass communication published during the past year.

Richardson said Blacks have borne witness to three overlapping eras of domestic terror – slavery, lynching and police brutality – and never stopped

using journalism as a tool for activism.

"As technologies changed, and as white supremacy mutated, our method of bearing witness while Black evolved, too. I realized that's the story that I had to tell," Richardson said.

Ed Carter, national president of Kappa Tau Alpha and a contest judge, said Richardson's scholarship builds on the activist legacy of the Black press and illustrates the power of alternative forms of documentation and protest, rights that need to be protected.

"Richardson's thought-provoking and compelling work details the importance of storytelling for racial justice," said Carter, a professor at Brigham Young University.

Richardson said she hopes her book will encourage others to expand on media witnessing literature with more culture-specific studies. As an example, she cited the Asian American-Pacific Islander community's use of videos to highlight the sharp rise in hate crimes against them.

"That labor should be documented and preserved, too," Richardson said.

Bearing Witness While Black was published by Oxford University Press.

Kappa Tau Alpha has recognized research contributions to the field since the inauguration of the award in 1944. The winning author receives a \$1,000 prize.

Other finalists for books published in 2020 were W. Joseph Campbell for *Lost in a Gallup: Polling*



ALLISSA V. RICHARDSON

Failure in U.S. Presidential Elections (University of California Press); John Maxwell Hamilton for *Manipulating the Masses: Woodrow Wilson and the Birth of American Propaganda* (LSU Press); Victor Pickard for *Democracy Without Journalism: confronting the misinformation society* (Oxford University Press); Sarah Sobieraj, *Credible Threat: Attacks Against Women Online and the Future of Democracy* (Oxford University Press); and Andrea Wenzel for *Community-Centered Journalism: Engaging People, Exploring Solutions, and Building Trust* (University of Illinois Press).

The KTA honor society was founded in 1910 to promote excellence in scholarship in journalism and mass communication.

Former KTA president named adviser of the year



Arkansas State University Professor Holly Hall initiates students into Kappa Tau Alpha, pre-pandemic. This year's initiates joined over Zoom.

Whether helping review books for a research prize or assisting students with Kappa Tau Alpha's initiation fees, Arkansas State University Professor Holly Hall shows her dedication to the national honor society.

Hall's history with Kappa Tau Alpha began 15 years before she became a chapter adviser.

She was initiated into the organization when she graduated from Arkansas State with a major in radio and television journalism in 1994. She worked in broadcast and as a voice-over artist before earning a law degree from the University of Arkansas at Little Rock and working in strategic communication.

She returned to Arkansas State as a strategic communication professor in 2008 and was invited

to take over as Kappa Tau Alpha adviser a year later.

On Aug. 5, Hall will be honored as the 37th winner of the William H. Taft Outstanding Adviser Award at the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication virtual conference.

"This award is richly deserved, especially given Holly's years of leadership in Kappa Tau Alpha," said Ed Carter, the national KTA president.

Hall was inspired to take on leadership roles in the society after receiving a KTA grant to support a research trip to London in 2012 about the role of super-injunctions in British media law. "Super-injunction, What's Your Function?" was published

Please see **ADVISER**, page 2

Three KTA advisers win research grants

Scholars affiliated with Kappa Tau Alpha are tackling everything from how to combat misinformation on social media to understanding large-scale journalistic collaborations to analyzing archives related to an early feminist.



NG

The researchers, Ming (Bryan) Wang, of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Yee Man Margaret Ng, of the University of Illinois, and Tracy Lucht, of Iowa State University, all received grants from KTA to support their research.

Wang, an associate professor, is analyzing visual posts on Instagram and TikTok related to cancer communication. His goal is to determine how to combat emotional posts carrying misinformation. He received a \$600 research grant to help with the analysis.

Ng, an assistant professor, is examining how journalists collaborating on massive data projects use the online GitHub platform to communicate



LUCHT

and share data with each other and their sources. Ng received an \$800 research grant to support a content analysis of participants' digital footprints on GitHub.

She will explore how power dynamics affect the strategic choices made by the parties involved—whether and with

whom to collaborate, and to what level—across the GitHub ecosystem.

Finally, Lucht, an associate professor, traveled to Seneca Falls, New York, in July to review archival materials and visit historical sites relevant to Amelia Bloomer and the history of women's rights. She received a \$600 research grant to support her travel.

Although women's suffragists such as Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton might be well known and many people might have heard of "bloomers," pantaloons introduced in the 1800s, Bloomer herself remains less well-known. Her

publication, *The Lily*, was the first in the United States devoted to temperance and women's rights.

"Bloomer sought to improve women's lives, democratize American institutions, and reform society through her writing, speeches, and activism at a time when women were criticized and ridiculed for stepping outside their expected sphere," said Lucht, who plans to write a book about Bloomer.

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 99 universities. To apply, the scholars must have served as KTA advisers for at least two consecutive years.

Since KTA began the grant program in 2003, the society has awarded 40 grants totaling more than \$33,000.

Ex-KTA leader receives Taft award

ADVISER from page 1



HALL

in *Communication Law and Policy* in 2013.

Hall was elected KTA's vice president in 2016 and served as president from 2018-2020.

"I was grateful for her calm, positive leadership when the pandemic began last spring," said Beverly Horvit, KTA's executive

director. "Holly is a pleasure to work with and incredibly organized and generous."

As an officer, Hall helped choose the Frank Luther Mott/Kappa Tau Alpha Research Award for the best book in journalism and mass communication. She also reviewed books in other years, as well.

Each spring, Hall welcomes the top students graduating from Arkansas State University's Department of Communication to join Kappa Tau Alpha. The initiation ceremony is one of Hall's favorite activities as chapter adviser. For her, the ceremony is about recognizing the hard work students have done throughout their college careers.

"These are the ones who work, and they give 110%, and then we get the opportunity to say, 'Hey, we see you, we acknowledge what you're doing and

what you stand for, and we want to recognize you,'" Hall said.

She's so proud of the students that, on occasion, she's personally paid initiation fees for those who have financial difficulties.

Because most students don't quite know what the organization stands for, the initiation ceremony gives Hall the opportunity to share Kappa Tau Alpha's history and core values. She emphasizes that the initials "KTA" also stand for knowledge, truth and accuracy.

"Those values, especially in the last few years, have become increasingly important to champion," Hall said. "So, I really enjoy letting students know the important role they have in upholding and advocating for those high ethical standards, no matter what profession they end up going into."

This year, even though they couldn't hold an initiation ceremony in person, Hall said her chapter was still able to find a way to make it work on Zoom. During the ceremony, she surprised the No. 1 graduate and undergraduate students with their awards. Seeing their faces was "priceless," Hall said.

"To me this is just a gift and a high honor," she said. "I'm just delighted to be involved and hope to be involved for many years to come."

Kansas State becomes 99th chapter



BENJAMIN

Kansas State University's A.Q. Miller School of Journalism and Mass Communications joined the Kappa Tau Alpha family in December 2020.

The society's 99th chapter is named after Louise Benjamin, the university's retiring associate dean of the College of Arts and

Science. A former television director-producer, Benjamin taught courses such as broadcast writing, telecommunications law and electronic media history.

Her book *Freedom of the Air and the Public Interest: First Amendment Rights in Broadcasting to 1935* won the National Communication Association's Haiman Award for Distinguished Scholarship in Freedom of Expression.

The A.Q. Miller School is accredited by the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications and most recently earned reaccreditation in May 2020. Students of the school choose between studying journalism and strategic communication. The school also serves as the headquarters for the national Journalism Education Association and the Huck Boyd National Center for Community Media.

The school is named for a pioneer Kansas journalist — A.Q. Miller of Belleville — thanks to a donation from his son, Carl Miller, who majored in journalism at Kansas State.

Associate Professor Raluca Cozma spearheaded the application process after previously serving as the KTA adviser at Iowa State University.



The Kappa Tau Alpha Newsletter is published by:

Kappa Tau Alpha, School of Journalism
University of Missouri
Columbia, MO 65211-1200
email: umcjourkta@missouri.edu
www.KappaTauAlpha.org

Executive Director:
Beverly Horvit