



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

National Society Honoring Scholarship in Journalism and Mass Communication

Volume 39, No. 1, Summer 2022
AEJMC Convention Issue

Surviving Mexico wins KTA research award

When Celeste González de Bustamante and Jeannine Relly started doing research about the violence facing Mexican journalists in 2011, they thought the times could not be worse.

Sadly, Relly notes, 2022 has been worse. About a dozen journalists have been killed so far this year, a “brutal and unfathomable death toll.”

For more than a decade, the University of Arizona colleagues researched the crisis facing journalists in Mexico who dared to report on organized crime and the ties to various governmental entities. Their fieldwork uncovered the myriad methods journalists use to persevere. They detail their findings in *Surviving Mexico: Resistance and Resilience among Journalists in the Twenty-First Century*.

The book, published by the University of Texas Press, is the winner of the Frank Luther Mott/Kappa Tau Alpha Research Award for the best



GONZÁLEZ DE BUSTAMANTE



RELLY

book on journalism and mass communication based on original research published in 2021.

“This was a powerful book that used attacks on journalists and journalism in Mexico as a case study for not just issues for journalists in Mexico, but around the world, including

disinformation on social media,” said Ed Carter, KTA’s national president and one of the contest judges.

Carter, professor of communications at Brigham Young University, praised the book for its in-depth examination of the issues and echoed its call for stronger enforcement of laws and development of networks to protect journalists.

Relly is affiliated with the Center for Latin American Studies at the University of Arizona. González de Bustamante is a historian who has studied Latin America for more than two decades. On July 1, González de Bustamante became an associate dean at the University of Texas’ Moody

College of Communication. The Mott award will be presented at the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication conference in Detroit.

“The biggest lesson learned for me was how in this unspeakably unsafe context, journalists came together collectively and resisted the conditions in large and small ways,” Relly said.

Said González de Bustamante: “After this study, I have an even deeper admiration and respect for those who are continuing to do the work to inform and hold the powerful accountable under such untenable conditions.”

Relly, who has also conducted research on other conflict zones in the Middle East and Asia, said one of the original goals of the book was to study the history and conditions for journalists along the Mexico-U.S. border region.

“From that, you can see how important it is to document the present, for if it is not documented, in some ways in decades to come, it is as if it didn’t happen,” Relly said.

Please see MEXICO, page 4

Knowledge, truth and accuracy



Graduates of the Medill School of Journalism celebrate their initiation into Kappa Tau Alpha in June with KTA adviser Abigail Foerstner (center). Foerstner was inducted into KTA herself in 1972.

Medill professor earns Taft award

Abigail Foerstner has been reporting on health, science and the environment for decades and teaching students at Northwestern University to do the same.

Whether her students are helping people find credible health care information related to the pandemic or informing community members about toxins in their midst, Foerstner highlights the importance of knowledge, truth and accuracy.

Those are the English words associated with Kappa Tau Alpha, the national honor society for journalism and mass communication.

“Whatever forum we use to bring people accurate news, that compass of knowledge,

Please see AWARD, page 3



Almost back to normal

KAITLYN LAVO

California State University, Northridge students take the KTA oath in May 2022. CSUN welcomed 16 new members, including three graduate students. Because of the pandemic, the university had a mask mandate in effect. Chapter adviser Linda Bowen, far right, said the ceremony was the first in-person initiation since the COVID-19 pandemic began.

KAITLYN LAVO

Northern Illinois' Cassidy to lead KTA

Bill Cassidy, professor of journalism at Northern Illinois University, will become the 47th president of Kappa Tau Alpha on Sept. 1.

Cassidy succeeds Edward L. Carter, communications professor at Brigham Young University, who served from 2020-2022.

"It's a tremendous honor to serve as president of KTA," said Cassidy, who previously served as vice president. "The honor society has been an important part of my academic life since being inducted in 2000."

Cassidy praised his predecessor.

"Ed Carter's thoughtful, judicious leadership as president has provided a tremendous example for me during the past two years while I served as vice president," Cassidy said, "while KTA Executive Director Beverly Horvit has been the glue holding everything together with grace and great insight."

The newly elected vice president is Raluca Cozma, professor of journalism at Kansas State University. Horvit was re-elected executive director/treasurer.

Cassidy was named the William H. Taft Outstanding Adviser in 2020 – just four years after Carter received the same honor. Cassidy has been NIU's KTA adviser since 2007. He is a former head, vice-head and co-research chair of the Newspaper and Online News Division of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication.

Cassidy has published two books examining sports journalism coverage of LGBTQ+ athletes. Most recently, he co-authored *Iran and the*



CASSIDY



COZMA

American Media: Press Coverage of the 'Iran Deal' in Context (2021, Palgrave Macmillan).

His research has also appeared in venues such as *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, *Communication & Sport*, *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, *International*

Journal of Communication and *Newspaper Research Journal*.

Cassidy earned his Ph.D. from the School of Journalism and Communication at the University of Oregon and was inducted into KTA in 2000 while a doctoral student. Before entering academia, he was a correspondent and columnist for Daily Racing Form, the leading publication in the thoroughbred horse racing industry.

Cozma serves as associate director for undergraduate programs and engagement at the A.Q. Miller School of Media and Communication at Kansas State University, after serving as associate director for graduate studies and research for the past four years. She is a member and former chair of the AEJMC Standing Committee on Teaching and former head of the Newspaper and Online News Division.

"As national KTA officer, I look forward to promoting scholarship at sister institutions across the country, while helping with one of the most prestigious book competitions in our discipline, the Frank Luther Mott research book award," Cozma said. "Reviewing entries for the competition is one of my annual academic pleasures."

Cozma was inducted into KTA as a doctoral student at Louisiana State University. She was

treasurer and then adviser of the Iowa State University chapter of KTA from 2013-2017. In 2021, she started the Louise Benjamin Chapter of KTA at Kansas State University.

Cozma has professional experience in local television news and served as faculty adviser of the student-run TV station at Iowa State University from 2012 to 2017.

Her research falls at the intersection of international and political communication and has been published in venues such as *Journalism Studies*, *Journalism Practice*, *Computers in Human Behavior*, the *Newspaper Research Journal*, the *International Communication Gazette*, *International Journal of Communication*, *The Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*, *The International Journal of Press/Politics*, as well as *Electronic News*.

Her scholarship of teaching focuses on the impact of new technologies on educators and student media. She is co-editor of an upcoming UNESCO handbook titled *Teaching Journalism Online*.

Like Cassidy and Cozma, Horvit also is a former journalist. She earned her Ph.D. at the University of Missouri's School of Journalism, where she is an associate professor professional practice. For more than seven years, she coordinated the school's introductory news-writing course. In 2020, she joined The Missouri Group as a co-author of *News Reporting & Writing* (13th edition). Her 10-plus years of professional experience include work at the Houston Post and the Corpus Christi Caller-Times.

Her research interests include international

Please see **LEADERSHIP**, page 4

KTA advisers study power of visuals

Two Kappa Tau Alpha advisers received grants to investigate such disparate topics as how journalists cover executions and which forms of animation best help audiences comprehend science.

University of Texas Professor Mary Bock traveled to Huntsville, Texas, in April to observe journalists reporting on the execution of Carl Wayne Buntion, who was convicted of killing a Houston police officer more than three decades ago. At 78, Buntion was the oldest person to be executed in Texas history.

Bock, who has been a KTA co-adviser at Texas since 2018, received about \$850, which covered her travel expenses and transcription costs.

"Journalistic practices on the ground have a significant impact on what the audience understands of the criminal justice system, and these practices operate in concert with powerful government institutions," Bock said.

Her case study, tentatively titled, "Live from Death Row: TV News, Witnessing, and 21st Century Executions," follows her recent book, *Seeing Justice: Witnessing, Crime and Punishment in Visual Media* (2021, Oxford University Press).

Another KTA adviser, Spencer Barnes of the University of North Carolina, used his \$1,000 grant to pay for cloud rendering to produce two 360-degree video prototypes.

The videos, one about dust devils and one about



BARNES



BOCK



MARY ANGELA BOCK

Visual journalists record activity outside the execution unit in Huntsville, Texas, in their restricted area.

Atlantic blue marlin, are being used in experimental research on how visualization and 3D animation can help viewers understand complex ideas.

Barnes used cloud computing to address the fiscal challenges of explanatory storytelling as cloud computing allows creators to take advantage of the power of dozens of computers at one time.

Barnes said his efforts have been so successful that he has been able to create explanatory 360° omni-directional videos, as well as versions in graphic language transmission format, or .gltf. He plans to launch a study soon to determine which

format works better for audiences.

Barnes has served as the adviser of the University of North Carolina chapter since 2014.

Since KTA began the grant program in 2003, the society has awarded 42 grants totaling more than \$35,000, reflecting its commitment to scholarly development.

Within its 100 university chapters, KTA conducts the grant program to provide research assistance for chapter advisers while recognizing their effort towards scholarship excellence.

Northwestern's chapter adviser models being lifelong learner

AWARD from page 1

truth and accuracy is always at the foundation of what we do," Foerstner said, "and has to be for journalism in a democratic society."

On Aug. 4, Foerstner will be honored as the 38th winner of KTA's William H. Taft Outstanding Adviser Award at the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication conference in Detroit. The Taft award comes with a \$500 check.

Charles F. Whitaker, professor and dean at the Medill School, said the award is well deserved.

"Abigail's indefatigable devotion to her students' success – both in the classroom and outside of it – makes her a model colleague," Whitaker said. "KTA and Medill are lucky to have her."

Foerstner received her bachelor's degree from Northwestern and was inducted into KTA as a master's student there in 1972.

"I knew from the time I was 7 that I wanted to be a journalist," Foerstner said.

At age 12, she paid 12 ½ cents every week to take the bus to downtown Chicago to visit such treasures as the Chicago Public Library and the

Art Institute of Chicago. All the reading and cultural appreciation has paid off.

Not long after graduating from Northwestern, Foerstner landed a job covering science, health and the environment for regional sections of the Chicago Tribune. She has also written hundreds of freelance articles on history and the arts, and she started teaching at Medill as an adjunct in 2002.

Now an associate professor, Foerstner has served as Medill's KTA adviser since 2009.

Beyond emailing students who have qualified for KTA membership by being in the top 10% of their class, Foerstner said she sometimes calls the students, too.

"I'm telling them this is an honor, that they represent the leadership of journalism in the future," she said.

Foerstner also enjoys leading the students in the KTA pledge.

"That pledge to be lifelong learners is so powerful to me," she said. "One of the greatest gifts of our profession is that as lifelong learners, we keep bringing new information and new insights to our audiences. We try to find solutions. We find the wonders of the universe and share them."

Foerstner models being a lifelong learner by reviewing books for the KTA Mott contest every year and by working on her own book, as well.

Since 2010, she has accompanied archaeologists on digs in Cahokia, an ancient metropolis in Southern Illinois, for a book about culture and climate change. The culture flourished more than 1,000 years ago and at its height had a population of 20,000 before being abandoned.

"You can still climb to the top of this 10-story temple pyramid," Foerstner said. "It was a very sacred place, and when you're on the top of that pyramid, you can kind of feel that."

Foerstner said she has enjoyed learning from and interviewing dig volunteers, graduate students and native Americans about Cahokia and other cultures that have been around for thousands of years. She said the story also underscores the increasingly urgent need to respond to climate change.

"Climate certainly played one role in the demise of that great civilization," Foerstner said. "Like many great civilizations, there's a limit to how many people you can sustain when the environment begins to dramatically change."

Celebrating excellence



CAROLINE JONES

Students at North Carolina A&T State University are flanked by KTA adviser Gail Wiggins, far left, and Interim Chair Robbie Morganfield, far right, after being inducted into Kappa Tau Alpha in May 2022. The KTA chapter was established at the university in Greensboro in 2007.

Surviving Mexico wins multiple honors

MEXICO from page 1

As Relly and González de Bustamante conducted their research, journalists in Mexico began creating dozens of local, regional and national journalist networks and collectives.

“We can’t quantify how many journalists are now safer as a result of the formation and work of these collectives and networks, but they’re certainly having multilayered and multilevel impacts,” González de Bustamante said.

She said the networks might have saved some lives and certainly improved the training journalists received.

“We would encourage folks to learn more about the journalism networks — most have websites and have started critical publications, and they could all use more support,” said González de Bustamante, citing the Juárez Journalist Network in the state of Chihuahua as a good example.

Named in honor of Frank Luther Mott, Pulitzer Prize winner, educator and longtime leader of Kappa Tau Alpha, the Mott award honors the best research-based book about journalism or mass communication published during the year. Kappa Tau Alpha, the national college honor society founded in 1910 for scholarship in journalism and

mass communication, has recognized research contributions to the field since the inauguration of the award in 1944. The winning authors will share a \$1,000 prize.

Other finalists were Jacob L. Nelson for *Imagined Audiences: How Journalists Perceive and Pursue the Public* (Oxford University Press); Kathy Roberts Forde and Sid Bedingfield, editors, for *Journalism and Jim Crow: White Supremacy and the Black Struggle for a New America* (University of Illinois Press); Matt Carlson, Sue Robinson and Seth C. Lewis for *News after Trump: Journalism’s Crisis of Relevance in a Changed Media Culture* (Oxford University Press); Nikki Usher for *News for the Rich, White, and Blue: How Place and Power Distort American Journalism* (Columbia University Press); and Steven Casey for *The War Beat, Pacific: The American Media at War Against Japan* (Oxford University Press).

In addition to the Mott award, González de Bustamante and Relly will also receive two additional awards at the AEJMC conference: the James A. Tankard Jr. Award and the Knudson Latin America Prize.

For more about their work, visit globaljournalist.org to read a Q&A with the authors.

National Council elects new officers

LEADERSHIP from page 2

communication, political communication, and the relationship between media and foreign policy. Her work has been published in the *Newspaper Research Journal*, the *International Communication Gazette* and the *International Journal of Press/Politics*. In addition to the University of Missouri, she has taught at Winthrop University, the University of Texas-Arlington and Texas Christian University.

She served as KTA chapter adviser at TCU for four years. She has a B.A. from Southern Methodist University and a master’s from Missouri, where she was inducted into KTA in 1997. She has served as the executive director of KTA since March 2017. In February 2022, she was elected to the Board of Directors of the Association of College Honor Societies, and she serves on the Public Information, and Diversity, Equity and Inclusion committees.

IN BRIEF

Arkansas State inducts students from Queretaro, Mexico, campus

Arkansas State University’s KTA inductees for 2022 included students from its online, Jonesboro and Queretaro, Mexico, campuses.

The strategic communication students in Queretaro take the same coursework as their Arkansas State peers in the United States, said Holly Hall, the Arkansas State adviser and former national KTA president.

The three students from the Queretaro campus are the first KTA initiates from a program based outside the United States.

“It is remarkable that these students came from all walks of life and every part of our media and strategic communication programs,” Hall said of Arkansas State’s 2022 inductees.



HALL

Elon University sets milestone for becoming KTA’s 100th chapter

The National Council approved Elon University’s journalism program for a Kappa Tau Alpha chapter in February, and the school initiated its first members in May.

Associate Professor Amanda Sturgill prepared the university’s application and is serving as the first adviser. Based in Elon, North Carolina, Elon is a mid-sized private university of about 8,000 students. The curriculum is grounded in the traditional liberal arts and sciences and complemented by nationally accredited professional and graduate programs. The university is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges.

Elon became the third KTA chapter in North Carolina and its 100th chapter nationwide.



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