



PRESS RELEASE

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Melissa Greene-Blye

W. Joseph Campbell

Erin Coyle

Keith Greenwood

AJHA Announces Joseph McKerns Research Grant Awards

The American Journalism Historians Association has awarded four Joseph McKerns Research Grants.

The recipients are: Melissa Greene-Blye, University of Kansas; W. Joseph Campbell, American University; Erin Coyle, Temple University; and Keith Greenwood, University of Missouri-Columbia.

Greene-Blye's grant will fund travel to the Sequoyah National Research Center, home to the world's largest collection of American Indian, Alaska Native, and First Nations newspapers, periodicals, and other publications. The center's newspaper collection houses nearly three thousand publications of tribal communities and governments, and Native organizations. She plans to use her research for a paper to present at the 2023 AJHA conference.

"Native editors and correspondents were strategic and intentional in their content selection, realizing what was at stake as they challenged federal policies of forced removal, forced assimilation, and, in some cases, outright genocide aimed at subjugating or annihilating the sovereign Native nations that refused to comply with America's self-appointed Manifest Destiny," she said.

A citizen herself of the Miami tribe of Oklahoma, Greene-Blye noted that of the roughly one dozen comprehensive American press histories on her shelf, only one offers more than a single line or image about the *Cherokee Phoenix* and its first editor, Elias Boudinot. Histories of the Native press offer little beyond "a laundry list of publications and dates, or biographical sketches of a few, key publishers, or editors."

"The editors of early Native American newspapers risked (and, in some cases, lost) their lives in the defense of Native American rights, freedom of the press, and the right of self-governance," she said. "Yet, journalism history as it is traditionally taught, touts the trials, sacrifices, and stories of John Peter Zenger and Elijah Lovejoy, while leaving Native American journalist editors and allies

and Lijian Lovejoy, while leaving Native American journalist editors and allies lost in the larger history of that same journalism.”

Campbell said that he plans to use the grant to examine from different angles and at different archives the confused and even bizarre newspaper reporting in the aftermath of the battle of Gettysburg in 1863. He also intends to examine civilian reactions and responses to that reporting, much of which predicted a climactic, post-Gettysburg battle in western Maryland between Union and Confederates forces. The grant will enable him to examine archival holdings at Columbia University, the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, and the Library of Congress.

"I am delighted to be a recipient of a McKerns grant," he said. "I am grateful to AJHA. I hope and expect the grant to provide dimension and momentum to a project that is in its early stages."

Campbell was the recipient of a McKerns grant in 2007, which helped him complete the research for his award-winning media-mythbusting book, *Getting It Wrong* (University of California Press, 2010, 2017).

Coyle will be checking the accuracy of the Supreme Court's characterizations of press conduct, asserted in its majority opinion for *Sheppard v. Maxwell*, a landmark 1966 ruling about media access to trials. The case was an appeal for the conviction Dr. Sam Sheppard for the brutal murder of his wife Marilyn in 1954. The defense argued that Sheppard had not received a fair trial due to several factors, including prejudicial publicity and a carnival-like courthouse atmosphere. The majority opinion states "that bedlam reigned at the courthouse during the trial, and newsmen took over practically the entire courtroom, hounding most of the participants in the trial, especially Sheppard." The defendant was acquitted in the second trial.

Coyle will fill in gaps in the research for a 2020 law review article, which argues there was not adequate support for the Court's assertions about the press. That article did not review journalists' archival records, coverage of the trial or retrial by Theodora "Theo" Wilson or H.D. "Doc" Quigg, two reporters for the national press who wrote a memo to the Supreme Court challenging the accuracy of its description of the trial's atmosphere, or other news coverage of the retrial of Sheppard.

"More than 500 court opinions have cited the point of law that prejudicial publicity and disruptive influences in a courtroom can undermine a criminal defendant's fair trial rights," Coyle said. "Courts must protect criminal defendants' rights to receive fair trials. They also must serve the public right to know about criminal trials by allowing the public and members of the press to observe trials. Journalists have argued that allowing journalists also may help protect defendants' fair trial rights by observing and scrutinizing court proceedings."

Greenwood's grant will enable him to conduct research about the content and presentation of photographs in *Stars and Stripes* related to the Vietnam War from 1964-1972. He will travel to Bloomfield, Mo., the location of the *Stars and Stripes* Library and Museum, which has an archive of the newspaper. He may need to fill in gaps in the publications and supporting documents by accessing archives in the Washington, D.C. area related to the Defense Department and specific military branches.

Greenwood noted that *Stars and Stripes* is unique as a publication by and for members of the military, but with a history of editorial independence. "I started thinking about how that might play out in the Vietnam era and how it would compare to what we know about civilian media coverage" he said. "There has been some research on the newspaper during that era and how its editorial independence was challenged. I wondered how that might be apparent in the

...independence was challenged. I noticed how that might be apparent in the photography published in the paper.”

He hopes his work will contribute to our knowledge and understanding of photojournalism in the military.

“There’s a long history of armed forces using photography as documentation of their activities but also as a means to communicate with the public,” he said. “But we don’t know a lot about the processes or policies, and we don’t know much about how this publication navigated editorial independence within a military structure. I’m hoping it will add a little more to our understanding of how our military has communicated.”

Founded in 1981, the American Journalism Historians Association seeks to advance education and research in mass communication history. Members work to raise historical standards and ensure that all scholars and students recognize the vast importance of media history and apply this knowledge to the advancement of society. For more information on AJHA, visit <http://www.ajhaonline.org>.

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