

WICHITA PROFESSIONAL COMMUNICATORS

Official newsletter of the Wichita Professional Communicators

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Wichita Professional
Communicators



FROM THE PRESIDENT

By Kristin Bogner

Note from Kristin Bogner, president: Each month, I will profile an active member of Wichita Professional Communicators so we can learn from and about one another. Enjoy the first installment; I know I loved learning more about Judy.

Judy Conkling's tenure as a member of Wichita Professional Communicators has lasted for nearly a quarter of a century, outlasting her tenure in any single one of her professional roles. Judy said she has retained her membership so long because of the connections she has made to others in the profession.

"We have always had a reputation of being a friendly and supportive group — not exclusive and not snobby," she said.

Judy joined WPC, which at the time was called Wichita Press Women, in the 1990s when she was a restaurant and real estate reporter for the Wichita Business Journal.



Judy Conkling

"A lot of the old timers, the women who were members then, blazed trails for the rest of us," Judy said.

"They were really active members in those days, and real mentors to us, too."

Judy has been a friend to many during her more than two decades of membership.

"I've enjoyed learning from people who do the same career differently than I do," Judy said.

"They're a great bunch of people, and I probably wouldn't have encountered them any other way. They are there to help each other."

When Judy joined Wichita Press Women, she appreciated learning practical skills that would help with her profession.

Judy's journey to become a professional journalist was a winding one.

"I always kind of wanted to be a writer, but a lot of people discouraged me from that," she said. "They said, 'You need a stable job where you can make a living.'"

So Judy decided to major in nursing, but it didn't suit her. She pivoted to study foods and nutrition science at Kansas State University. She liked cooking and developing recipes, but she found the process in that profession a little scientific (think weighing grams of egg whites) and less creative than she anticipated.

Through a stroke of luck, Judy's roommate — also a home economics major — decided to take a journalism class, and Judy joined her. The rest is history.

"I got an A, and I loved it, and I thought, I want to do this," Judy said.

Another friend helped Judy get her first job as a reporter at a small-town newspaper, and she jumped from paper to paper — Osage City to El Dorado to Derby to Haysville to Mulvane to Wichita — for the next 15 years, telling people's stories.

Later, Judy took a job with Via Christi in the communications department, where she did everything from media relations to newsletter editing to writing for the organization's magazine.

One of her favorite assignments was coming up with a healthy recipe for the magazine and then working with dietitians and graphic artists to create a magazine spread in each issue. Judy worked for Via Christi for more than 16 years.

Judy is somewhat of a jack-of-all-trades in the communications industry. She has done extensive writing and editing, advertising copywriting and grant writing. After an eventful career, Judy reflected on what helped her succeed.

"I was sure I knew what I wanted to do when I started in my career, but what I'm doing now is nothing like what I started out to do," Judy said. "My advice is: Don't be afraid to try something new and different. Maybe you'll try and fail — but in the end, you'll have learned something that will help you grow both professionally and as a person."



Among Judy's many vocations is being a caregiver to her 103-year-old mother, Katie, a World War II veteran who was recently recognized by the Wichita City Council on her birthday.



One Person, Many Hats: How to Manage Communications with a Small Team (or a Team of One)

featuring

Sean Jones (Wichita Public Library)

Wednesday, March 6, 2024

11:30 a.m.-1 p.m.

Larkspur Bistro & Bar, 904 E. Douglas Ave.



Sean Jones is the Communications Specialist for Wichita Public Library. He manages marketing, communications and public relations for the seven-branch library system. He has a Bachelor of Arts in Communications from Wichita State University (WSU) and is pursuing a Master of Public Administration from WSU. In 2023, Sean received the Excellence in Public Service Award from the City of Wichita, and was a 2023 Wichita Business Journal Marketing Awards honoree.

In this program, Sean will talk about his role as the Communications Specialist for Wichita Public Library and how he manages running social media, media relations, graphic design, campaign development (and more) as a team of one. He will talk about working with other divisions within the Library to complete projects, including the Library's uptick in video production, and will showcase some of the neat programs coming up and resources that might help communicators take their work to the next level.

RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP

If you are a current member of WPC/Kansas Professional Communicators/NFPW, you should have received an email from NFPW headquarters to renew your dues since membership runs on the calendar year.

To continue your WPC and KPC membership, select both the Kansas and Kansas-Wichita affiliates when renewing. To check your membership record to ensure all your information is correct or to renew, visit <https://nfpw.memberclicks.net/join> . If you haven't already, create a login and password to access your record. If you'd like to join WPC/KPC/ NFPW, visit the same link.

Dues are \$160 (\$30 for WPC, \$40 for KPC and \$90 for NFPW). A Wichita-only membership is \$50. A professional-level membership provides more networking opportunities with professionals across the U.S. and access to both NFPW and all other affiliates' programming (many offer virtual options). It also offers more professional development opportunities, including financial grants for members, advocacy for First Amendment issues and recognition through a national contest.

For any questions about membership, please contact info@nfpw.org or Amy Geiszler-Jones, KPC vice president of membership, at algj64@sbcglobal.net or 316.210.4931.

Renewals for local-only WPC membership are handled directly by WPC.

WPC SCHOLARSHIP DEADLINE IS MARCH 4

Online applications for the 2024 Wichita Professional Communicators (WPC) \$2,000 scholarship will be accepted until midnight Monday, March 4.

WPC offers an annual scholarship to students pursuing degrees in the communications field at Wichita area colleges and universities. Students pursuing careers in advertising, digital media, editing, graphic design, journalism, marketing, photography, public relations, public speaking, writing and other mass communications areas should apply.

Besides the monetary award, the scholarship recipient will receive a one-year membership in WPC and its affiliated state and national organizations, Kansas Professional Communicators (KPC), and National Federation of Press Women (NFPW which is open to both men and women). The winner will be announced in spring 2024.

Requirements for a complete application can be found online at WichitaProfessionalCommunicators.com. For questions or more information, email WichitaProCom@gmail.com or directly contact WPC's scholarship committee co-chairs Wilma Moore-Black at wilma.black@wichita.edu or Ellie Keppy at keppy@kmuw.org.

"We are proud to offer this annual award that encourages young journalists to continue their collegiate education," Moore-Black said. "We have a strong, supportive membership that believes in giving back to grow our own communicators. We are always seeking sponsorships and support to fund the annual scholarship award."

Funds for the scholarship come from donations and WPC events like the annual mixer featuring a silent auction. Save the date of Sept. 12 for the 2024 WPC mixer/networking and silent auction. Contact Ellie to learn ways you can help her with sponsorships.



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