PENNSYLVANIA NEWSMEDIA ASSOCIATION

Evening of Excellence

Celebrating Pennsylvania Journalism

OCTOBER 8, 2026

THE CENTRAL HOTEL & CONFERENCE CENTER | HARRISBURG

Welcome to the Evening of Excellence

CELEBRATING THE PEOPLE AND ORGANIZATIONS THAT STRENGTHEN PENNSYLVANIA JOURNALISM



On behalf of the Pennsylvania NewsMedia Association, it is my pleasure to have you with us for this special evening.

Tonight is about the people and organizations that make Pennsylvania journalism extraordinary. We gather to recognize distinguished careers and remarkable achievements, to celebrate innovation and emerging leadership, and to honor news organizations whose work demonstrates the enduring value of local journalism.

Each of tonight's honorees has contributed to our industry in a meaningful way. Some have devoted decades to informing and serving their communities. Others are finding new ways to strengthen journalism and position it for the future. Together, they remind us of the talent, dedication and sense of purpose that exist throughout Pennsylvania's news media community.

This evening is also an opportunity to appreciate something equally important: one another. Our industry continues to navigate extraordinary change, but gatherings like this remind us that we do so as a community — sharing ideas, learning from each other, supporting our colleagues and remaining steadfast in our commitment to the people and communities we serve.

Thank you for being here and for the work you do every day on behalf of journalism in Pennsylvania. I hope you enjoy this opportunity to reconnect with colleagues, make new connections and, most importantly, celebrate those we are privileged to honor tonight.

Congratulations to all of our 2026 honorees. I hope you enjoy a memorable evening of recognition, connection and celebration.

Warm regards,

William M. Cotter

William M. Cotter
President and CEO
Pennsylvania NewsMedia Association

Tonight's Program

6 p.m.

Welcome remarks

Bill Cotter, President and CEO, Pennsylvania NewsMedia Association
Dinner service begins

7 p.m.

Evening of Excellence Program

AWARDS · FEATURED SPEAKERS · NEWS ORGANIZATIONS OF THE YEAR · INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

James McClure, Retired Editor, York Daily Record

FEATURED SPEAKER

Bob Cohn, President, The Venetoulis Institute for Local Journalism

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE

John Finnerty, Managing Editor, CapitolWire

FEATURED SPEAKER

Mike Orren, CEO and Publisher, LNP | LancasterOnline

NEWS MEDIA INDUSTRY EXECUTIVE OF THE YEAR

Lisa Hughes, Publisher and CEO, The Philadelphia Inquirer

FEATURED SPEAKER

Andrew Conte, Ph.D., Director and Editor, The Newsworks Lab

PNA HALL OF FAME

Joseph H. Zerbey IV, Retired Newspaper Executive

NEWS ORGANIZATIONS OF THE YEAR

PennLive/The Patriot-News
Pittsburgh Post-Gazette
TheBurg
Chestnut Hill Local

PNA FOUNDATION SUMMER INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

Cate Barron, Chair, Pennsylvania NewsMedia Association Foundation Board of Trustees

Tanya Henderson, Executive Director, Pennsylvania NewsMedia Association Foundation

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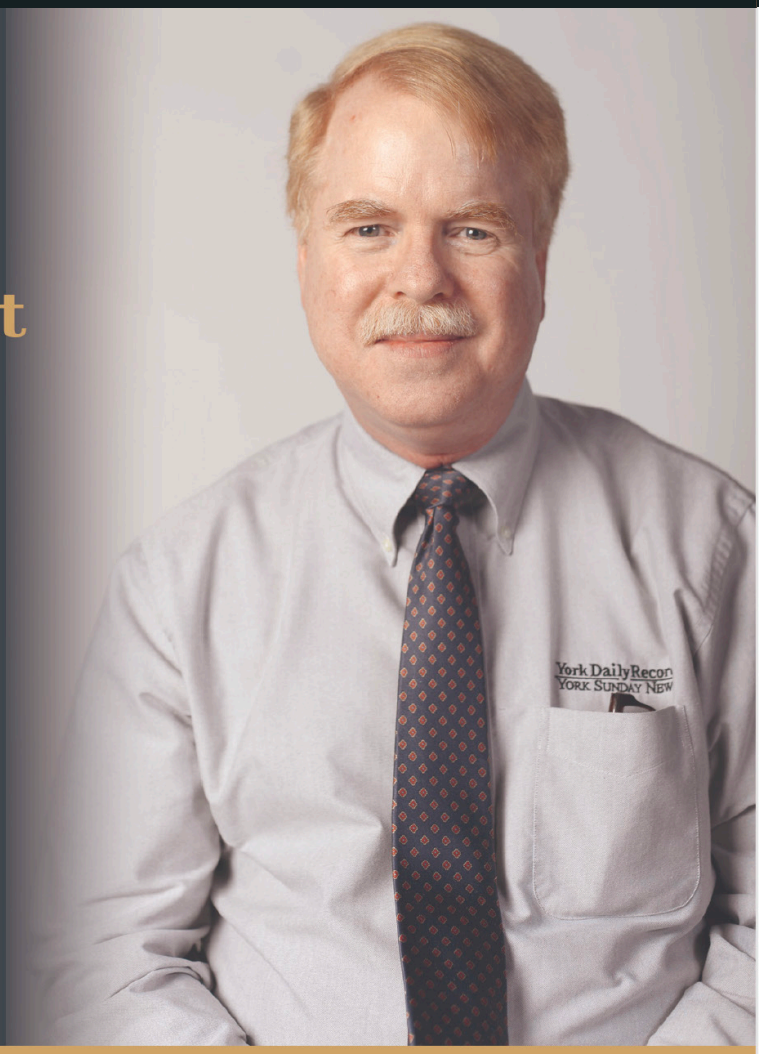
CONGRATULATIONS

Jim McClure on a well-deserved Lifetime Achievement Award!

Leader. Mentor. Historian.
Author. Friend.

His legacy of journalism excellence lives on.

From his friends at the
York Daily Record





LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

James McClure

RETIRED EDITOR · YORK DAILY RECORD

Four decades of journalism, leadership, mentorship and service.

For more than four decades, Jim McClure has distinguished himself as a journalist, editor, historian, author and educator whose leadership has strengthened Pennsylvania journalism and shaped generations of news professionals.

McClure retired in 2019 after 30 years with the York Daily Record, where he served as editor of its print and digital products and as state editor for Gannett properties in Pennsylvania, Maryland and Delaware. Throughout his career, he led newsrooms large and small, guided coverage of major national events and earned a reputation as a generous mentor who combined high journalistic standards with a competitive spirit and warm sense of humor.

His leadership helped newsrooms earn numerous state and national honors, including the John V.R. Bull Freedom of Information Award, recognition from Editor & Publisher among its "Ten That Do It Right," and multiple Keystone Sweepstakes honors. McClure is also a member of the PNA Hall of Fame and received the Benjamin Franklin Award for Excellence in 2013.

His commitment to community journalism continues in retirement through his longtime "York Town Square" column, local history books, public speaking and the Retro York community.

The 2026 Lifetime Achievement Award recognizes McClure's extraordinary career and enduring legacy of journalism, leadership, mentorship and service



Celebrating Excellence

Congratulations to this year's honorees and to the dedicated professionals and organizations who continue to strengthen our industry and ensure its future.

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What have you heard? What are the facts? Learn more about your local and regional wastewater treatment facilities and why it matters to you!

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For more information and to get connected, contact Mary Baker MABA Executive Director mbaker@mabiosolids.org

www.mabiosolids.org
845-901-7905



2026 BENJAMIN FRANKLIN AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE

John Finnerty

MANAGING EDITOR, CAPITOLWIRE

Consequential reporting on Pennsylvania government and the issues affecting people across the commonwealth.

For more than 25 years, John Finnerty has distinguished himself through thoughtful, consequential reporting on Pennsylvania government and the issues affecting people across the commonwealth.

Finnerty has covered the Statehouse and state government for CapitolWire since 2021, following years as Capitol correspondent for a group of five central and western Pennsylvania newspapers. His reporting has explored complex issues including prison suicides, child abuse, the opioid epidemic, school safety, medical marijuana, lead in school drinking water and the burden of medical debt.

When State Affairs acquired CapitolWire in 2025, Finnerty became managing editor and helped guide the organization through a significant transformation while continuing the daily Statehouse reporting readers rely upon. He helped place original journalism at the forefront of CapitolWire's redesigned digital presence while overseeing its news and production team and coordinating coverage of Pennsylvania government.

Throughout that transition, Finnerty continued to report, write and produce the daily Under the Dome newsletter, demonstrating a commitment to both innovation and the fundamental work of journalism. The 2026 Benjamin Franklin Award for Excellence recognizes Finnerty's sustained commitment to public-service reporting and ensuring that essential Statehouse journalism continues to evolve and thrive.

The Lenfest Institute for Journalism

congratulates

Lisa Hughes, Publisher and CEO of The Philadelphia Inquirer

on being named PNA News Media Industry Executive of the Year.

The Lenfest Institute is proud to support The Inquirer's work serving communities across the Philadelphia region.

We extend our congratulations to all of this year's winners.

THE LENFEST INSTITUTE
CELEBRATING 10 YEARS

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2026 NEWS MEDIA INDUSTRY EXECUTIVE OF THE YEAR

Lisa Hughes

PUBLISHER AND CEO, THE PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER

Leadership, vision and a commitment to sustainable local journalism.

Lisa Hughes is leading the transformation of one of the nation's oldest and most respected locally owned news organizations, helping position The Philadelphia Inquirer for a sustainable future while preserving its commitment to consequential journalism.

Under Hughes' leadership, The Inquirer has pursued a transformation centered on digital growth and sustainable profitability. In March 2026, the National Press Foundation presented Hughes with its Chairman's Citation, recognizing her leadership and the significant transformation the company has undergone during her tenure.

Before joining The Inquirer, Hughes served as publisher and chief business officer of The New Yorker, where she helped transition the iconic publication into a multiplatform business positioned for long-term viability. Earlier in her career, she served as vice president and publisher of Condé Nast Traveler and House & Garden.

Hughes also contributes her leadership beyond the organizations she has led, serving on the boards of the Chamber of Commerce for Greater Philadelphia and the News/Media Alliance, as well as the Board of Trustees of St. Paul's School.

The 2026 News Media Industry Executive of the Year Award recognizes Hughes' leadership, vision and commitment to building sustainable news organizations equipped to serve their audiences well into the future.

Congratulations to all the

Journalism Excellence Recipients

Where Local Journalism

- SEEKS THE TRUTH
- REPORTS THE FACTS
- TELLS THE WHOLE STORY

Strong Communities need people who are informed-not influenced

SAMPLE NEWS·GROUP

The Pennsylvania Food Merchants Association (PFMA) is a statewide trade association representing the interests of more than 600 food retailers, including convenience stores, supermarkets, independent grocers, wholesalers, and consumer product vendors. PFMA members operate over 3,000 stores across Pennsylvania and collectively employ more than 300,000 residents.

LEARN MORE AT PFMA.ORG

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2026 PNA HALL OF FAME

Joseph H. Zerbey IV

RETIRED NEWSPAPER EXECUTIVE

Quite simply, Joe Zerbey is a genuine newspaperman.

Joseph H. Zerbey IV has newspapering in his blood. His career began at an early age in the business founded by his great-grandfather in Pottsville in 1884—the newspaper now known as the Republican Herald.

Known for his outgoing personality and natural ability to connect with people, Zerbey gravitated toward advertising sales early in his career. His path eventually took him to Connecticut, where he rose to become publisher of The Bristol Press, before returning to Pennsylvania as president of York Newspaper Company. He later held newspaper leadership positions in Salt Lake City, Utah, and Toledo, Ohio.

Wherever his career took him, Zerbey's commitment extended beyond the newspaper office. Through board leadership, volunteer service and civic involvement, he became an active and highly visible presence in the communities his newspapers served.

Across a career rooted in a family newspaper tradition spanning generations, Zerbey has exemplified a deep commitment to the industry, community service and the relationships at the heart of local journalism.

Quite simply, Joe Zerbey is a genuine newspaperman.

NEWS ORGANIZATION OF THE YEAR

Excellence Across the Newsroom

The PNA News Organization of the Year Awards recognize excellence across all facets of a news organization.

To be eligible for this distinction, news organizations must participate in both the PNA Foundation Advertising Contest and the Professional Keystone Media Awards. Points earned through winning entries in both competitions are combined to determine the News Organization of the Year honorees.

> By recognizing achievement in both journalism and advertising, the awards celebrate news organizations whose work reflects excellence across the breadth of their operations.

2026 News Organization of the Year



PennLive/Patriot-News

FIRST PLACE
MULTI-DAY PUBLICATIONS



Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

SECOND PLACE
MULTI-DAY PUBLICATIONS



TheBurg

FIRST PLACE
WEEKLY PUBLICATIONS



Chestnut Hill Local

SECOND PLACE
WEEKLY PUBLICATIONS

FEATURED CONVERSATION

A Transformative Year in Pennsylvania Journalism

Pennsylvania journalism is experiencing remarkable change, from new ownership models to innovative approaches designed to sustain and strengthen local news.

Throughout tonight's program, three industry leaders will share their perspectives on this transformative moment and what it could mean for the future.



Bob Cohn

BOB COHN, PRESIDENT AND CEO, THE VENETOULIS INSTITUTE FOR LOCAL JOURNALISM

Bob Cohn has led business and editorial teams at some of the nation's leading media brands. At The Venetoulis Institute for Local Journalism, the nonprofit news organization that owns The Baltimore Banner and the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, Cohn sets strategy and oversees business and editorial performance. Previously, Cohn served as president of The Economist and The Atlantic, executive editor of Wired, and White House and Supreme Court correspondent for Newsweek. He has overseen teams that won five National Magazine Awards and received the American Bar Association's Silver Gavel Award for his Supreme Court coverage. In 2018, Advertising Age named him Publishing Executive of the Year.



Mike Orren

CEO AND PUBLISHER, LNP | LANCASTERONLINE

Mike Orren is a digital media executive with three decades of experience building and leading local news organizations. He became CEO and publisher of LNP | LancasterOnline following its transition to nonprofit ownership under Always Lancaster in 2026. Orren previously served as chief product and marketing officer at DallasNews Corp., where he drove significant growth in digital subscriptions and advertising while modernizing the company's technology platforms. He also founded the pioneering hyperlocal news site Pegasus News and has raised more than $40 million in capital throughout his career.



Andrew Conte, Ph.D.

DIRECTOR AND EDITOR, NEWSWORKS LAB

Andrew Conte is editor and director of Newsworks Lab and an investigative journalist, author and longtime journalism educator. He previously founded the Center for Media Innovation at Point Park University, where he raised $8.5 million to support community-engaged approaches to sustaining and growing local news. Conte also founded the Pittsburgh Media Partnership, a collaboration among more than 40 news organizations, and helped launch a local chapter of the national Press Forward movement. He is the author of four nonfiction books, including Death of the Daily News, which examines the impact of declining local journalism on communities.

Tonight we celebrate excellence.

Tomorrow, we help create it.

The PNA Foundation's Newsroom Internship Program, a key initiative of the Center for Journalism Excellence, is strengthening the future of local journalism by connecting student journalists with paid, hands-on reporting opportunities in newsrooms across Pennsylvania. Made possible through the support of philanthropic partners and donors, the program builds a strong pipeline of emerging talent while helping news organizations expand their capacity to serve their communities.

The program's continued growth has been fueled by investments that make internships more accessible to students.

156%
Increase in Funding

77%
Increase in Applications

56%
Increase in Newsroom Participation

91%
Increase in Student Participation



"A little over a month ago, I walked across the Liacouras Center stage as a proud graduate of Temple University.

Now I'm happy to announce that I'll be transitioning to be full-time at The Philadelphia Inquirer as a Social Platform Editor with the Programming and Audience team.

It's been amazing working at the Inquirer for the past year and being able to have so many unique experiences from covering all local colleges, to national sports teams, and huge events like Unrivaled in Philly."

- Jaison Nieves, The Philadelphia Inquirer

HELP BUILD WHAT COMES NEXT

Support the future of Pennsylvania journalism.

PENNSYLVANIA NEWSMEDIA ASSOCIATION FOUNDATION

CJE Center for Journalism Excellence

Your support of the Pennsylvania NewsMedia Association Foundation helps create opportunities for emerging journalists and strengthens the future of journalism throughout Pennsylvania.

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OUR WORK CONTINUES

Excellence Doesn't End Tonight.

This evening celebrates the people and organizations whose work makes Pennsylvania journalism stronger. Every day, the Pennsylvania NewsMedia Association and Pennsylvania NewsMedia Association Foundation work to help ensure a vibrant future for our industry.

PNA advocates.

We champion a strong, independent news media industry, represent the interests of our members and defend the public's right to know.

PNA connects.

We bring Pennsylvania's news media community together to share ideas, build relationships and navigate an ever-changing industry.

PNA educates.

Through the Center for Journalism Excellence, we invest in professional development, emerging journalists, newsroom innovation and opportunities that strengthen journalism across the commonwealth.

Together, we recognize excellence.

We honor the people, organizations and journalism that inform communities, inspire trust and demonstrate the enduring value of a strong local news media.

ONE MISSION.

A STRONGER FUTURE FOR PENNSYLVANIA JOURNALISM.

PENNSYLVANIA NEWSMEDIA ASSOCIATION

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Photo courtesy of The Herald (Sharon)

TRUSTED NEWS. STRONGER COMMUNITIES.

Local journalism is woven into the fabric of Pennsylvania communities.

PENNSYLVANIA NewsMedia ASSOCIATION