



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

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Click becomes 37th president

J. William Click, Winthrop University, became the 37th President of Kappa Tau Alpha following the annual meeting of the National Council in August.

Thomas A. Schwartz, Ohio State University, became Vice-President and Keith P. Sanders, University of Missouri, continues as Executive Director. They will serve until the 2004 annual meeting.

Click, professor and chair of mass communication at Winthrop, has been a

member of KTA since his initiation at Ohio University in 1959 and an adviser since his chapter was installed in 1990. He was inducted into the Ball State University Journalism Hall of Fame in 1987 and the College Media Advisers Hall of Fame as a founding member in 1994. His research has been published in *Journalism Quarterly*, *Journalism Educator*, *Public Relations Quarterly* and *the Journal of Typographic Research*. He is co-author of six editions of *Magazine Editing and Production* and three editions of *Governing College Student Publications*. He was named Magazine Educator of the Year by the AEJMC Magazine Division in 1999. He received his Ph.D. from Ohio State University.

Schwartz is an associate professor in the School of Journalism and Communication at Ohio State University where he has been honors program coordinator and James E. Pollard Chapter adviser since 1988. He received the William H. Taft Outstanding Adviser Award in

1999. He teaches reporting and mass communication law and is the author or co-author of more than 50 book chapters, articles and papers on journalism history and law. He has held leadership positions in AEJMC, ICA and AJHA. He is the editor of *Communication Law and Policy*. A former newspaper and magazine reporter, photographer and editor, he received a Ph.D. in journalism from Southern Illinois University in 1981.

Sanders, executive director since 1991, is *professor emeritus* at Missouri, where he has been O.O. McIntyre Distinguished Professor. He served as department chair and associate dean for graduate studies/research. In 2000 he was selected by vote of chapter advisers as one of the five most significant leaders in the history of the Society. He received the Society's first-ever Commitment to Excellence Award at the Phoenix annual meeting in 2000. He is listed in *Who's Who in America*. He received his Ph.D. from Iowa and was initiated into KTA at Ohio University in 1962.

Former president George Abney remembered

George M. Abney, the 32nd President of Kappa Tau Alpha, died May 27, 2002 of a massive heart attack. He suffered the attack and died in an emergency room while wife Beth was checking him in.

The Abneys were rabid University of Georgia sports fans, especially of the men's and women's basketball teams, and they were active community leaders in Athens, Georgia. In 2001 Abney was named a "Top Citizen of Athens."

Abney was initiated into KTA in 1958 as an undergraduate at UGA. After a stint in the military, he returned to the university and served as a professor for nearly 40 years. He became the adviser of the Benjamin H. Hardy, Jr. Chapter in 1983 and continued through 1993. He was elected national president in 1992 and served through August, 1994. He received the William H. Taft Adviser of the Year Award in 1994.

During his presidency the immediate financial security of the Society was assured following his proposal to increase the initiation fee to \$20.

Jazzin' it up in Kansas City

Make plans now to attend two important KTA functions at the AEJMC convention in Kansas City July 30-August 2 in Kansas City.

Both the Advisers' Breakfast and annual meeting of the National Council and the KTA/AEJMC Awards Luncheon will be on Friday, Aug. 1. You can sign up for each on your convention registration form. You pay only \$9 for breakfast (with KTA picking up the rest of the actual charge) and the awards luncheon is \$24. The breakfast/annual meeting is a great opportunity for you to meet other chapter advisers and discuss common issues. An operating budget for academic year 2003-

2004 will be proposed and other business will be conducted. Please join us at 7 a.m.

The KTA/AEJMC Awards Luncheon honors winners of the division student paper competitions and major AEJMC awardees. Also to be honored are the winners of the William H. Taft Adviser of the Year Award and the Frank Luther Mott/Kappa Tau Alpha Research Award. KTA President Click and AEJMC President Theodore Glasser will preside.

The luncheon begins at 11:45 and will end well before the four Mini Plenary sessions that begin at 1:30. The luncheon is one of the main vehicles KTA has to promote excellence in scholarship.

First recipients announced

Council establishes adviser research grants

The National Council enthusiastically approved a program of research grants for chapter advisers at its annual meeting during the 2002 AEJMC convention in Miami Beach.

The Chapter Adviser Research Grants are designed to recognize and reward KTA advisers for their good work and to support their academic endeavors. Up to three grants per year for up to \$1,000 each will be awarded annually depending on budget availability.

Three inaugural recipients were announced in February by KTA President J. William Click. They are Jane Singer (Iowa), Earnest Perry, Jr. (Texas Christian) and Gilbert L. Fowler, Jr. (Arkansas State).

Singer's proposal was for "Converged Newsrooms: A Sociology of News Work Study." Her research included several week-long site visits to "converged" newsrooms around the country. The proposal explains that "the conceptual underpinning to this study lies in a set of interconnected 'sociology of news work' concerns including journalistic norms and values, professional standards of practice, ethics, workplace environments and interactions, and response to change." Singer has been adviser at Iowa for three years and previously served two years as founder and adviser at Colorado State.

Perry will explore "How the mainstream Houston media framed Barbara

Jordan's first two political campaigns." He will research Jordan's records, those of the Harris County Democratic Party and archival material of the two major mainstream newspapers involved in her career, the *Houston Chronicle* and the *Houston Post*. This study also will address the continuing phenomenon of DuBoisian double-consciousness. Perry has been adviser at TCU for three years.

Fowler will study the "Relationship Between Children's Aggressive Tendencies and Parental Mediation Habits in Selected Countries of the Middle East." His proposal notes that "most research indicates a link between parental mediation, a child's aggressive tendencies and perceptions of television violence." However, no such studies have been done in the Middle East where parental control over media exposure has been very strong. He will oversee surveys of third and fifth graders in Kuwait, Egypt and Jordan. Fowler has been chapter adviser at Arkansas State since 1981 and has served as national president.

The recipients were selected by the Executive Committee after review of the six submitted proposals.

Instructions and application forms for the Chapter Adviser Research Grant program can be found on the KTA web site and are in the recently mailed revised inserts for the Chapter Adviser Handbook. Applicants must have served at least two full years as advisers and they and the chapter must be in good standing with the Society. The deadline for applications for the 2003-2004 academic year is Oct. 1.

In addition to the research

Honor cord ordering

The first year of offering honor cords through the national headquarters office has been quite popular, resulting in a sharp increase in the number ordered.

If you plan to order honor cords next year, please plan ahead and give us time to fill the order. Our new supplier has cut the lead time but we still need to order in bulk to get the best rates. We anticipate selling the cords at \$5 each next year.

proposal, applicants must include an endorsement letter from the her/his program head.

For all grants awarded, credit shall be made to KTA in writing and/or expression for any publications or presentations that result. Awardees must provide a report of the completed research effort that KTA may use for promotional purposes.

The research grant proposal is modeled after the highly successful one operated for several years by Psi Chi, the psychology honor society.

2002 Council highlights

Approval of an innovative plan to reward chapter advisers and assist them in their scholarship and welcoming a new national president highlighted the annual KTA business meeting (officially known as the National Council) in Miami Beach.

The Chapter Advisers Research Award proposal was approved unanimously (see story at top of page) for implementation in AY 2002-2003.

President Gilbert Fowler, Jr. completed his term of office and welcomed incoming president J. William (Bill) Click. Fowler announced that James Whitfield (Louisiana-Monroe) was the 2002 winner of the William H. Taft Adviser of the Year award and that Leonard Teel had won the F.L. Mott/KTA Research Award.

The Council approved Fowler's proposal to increase the executive director's honorarium from \$3000 to \$5000 and to review it every 2-3 years.

Executive Director Keith Sanders thanked Mott book contest judges. His budget proposal was amended to include money for the new research grants and the honorarium increase. The budget was approved.

The Council approved wording changes in the membership certificate to better reflect KTA's high standards. The change in wording is to be implemented at the next convenient printing.

Dicken-Garcia honored

Hazel Dicken-Garcia was honored last summer with a Distinguished Teaching Award for Outstanding Contributions to Postbaccalaureate, Graduate and Professional Education by the University of Minnesota.

In accepting the award, she said, "I don't want students to be like me. I want them to be better than me. I don't want them to be lemmings. I want them to be visionary. I want students to have a solid foundation of knowledge and high standards." She has been chapter adviser since 1995.

Mott, continued from page 4

Baggs had numerous contacts with national figures in both politics and journalism, and he and McGill shared many confidences during the tumultuous 12 years from 1957 until 1969. Baggs died in January 1969, a month before McGill's death.

While McGill's papers were neatly catalogued in Special Collections at Emory University's Woodruff Library, Baggs' papers were nowhere to be found until the day I paid a visit to Mrs. Joan "Freck" Baggs. She knew I was writing about McGill and offered some helpful information about him and his relationship with her husband.

My big question was simple.

"Where are Bill's letters?"

"Well, I'll tell you. I've never been able to part with them. They're in the attic."

I'm sure I said something historic.

"May I have a look?"

She led the way to a hall and a pull-down staircase. I climbed high enough to see the numerous cardboard boxes, and dipped into one file. The first sheet was correspondence with Edward R. Murrow.

As it turned out, Mrs. Baggs was persuaded to donate the papers to the Otto G. Richter Library at the University of Miami, where they were catalogued in Special Collections. The files of most interest were those with McGill and with contemporary journalists, and with the Kennedys and officials in the White House during the Johnson Administration.

The Vietnam War files were intriguing. In 1967 and 1968 Baggs and Harry Ashmore undertook a private peace mission during which they interviewed North Vietnam's president, Ho Chi Minh, about conditions necessary to end the war. Because these peace efforts conflicted with the Johnson Administration's strategy, which McGill supported as a loyal Democrat, the mission strained the relationship between Baggs and McGill. Their differences on the war was another example of how McGill was often wrong on international affairs while being usually right on issues at home, especially on the most important moral issue of 20th Century America, the issue of racial justice.

The Baseball-bat Murder

The murder surfaced at the University of Tennessee-Chattanooga, in the T. Cartter and Mary Rawlings Lupton

Library. I was on campus for the annual conference of Civil War and 19th Century historians and wandered over to the library to investigate the archives. The following exchange was so simple until reference librarian William W. Prince gave me the unexpected answer.

"Do you have anything on Ralph McGill?"

"Do you mean the guy who killed one of our students?"

Prince said that an undergraduate student, Harry Hays, had seen a stone memorial to a former student that read, "Killed by a Schoolmate." Hays had written a research paper, citing articles in the *Chattanooga Times* about the confessed killer. Prince retrieved the undergraduate's paper from the archives. Hays had traced the killer and identified him as the father of Ralph McGill, publisher of the *Atlanta Constitution*.

The killing on the campus baseball

"Do you mean the guy who killed one of our students?"

diamond had been violent and very public, during a game. The student who died was a player, James Johnson, who disagreed with the umpire. The assailant was the student umpire, who, evidently in great anger, picked up a bat and struck Johnson on the head. Johnson died five hours later, and the assailant turned himself in the following day in company of a member of the family who was a prominent lawyer.

After reading the research paper, I telephoned Hays, who was by then a graduate student in Baltimore. I also traced Hays' sources from 1887 and 1888, which were accurate but insufficient because of confusion over the killer's name. As the case dragged through the court, the *Chattanooga Times* identified the defendant variously as M. McGill, Ben McGill, B.F. McGill, Magill, B.F. Magill and D.F. Magill.

The newspaper gave more clues. Reporters identified the defendant's residence (Igou's Ferry, north of Chattanooga), age (21), and father (David McGill). At the Lupton Library, archivist Holly

Hodges located mention of the killing in the 1887 minutes of the university's Literary Society to which the victim belonged, in the student newspaper, the *University Outlook*, in the *Year-Book* of Chattanooga University, 1887-88, and in the handwritten minutes of the Faculty of Chattanooga University in the case of "Benj. F. McGill," who was "withdrawn under charges." Further evidence was provided by Chattanooga's veteran genealogist who, after looking at all the records, concluded, "That's the man."

All biographers consider their subject's parents, for good or ill. As early as Exodus 20:5 we have, "For I am the Lord thy God, visiting the iniquities of the fathers upon the children..." The Greek Euripides' "Phrixus" repeated the admonition, "The gods visit the sins of the fathers on the children."

It was difficult to place the weight of this event upon the son because the son never acknowledged knowing what his father had done as a student. According to Ralph's autobiography, his mother told him only that his father, before she met him, had dreamed of being a lawyer. Ralph did say something that may have been related to the tragic day. He said that as a child he occasionally deserved to be punished, but that his father never laid a hand on him.

In the end, having explained all this to my editors, they said OK.

Leonard Ray Teel, professor and director of the Center for International Media Education at Georgia State University, won the Frank Luther Mott Award for the best journalism/mass communication research-based book published in 2001.

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Mott winner recounts research

It's a profound question. When two biographies have already been published about your chosen subject, the prospective publisher naturally wanted to know, "What will your book contribute to the already known fact that Ralph McGill was an important figure? What have you found, son?"

I sat back and took inventory. Well, there is the "smoking gun" dug up in the Library of Congress. Consider the FBI files that took three years to be disclosed. How about the entire body of the Bill Baggs papers retrieved from an attic? And then there is the baseball-bat murder that their biographies never mentioned because it was held as a family secret, held so tightly that today's family members knew little or nothing.

Throughout my research on *Ralph Emerson McGill: Voice of the Southern Conscience*, I focused particularly on finding evidence which shed light on my research questions, while at the same time thinking about some questions answered inadequately by the two previous biographers. Historian John Egerton thought of me as *the* biographer of Ralph McGill, and I intended to write the *definitive* biography.

The Smoking Gun

One question concerned the allegation that for years McGill had been blacklisted from receiving the Pulitzer Prize because of personal vendetta held by the dean of the Columbia School of Journalism, Carl Ackerman. McGill himself had mentioned this to staffers at the Atlanta newspaper where as editor he wrote his daily column and often visited reporters and editors in the newsroom. No one had followed this sufficiently to say whether it was true, and, if so, even more interesting, *why*.

I remember the moment on that third summer's day in the Library of Congress when at last I found that smoking gun while poring over Dean Ackerman's letters and diary written in April 1945 and specifically excoriating McGill. Writing history is such a lonely endeavor that I cite this moment, when I teach historical research, as evidence of the rewards of the

search. The moment was further proof of the mantra taught by Professor Duane Koenig at the University of Miami: "History will *never* let you down."

What Ackerman wrote in 1945 clearly predisposed him, as secretary to the Pulitzer Committee until 1956, to block any award to McGill. Ackerman and McGill had been together from January to April on a round-the-world mission for the American Society of Newspapers Editors. Their mission was to persuade national leaders to guarantee freedom of information after World War II. Their premise was that a free flow of news across borders would inoculate the world against the rise of future Hitlers.

By April when the team finished

2001 awardee Leonard Teel describes the biographer's challenge when others have published about his subject.

its work in China, Ackerman threatened to resign because of McGill. In a confidential letter to publisher John S. Knight, the ASNE president, Ackerman grieved that, "In every city McGill has been drunk on the job....I feel that American journalism has been disgraced by his conduct." Ackerman wrote that McGill, while drunk, had made "irresponsible remarks concerning American journalism." In Ackerman's letter to his wife, Vandy, he said that during the interview with Generalissimo Chiang Kai Shek, McGill occasionally "pounded the table, made critical remarks in an undertone when others were speaking and was otherwise not in a condition to represent the ASNE in a honorable fashion....[McGill] was intoxicated...half of the time with his eyes closed, mumbling incoherent words."

The FBI Files

In the biography my task of putting this episode into the context of McGill's career was assisted significantly by the arrival of the FBI files. I am grateful to Professor Patrick Washburn of Ohio University whose own work with FBI files taught him "fast track" words that shaved

months or years off the delivery process. As it was, it took three years before I received the memorable letter promising 323 pages, the first 100 being free and the others costing 10 cents a page.

Although the FBI did not investigate McGill in order to help me write a book, that's how it turned out. Each time McGill was nominated by the White House for a significant federal appointment, agents reported the results of interviews with McGill and his friends and family. The files noted among other things McGill's alleged associations with identified Communist organizations (he denied these), his finances (good), and his drinking (reported as under control). The FBI helpfully tracked the whereabouts of all three of McGill's married sisters.

One surprise was the related correspondence between McGill and FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover. As it turned out, McGill, often denigrated as "Red Ralph," had ingratiated himself to Hoover, often writing positively about the FBI. His relationship with the FBI could be documented as two-way. One agent noted, "We have had very cordial relations with McGill and he is on the Special Correspondents' List. He is also an SAC (Special Agent in Charge) Contact in our Atlanta office." When McGill visited Washington, agents permitted Ralph Jr. to sit in Hoover's chair.

The task here was to place McGill's governmental career in the context of his journalism. In all he said and wrote, he never worried about a conflict of interest between his roles in journalism and politics. He discounted the "objective" reporting that he claimed had contributed to the uncritical reporting of Sen. Joseph McCarthy's accusations. "One of the curses of newspapering," he stated in his 1959 Pulitzer Prize acceptance speech, "was, and is, the cult of objectivity."

Mrs. Baggs' Attic

McGill's circle of editors shared this view, as evidenced in part by the cache of Bill Baggs' letters found in his widow's attic in Miami. Baggs had risen to become editor of the *Miami News*, another Cox newspaper, partly because of McGill's respect for Baggs' courage and eloquence.