



# 2019 Convention

Be Relevant • Investigate • Innovate



Don't miss headlines including [Governor Mike DeWine](#) • former football star [Maurice Clarett](#), whose inspiring life story you won't forget. • "Revolution, rights and rock 'n roll" with [Ken Paulson](#), president of the First Amendment Center and the former editor of USA Today • [Kelly Wirges](#) of Pro Max, one of the media industry's leading sales trainers • [Al Cross](#), director of the Institute for Rural Journalism and Community Issues • [Thomas Rosenberger](#), executive director of the National Cannabis Industry Association of Ohio • Sales trainer [Lewis VanLandingham](#) of Sandler Training • and many more!

February 7 & 8

Renaissance Columbus  
Westerville-Polaris Hotel

## A MESSAGE FROM YOUR CONVENTION CHAIR

Despite what the naysayers proclaim, newspapers have never been more relevant. A few weeks ago a new Ohio law was signed which helps protect children against underage marriage. The law resulted from a Dayton Daily News investigation that found 4,443 girls under the age of 17 were married in the state between 2000 and 2015, including 59 children who were 15 years old and younger.

That law will have immediate impact on the lives of thousands of children. And the law wouldn't have been written and passed without a local newspaper investigation.

The theme of this year's ONMA convention is "be relevant, investigate, and innovate," which are all things Ohio newspapers do each and every day. We are continually conducting the investigations which other media outlets don't do. We are continually innovating to provide our readers with the information which makes a difference in their lives and communities.

If that isn't being relevant, I don't know what is.

At this year's convention you will find plenty of ways to continue helping your paper be relevant, investigate, and innovate.

I hope you enjoy our outstanding convention and the many dining, shopping and entertainment options in the Polaris area. If you have any questions about either the convention program or nearby eating and shopping choices, ask any member of the ONMA staff. And don't forget to take part in our Wall of Wine raffle to help raise money for the Ohio News Media Foundation!



**Karmen Concannon**

Karmen Concannon  
The Sentinel-Tribune  
Bowling Green



# 2019 Convention

**Be Relevant • Investigate • Innovate**

### Registration and Name Badges

For any special needs contact one of the staff members at the ONMA Registration Desk in the main foyer. Name badges are required for admittance to all sessions and meal functions.

### Convention Social Media Feeds

For real-time comments and thoughts about the convention, please go to **Twitter.com/ONAnews**. You can also share your own thoughts and view convention photos on Twitter using the hashtag **#OhioNews19**.

### Buy tickets for our ONMA Foundation raffles

This year's convention is offering two raffles supporting the Ohio News Media Foundation, with all money raised benefitting Foundation activities.

The first raffle is our Wall of Wine, with winners announced during the Thursday evening cocktail reception. The first ticket drawn will allow the winner to select six bottles from our Wall of Wine. All tickets drawn after that will allow the winners to select one bottle each.

The second raffle is for different gift baskets and items, with these winners announced during breakfast on Friday.

Tickets for both raffles are \$5 each, or 5 tickets for \$20. Tickets may be purchased at the registration table or from any ONMA staff member.

### Exhibits

Don't forget to check out our exhibits, including:

- Photos from the Hooper & Collegiate Competitions
- The newspaper sharing table
- Student journalist resumes

### Thanks to our sponsors

We want to take a moment to thank our sponsors. As always, we appreciate their support of ONMA. Please stop by all the vendor tables and get to know the sponsors, who offer a number of specialized services and products of interest to the newspaper industry. You never know what they can do for you! Again, thank you for helping to make the 2019 convention a success.



Ken Paulson

## THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 7

### Convention Opens

**10:00 - 11:15 a.m.**

### Breakout Session: What Ohio Media Outlets Must Do to Restore and Build Trust

**(Captain B)**

Our panel of professionals from inside and outside our industry will discuss what Ohio media outlets need to do to restore or build trust. One of our panelists will be **Gary Abernathy**, the former publisher of the Times-Gazette in Hillsboro, one of the few papers in America to endorse Donald Trump. Gary, now a Republican county commissioner, continues to write op-ed columns for the Washington Post. Other panelists include moderator **George Rodrigue**, editor of The Plain Dealer; **Aimee Edmondson** of Ohio University; and former Ohio House Speaker **Jo Ann Davidson**.



Jo Ann Davidson

### Breakout Session: Hooper and Collegiate Awards **(Admiral C)**

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

### Lunch and Luncheon Speaker Ken Paulson **(Admiral A&B)**

The luncheon will include remarks from ONMA President Ron Waite along with the presentations of the Maxwell Award, ONMA President's Award, Carrier of the Year Awards, the OCOG Champion of Open Government Award, the Hooper Newspaper of the Year Awards and the Collegiate Frank E. Deaner Awards.



Aimee Edmondson

The luncheon will also feature **"Revolution, rights and rock 'n roll" with Ken Paulson**, a look at the hidden history of the First Amendment in an interactive presentation that will challenge and inspire. Paulson is president of the First Amendment Center and the former editor of USA Today. He's widely known for his creative approach to teaching the First Amendment called "Freedom Sings," the social media campaign called "Free to Tweet," and the Emmy-honored national television show "Speaking Freely."



Gary Abernathy

**1:45 - 2:45 p.m.****General Session: Governor Mike DeWine  
(Admiral A&B)**

Governor Mike DeWine will address the convention and share his legislative priorities and his thoughts on where he wants to take Ohio over the next four years.

**Mike DeWine****2:45 - 3:00 p.m. Beverage Break**

Special sponsorship thanks to White Birch Paper.

**3:00 - 4:00 p.m.****Breakout Session: Rural and Small Town  
Coverage (Captain B)**

No one spends more time studying and thinking about rural and small-town journalism in America than **Al Cross**, director of the Institute for Rural Journalism and Community Issues at the University of Kentucky. Al joined the institute after spending 26 years at The Courier-Journal in Louisville where he shared in a Pulitzer Prize. Al will talk and lead discussions on both problems and opportunities in local news organizations today.

**George Rodrigue****3:00 - 5:00 p.m.****Breakout Session: Ad Training with Kelly  
Wirges (double session) (Admiral C)**

Get back to the basics of sales training with Kelly Wirges of Pro Max, one of the media industry's leading sales trainers. In this double session, Kelly will first cover "Prospecting that Pays" and follow that with "Developing a Competitive Multi-Media Advantage."

**Kelly Wirges****4:00 - 5:00 p.m.****Breakout Session: Weekly and Collegiate  
Roundtables (Admiral A)**

Don't miss these his opportunity for people at weekly and collegiate newspapers to share with their peers the issues they're facing and the best recent ideas they've executed.

**Al Cross**



**Maurice Clarett**

**5:30 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.**  
**Welcome Reception**  
 (Vendor Foyer)

Join us for cocktails, hors d'oeuvres and musical entertainment while connecting with friends and colleagues. The drawing for the Wall of Wine raffle (see page 2) benefiting the Ohio News Media Foundation will take place at 6:30 pm.

Special sponsorship thanks to Southern Lithoplate.



**Rob Oller**

**FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 8**

**7:30 - 8:30 a.m.**  
**Breakfast / ONMA Business Meeting**  
 (Admiral A&B)

**8:30 - 9:30 a.m.**  
**Breakfast Speaker: Maurice Clarett**  
 (Admiral A&B)

Maurice Clarett seemed to have it all as a star athlete who became Big Ten freshman of the year as a running back at Ohio State who helped OSU clinch the national championship in 2002. Then everything went wrong, including dismissal from Ohio State, a failed pro football career and a prison sentence for armed robbery. In prison Clarett vowed to turn his life around. He began reading, finished his college degree and earned early release. Today he's a sought-after motivational speaker and author who founded "The Red Zone," a behavioral health agency serving more than 1,500 children and adults in Ohio. Clarett will sign books after the session.

**Rob Oller**, OSU writer for The Dispatch, will handle our conversation with Maurice.

**9:30 - 9:45 a.m.**  
**Break**



**Beryl Love**

**9:45 - 10:45 a.m.**

### Breakout Session: What Should You Do in a Crisis (Captain B)

What would you do in your workplace if a top manager was accused of sexual harassment? What if a violent attack such as the one at The Capital in Annapolis took place? And what are the best practices in these difficult times for covering crisis incidents in your community?

**Thom Fladung** has some answers for you. Thom joined Hennes Communication in Cleveland after 33 years as a journalist, including managing editor of The Plain Dealer.



**Tom Fladung**

### Breakout Session: Ad Directors Roundtable (Admiral A)

### Breakout Session: Circulation Roundtable (Admiral B)

Don't miss these two unique opportunities for circulation managers and ad directors to share with their peers the best recent ideas they've executed in a fun, rapid-fire format. The ad directors roundtable features **Thomas Rosenberger**, executive director of the National Cannabis Industry Association of Ohio.



**Thomas Rosenberger**

**10:45 - 11:00 a.m. Beverage Break**

**11:00 - 12:00 p.m.**

### Breakout Session: Why Salespeople Fail & What You Can Do About It (Admiral A)

**Lewis VanLandingham** of Sandler Training will show you exactly how media sales teams fail and easy steps you can take to prevent that from happening.



**Lewis VanLandingham**

### Breakout Session: Editors Roundtable (Admiral B)

Don't miss this opportunity for editors to share with their peers the best recent ideas they've executed along with discussing issues their facing. **Beryl Love**, editor and vice president at Enquirer Media in Cincinnati, will moderate. The editors roundtable also features **Thomas Rosenberger**, executive director of the National Cannabis Industry Association of Ohio.

**Noon: Adjourn**

Thank you to the companies and industry suppliers that are sponsors at the ONMA Convention. This is an excellent opportunity to network, to hear about what's new in newspaper industry goods and services, and perhaps do your own on-the-spot negotiating. Sponsor exhibits are in the main foyer.

We encourage you to thank our sponsors for their support.

## Special Sponsors



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**George Rodrigue**  
The Plain Dealer



**Cheryl Vespoit**  
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**CONVENTION COMMITTEE**

Karmen Concannon, The Sentinel-Tribune, Bowling Green (Convention Chair)

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Kirk Dougal, Adams Publishing Group, Athens

Lori Figurski, Ogden Newspapers, Inc. (Past Chair)

Karl Heminger, Findlay Publishing Co.

Mary Huber, Archbold Buckeye

Dave Johnson, Akron Beacon Journal (Circulation)

Bruce Wings, Akron Beacon Journal

Steve Zonars, The Columbus Dispatch

ONMA staff liaisons: Dennis Hetzel and Sue Bazzoli

**OHIO NEWS MEDIA FOUNDATION**

Lori Figurski, Ogden Newspapers, president

Bruce Wings, Akron Beacon Journal, treasurer

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Dennis Hetzel (President), Ohio News Media Association (NV)

George Rodrigue, (Chair) The Plain Dealer, Cleveland

David Marburger (Counsel), Cleveland (NV)

A long-standing convention tradition to showcase young journalists continues with this year's student news bureau staffed by students from The Ohio State University.

We gratefully acknowledge Spencer Hunt, Lantern Director of Student Media at The Ohio State University, for his assistance as the student media adviser.

We are pleased to welcome the following students:

- Casey Cascaldo: [cascaldo.1@osu.edu](mailto:cascaldo.1@osu.edu)
- Katie Hamilton: [hamilton.1193@osu.edu](mailto:hamilton.1193@osu.edu)
- Michael Lee: [lee.7240@osu.edu](mailto:lee.7240@osu.edu)
- Joe Matts: [matts.2@osu.edu](mailto:matts.2@osu.edu)
- Sydney Riddle: [riddle.136@osu.edu](mailto:riddle.136@osu.edu)

These students are based in the near the ONMA registration desk. They will be providing news, photo and video coverage, real-time Twitter updates from @ONANews and their own special Bulletin design to be published as a special electronic edition of the ONMA Bulletin on Feb. 15.

Please introduce yourselves to these young journalists and ask for resumes. This is an excellent opportunity for recruiting.

**Follow their tweets:**

Twitter: @ONANews

And follow the action, and share your own tweets,  
with the hashtag #OhioNews19

### **Gary Abernathy**

Gary Abernathy is a contributing columnist for The Washington Post. After spending 13 years as an editor at three Ohio newspapers from 1983 to 1996, Abernathy worked in Republican Party politics in Ohio and West Virginia, as well as for an Ohio congressman and two U.S. senators. He returned to journalism in 2011, serving until July 2018 as publisher and editor of the Hillsboro Times-Gazette, one of the few newspapers to endorse Donald Trump for president in 2016. Abernathy has won numerous industry awards for column writing, editing and reporting. He serves as a Republican commissioner on the Highland County Board of Commissioners. His blog on local, state and national issues can be found at [garyabernathymedia.com](http://garyabernathymedia.com).

### **Maurice Clarett**

Maurice Clarett's physical prowess as a football athlete at Warren High School caught the eyes of recruiters at The Ohio State University who saw his potential. He became the first freshman running back to start, be named Big Ten freshman of the year, and set the freshman rushing and touchdown season record, seamlessly solidifying his role as a leader on the field. Most notably, Clarett played an instrumental role in The Ohio State Buckeyes team clinching the National Championship in 2002 with two pivotal plays: "the strip" and scoring the go ahead touchdown. Then everything went wrong, including dismissal from Ohio State, a failed pro football career and a prison sentence for armed robbery. In prison Clarett vowed to turn his life around. He began reading, finished his college degree and earned early release. Today he's a sought-after motivational speaker and author who founded "The Red Zone," a behavioral health agency serving more than 1,500 children and adults in Ohio. Clarett will sign books after the session. Clarett's Twitter handle is @ReeseClarett13.

### **Al Cross**

Al Cross became director of the Institute for Rural Journalism and Community Issues in 2004 after more than 26 years as a reporter at The Courier-Journal, the last 15½ as the Louisville newspaper's chief political writer. His coverage ranged from presidential to local elections and included all facets of state government. He is also an associate professor in the School of Journalism and Media at the University of Kentucky, where the Institute is based. His awards include a share of the Pulitzer Prize won by The Courier-Journal staff in 1989 for coverage of the nation's deadliest bus crash. In 2015 he received the James Madison Award for service to the First Amendment from the Scripps Howard First Amendment Center in the UK School of Journalism and Media. Cross was the elected national president of SPJ, the nation's oldest, broadest and largest journalism organization, from October 2001 to September 2002. He is the longest-running panelist on KET's weekly "Comment on Kentucky," has appeared on C-SPAN and "Washington Week In Review," and has been quoted in The Almanac of American Politics. Cross is a graduate of Clinton County High School and Western Kentucky University, where he was chief reporter, editor and advertising manager of the award-winning College Heights Herald. His Twitter handle is @ruralj.



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### **Jo Ann Davidson**

Before most women even thought of running for public office, Jo Ann Davidson had already decided to serve. She first ran for Reynoldsburg City Council in 1965 before any women had been elected to council. She did not win. Undaunted, she ran again in the next election cycle. This time she won. She went on to serve ten years as a hardworking member of city council and become chair of its powerful finance committee. In 1980 Davidson successfully ran for a seat in the Ohio House of Representatives where she served with distinction for 20 years. She was elected by her peers to be the Speaker of the Ohio House of Representatives in 1995. During her historic service as the first woman Speaker from 1995 through 2000, she guided many important legislative initiatives through the Ohio General Assembly including welfare reform, electric deregulation and criminal justice reform. In addition, Davidson has extensive experience in the private sector. Prior to 1994, Davidson worked as Vice President of Special Programs for the Ohio Chamber of Commerce. Davidson holds honorary Doctor of Law degrees from Franklin University, Ohio University, Capital University and Cleveland State, an honorary degree in Government Leadership from the University of Findlay, and an honorary Doctor of Public Administration degree from The Ohio State University. She formed her own consulting firm, JAD and Associates, and is doing consulting work on a broad range of issues involving public policy development and analysis, strategic planning and political campaigns. She served as Co-Chair of the Republican National Committee from 2005 to 2009.

### **Mike DeWine**

On November 6, 2018, Mike DeWine was elected to serve as the 70th Governor of the State of Ohio. DeWine has had a long and distinguished career in public service and has previously served as the 50th Attorney General of Ohio and as Greene County Prosecutor, Ohio State Senator, U.S. Congressman, Ohio Lt. Governor, and U.S. Senator. DeWine met his wife, Fran (Struewing), in the first grade and they married while students at Miami University. They've been blessed with eight children and 24 grandchildren.

### **Aimee Edmondson**

Through her research and courses, veteran journalist and Ohio University associate professor Aimee Edmondson helps future journalists combine their writing skills with technology-assisted reporting and media law. Edmondson researches and writes about changes in state sunshine laws and the evolution of libel law during the U.S. civil rights movement. She works to bridge the gap between professional journalists and academics. She is an international CAR trainer, most recently working with journalists in East Africa and India. Before coming to teach at Ohio University, Edmondson covered politics, poverty and education mostly while reporting for the Commercial Appeal in Memphis, Tennessee, and the Augusta Chronicle in Georgia. National reporting awards include Green Eyeshade Excellence in Journalism, Society of Professional



Journalists, and the Casey Medal for Meritorious Journalism. She also won 10 Best of Scripps awards for work at the Commercial Appeal. State reporting awards include Tennessee Associated Press Managing Editors, first place, non-deadline reporting and Malcolm Law Investigative reporting award; and multiple Georgia Associated Press awards. She earned her bachelor's degree from Louisiana State University (1990), her masters from the University of Memphis (1999) and her doctorate in journalism from the University of Missouri (2008).

### **Thom Fladung**

Thom Fladung is managing partner of Hennes Communications, one of the few firms in the United States focused exclusively on crisis communications and crisis management. Fladung spent 33 years in newspaper newsrooms, and held lead editing positions at the Detroit Free Press, St. Paul Pioneer Press, Akron Beacon Journal and, most recently, served as managing editor of The Plain Dealer. Thom, a native of Canton, Ohio, serves on the board of the Cleveland Press Club.

### **Beryl Love**

Beryl Love is the executive editor of the Cincinnati Enquirer and regional editor for the USA Today Network's Ohio region. Love joined USA Today in 2013 to launch the National News Desk, a hub that connects the USA Today Network's 109 local news organizations. Prior to that, Love was executive editor of the Reno Gazette-Journal. While there, he ushered in an era of rapid digital audience growth. The Gazette-Journal's website, RGJ.com, rose to seventh in the nation for digital reach among newspaper websites in 2010, as measured by Media Audit. He led the fight to protect open records laws in the state, winning a Gannett Freedom of Information award in 2009 for cases that were decided by the Nevada Supreme Court. Love also was active in the Northern Nevada community, volunteering on boards for the Boy Scouts of America and the American Heart Association. Love is a graduate of the University of Cincinnati, where he was editor of the student newspaper, the News Record. He roots for the Reds, has an affinity for Greek festivals and enjoys outdoor activities with his 11-year-old son, William.

### **Rob Oller**

Rob Oller has worked at the Columbus Dispatch since 1995. Over that stretch he has covered everything from the World Series to the Masters to Ohio State football, including the 2002 national championship season that featured Maurice Clarett at tailback. Rob is from northern Ohio and attended Ohio State, where he majored in journalism and ran track for the Buckeyes.

### **Ken Paulson**

Ken Paulson is dean of the College of Media and Entertainment at Middle Tennessee State University and president of the First Amendment Center. He is also the former editor-in-chief of USA Today and remains a columnist on USA Today's board of contributors, writing about First Amendment issues. He is also the host of "The Songwriters," a television show on PBS television affiliates in 55 markets nationwide featuring interviews with inductees into the Nashville Songwriters Hall of Fame. The program was selected for screening at the Nashville Film Festival in 2018. Paulson is a member of the Hall of Fame's board. Throughout his career, Paulson has drawn on his background as both a journalist and lawyer, serving as the editor or managing editor of newspapers in five different states. He was on the team of journalists who founded USA Today in 1982 before moving on to manage newsrooms in Westchester County, N.Y., Green Bay, Wis., Bridgewater, N.J. and at Florida Today in Brevard County, Fla. He also is a former president of the American Society of News Editors, the nation's largest organization of news-media leaders. He is also the former president of the Newseum, the museum of new in Washington, DC. Paulson also was the host of the Emmy-honored television program "Speaking Freely," seen in more than 60 PBS markets nationwide over five seasons, and the author of "Freedom Sings," a multimedia stage show celebrating the First Amendment that continues to tour the nation's campuses. In 2007, he was named fellow of the Society of Professional Journalists, "the highest honor SPJ bestows upon a journalist for extraordinary contributions to the profession." He is a graduate of the University of Illinois College of Law and the University of Missouri School of Journalism. He also has served as an adjunct professor at Vanderbilt University Law School

### **George Rodrigue**

George Rodrigue became editor of The Plain Dealer in January 2015. As editor, he leads the journalists who provide stories, photos and graphics for the newspaper and for Cleveland.com from The Plain Dealer's newsroom. He also leads the team that produces the printed paper. In June 2016, he added General Manager to his title, adding local responsibility for circulation, production, human resources and financial operations. In February 2017, he was named President & Editor of Plain Dealer Publishing Co. Before coming to Cleveland, he served as the assistant news director of WFAA-TV in Dallas, the ABC affiliate in the nation's fifth-largest television market. From 2004 until 2014, he was vice president and managing editor of The Dallas Morning News. There, he oversaw numerous reshapings of the newsroom and led the team that produced and designed the paper's website. His staff won one Pulitzer Prize and was twice named a finalist for the award. From 1982 until 1998, he worked for The Dallas Morning News. He and a partner won the 1986 Pulitzer Prize for National Reporting for stories that exposed segregation and discrimination in federally subsidized housing programs. He was one of eight Dallas Morning News reporters who won the 1994 Pulitzer Prize for International Reporting for a series about violence against women. He has also received the American

Bar Association's Silver Gavel Award, the Robert F. Kennedy award for covering problems afflicting the disadvantaged, and the Certificate of Merit from the Overseas Press Club. He's a native of Boston, holds a bachelor's degree in history from the University of Virginia, and studied law and economics on a Nieman Fellowship at Harvard University. He has been married since 1979 to Wendy Meyer, a fellow graduate of the University of Virginia. They have two children.

### **Thomas Rosenberger**

Thomas Rosenberger has spent the past four years working on medical marijuana reform in Ohio, most recently as the Executive Director of the National Cannabis Industry Association of Ohio (NCIAO). Prior to his role with NCIAO, Rosenberger served as Deputy Political Director for the 2016 Ohioans for Medical Marijuana campaign.

### **Lewis VanLandingham**

After 23 years of sales success in a variety of contexts, Lewis VanLandingham now works with business owners and non-profit leaders to learn new ways to lead their selling interactions more effectively and efficiently so that they can do more good as they serve more customers. He has won numerous awards as a sales professional and trainer and is frequently invited to speak to local organizations and associations.

### **Kelly Wirges**

For over 25 years Kelly Wirges has assisted companies to increase sales and revenue in all facets of business. In her career, she has enjoyed positions in sales, marketing and management and has been a partner at an advertising agency focusing on small business development. In 1993, she founded ProMax Training & Consulting, Inc. ProMax develops practical, customized solutions that help companies retain, develop and align talent with business strategies. She has authored over 50 training programs, has customized materials for hundreds of companies, and has helped over 200,000 ProMax alumni increase their success. Wirges is known for her ability to combine a dynamic presentation and lively interaction with the necessary information and tools to achieve the desired results. Wirges's educational background includes an advertising, marketing and business degree from the University of Nebraska, as well as a graphic design degree from Platt College.

## **About the Ohio News Media Association**

Established in 1933, the Ohio News Media Association formally consolidated the activities of two loosely-knit groups of publishers which had existed since the late 1800's – the Buckeye Press Association for weekly newspapers and the Associated Ohio Dailies. These forerunner organizations banded together to share trade information and to jointly sell advertising.

From these roots has evolved a strong state trade association which represents all of Ohio's daily newspapers and weekly newspapers which qualify for periodicals class mail privileges. ONMA administers a full program of member services that include: government relations and lobbying, publications, seminars and employee training, legal assistance, group insurance, and advertising services.

To learn more about the Ohio News Media Association, go to [www.ohionews.org](http://www.ohionews.org).



**1335 Dublin Rd., Suite 216-B  
Columbus, OH 43215**