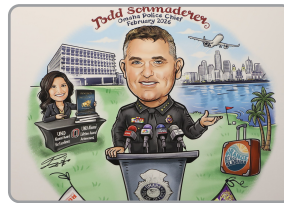


OPC NEWS

VOLUME 148 • NUMBER 100 APRIL 2026 WWW.OMAHAPRESSCLUB.COM



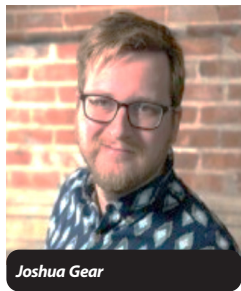
SEE PAGE 2



SEE PAGE 3

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

By Joshua Gear
OPC President



Joshua Gear

It feels like just yesterday that I was attending a Communications Committee meeting at the Omaha Press Club in late 2024 when the good news arrived that First National Bank had reached a deal to sell its former headquarters. There was so much excitement and anticipation for the new owners. It felt like only a matter of time before the next phase would begin.

After a holding pattern far beyond anyone's plans and out of everyone's control, the closing date finally arrived. NuStyle Development, the masterminds behind some of this area's most incredible and creative redevelop-

ments, has taken ownership of First National Center at 1620 Dodge St.

For those of you unfamiliar with their work, their vision centers on finding the beauty in residential conversions of commercial office spaces (The Highline, formerly the Northern Natural Gas building), manufacturing operations (TipTop, previously the Omaha Ford Motor Company Assembly Plant), industrial applications (Breakers, a closed OPPD power plant), and a growing portfolio of projects across the region.

That appreciation for history, combined with a vision for what's next, makes me incredibly excited about what this means for the building — and for the 22nd floor that the Omaha Press Club calls home. In the weeks and months ahead, work will begin to bring meaningful updates and improvements to the space.

The Omaha Press Club has called this space home since 1971, and that isn't chang-

ing. With Steve and Christine managing the restaurant operations and the OPC Board focused on marketing and membership growth, we're hard at work to ensure this space remains a center for celebrating the news and newsmakers of our community.

So, how can you help?

Come dine with us.

Bring friends, family, coworkers, and clients.

Encourage those you know to become members.

Host your events and gatherings here.

Attend OPC events whenever you can.

We've got so many great things in store for 2026 and beyond, but we can't make them happen without your help.

See you at the club,

- Josh Gear

Kirsten Bernthal Booth and Jim Flanery

Two icons in Creighton women's athletics will be next Face on the Barroom Floor

By Tom O'Connor
Communications Committee

Women's athletics have never been bigger in the United States. These days you can hardly turn on the television without finding a women's athletic event.

In Omaha, two of the leading ambassadors for women's athletics are Kirsten Bernthal Booth and Jim Flanery. For more than two decades, Booth and Flanery officed next door to each other in the Creighton University Athletics Department. Booth coached the women's volleyball squad from 2003-2024, while Flanery has guided the women's basketball team since 2002.

Both coaches built programs of excellence that elevated Creighton to national prominence in their respective sports. For all their efforts in taking women's athletics to a

new level, the Omaha Press Club will honor Booth and Flanery on Wednesday, May 13, as the duo will be recognized as the 186th Face on the Barroom Floor.

Due to the success of the women's volleyball and basketball programs, Creighton was able to open the Ryan Athletics Center and D.J. Sokol Arena in 2009. The facility has a seating capacity of 2,500 and provides an energetic atmosphere for sporting events.

"This is the time for women's sports," said Booth, who is now serving as president of business operations for LOVB Nebraska, part of the League One Volleyball professional league. "Flan and I are both honored to be a face for all the women's athletes and coaches who have come before us."

Booth was a two-time state champion in



Jim Flanery



Kirsten Bernthal Booth

OPC Hall of Fame to add 7 on June 6

By Bridget Weide Brooks
Marketing & Membership

Since 2008, the Omaha Press Club has honored journalists from both the past and present. Each year, the OPC Journalists of Excellence Hall of Fame dinner provides a meaningful evening celebrating individuals who have made notable contributions to Omaha journalism and who have demonstrated exceptional leadership, courage and impact across broadcast, print, digital media, and public relations.

Those to be honored on Saturday, June 6: Ross Jernstrom
Julie Anderson
Terri Sanders
Marcos Mora
Chris Allen
Rosalee Roberts (posthumous)
Scott Buer

Now in its 18th year (there was no induction in 2020), the Hall of Fame continues to recognize professionals whose work has helped shape the media landscape in Omaha

Continue on Page 4

Continue on Page 4

Schmaderer roast mixes barbs, bravos

By Katie Raine Thomas
Communications Committee

The Omaha Press Club hosted an evening of celebration, humor and recognition honoring Omaha Police Chief Todd Schmaderer as the 185th Face on the Barroom Floor, celebrating his decades of service and lasting impact on the Omaha community.

Set against the warm glow of the Press Club's storied walls — where history quite literally surrounds the room — the evening carried a distinct energy: part celebration, part reflection, and part tradition unfolding in real time.

Emceed by WOWT 6 anchor Brian Mastre, the evening began with a nod to the tradition of the event, where, as Mastre noted, “nothing is off limits” and “there will be things that probably should have been left unsaid,” setting the tone for a program that blended lighthearted roasting with meaningful reflection.

Mastre also acknowledged Schmaderer's 30-year career in law enforcement, including more than 13 years as chief — “that's rare,” he noted — highlighting the longevity and significance of his leadership in a major metropolitan department. In keeping with the spirit of the evening, Mastre joked early on, “We'll be collecting your badges, tasers and guns now,” drawing laughter from the audience.

The evening's roasters included a mix of colleagues, elected officials, media figures, and close collaborators, each offering a unique perspective on Schmaderer's career and character.

As the program unfolded, the rhythm of the evening moved effortlessly between laughter and reverence — a signature of the Face on the Barroom Floor tradition.

Omaha City Attorney Matt Kuhse opened with humor rooted in their professional relationship, joking, “I am Todd's therapy animal,” and adding, “I don't salute him. I don't kiss his ass. I treat him terribly,” before shifting to a more sincere tone, noting, “You're a great police chief and an even better friend.” He also drew laughs from the audience with the remark, “I'm glad we could all be here to give attention to someone who never gets any attention.”

Attorney Mike Dowd, who has worked closely with law enforcement leadership for years, described Schmaderer as “a stoic leader who has steadfastly committed himself to

protecting the city,” while also adding humor to his remarks, noting, “We know the serious Todd... the very serious Todd... and the super serious Todd.”

Media voices also took the stage, including KFAB's Scott Voorhees, who reflected on Schmaderer's consistent presence in the public eye and the demands of leading during high-profile moments. Adding to the evening's humor, Voorhees joked that Schma-

derer had been recognized as “hunkiest cop” and “most likely to fight his roasters,” and quipped that “Several women have been known to commit crimes just to see if Todd would show up,” drawing laughter from the crowd.

derer's fiancée, Carla Liberty, who offered insight into his life beyond the public role. Balancing humor with sincerity, she noted, “Roasting my fiance in front of 200 people and still expecting the wedding to happen... that takes courage,” before reflecting on his leadership and commitment, adding, “He stayed. He weathered the storm.” She concluded with a heartfelt tribute: “No one deserves this honor more... Omaha is better because of you.”

Current Omaha Mayor John Ewing Jr. offered both praise and humor, telling the audience, “I am the luckiest mayor in the United States of America,” and joking, “I have been carrying you since the moment you were recommended,” before adding, “It has been great watching you grow as chief” and expressing appreciation for his service to the community.

In video remarks, former Mayor Jean Stothert highlighted their long-standing working relationship, noting Schmaderer's professionalism and media presence, adding with a smile, “You look pretty darn good on TV.” She also joked about his book, saying their work together was captured “not in a chapter... not in a page... but in a paragraph,” and noted that he could easily turn his experience into “a TED Talk.”

Moments throughout the evening revealed not just a career, but a community — one shaped by shared experiences, long-standing relationships, and a collective investment in the city's future.

The tone of the evening shifted toward reflection during remarks from Schmaderer's fiancée, Carla Liberty, who offered insight into his life beyond the public role.

His leadership has played a key role in shaping public safety and civic confidence in Omaha over the past decade.

The highlight of the evening was the unveiling of Schmaderer's caricature, a hallmark of the Face on the Barroom Floor tradition. The artwork depicts him at a podium surrounded by media microphones, symbolizing his role as a steady and visible communicator throughout his tenure. Additional elements in the piece reflect his career, education and personal life, including references to his book “Synergy of Influence: Leadership, Law Enforcement, and the Media,” as well as nods to Omaha's skyline and his professional journey.

With the Face unveiling, Schmaderer



Carla Liberty and Todd Schmaderer with The 185th Face on the Barroom Floor.



The roasters, from left: Mike Dowd, Brian Mastre, Mayor John Ewing, Jr., Matt Kuhse, former Mayor Jim Suttle, Todd Schmaderer, Carla Liberty, and Scott Voorhees. Photos by Gary Willis.

derer had been recognized as “hunkiest cop” and “most likely to fight his roasters,” and quipped that “Several women have been known to commit crimes just to see if Todd would show up,” drawing laughter from the crowd.

The program also featured remarks from civic leadership across multiple administrations. Former Mayor Jim Suttle reflected on Schmaderer's tenure with both humor and perspective, noting, “You've done over a million things right... and only a couple wrong,” while joking, “I asked you to change

Continue on Page 3

officially joins the historic wall of honorees that decorate the Press Club — becoming the first active Omaha police chief to receive the distinction.

In closing remarks, Schmaderer reflected on his career with humility, telling the audience, “All I really did was steer — everybody else did the hard work,” and adding, “I couldn’t have done it without my tremendous staff and the people in this room.”

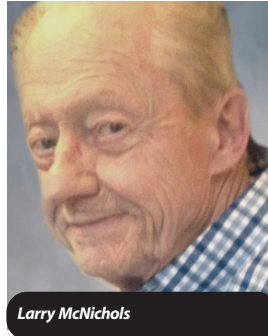
The evening served as both a celebration of a distinguished career and a reflection of the leadership, relationships and service that have helped shape Omaha’s public safety landscape.

The OPC remembers: Larry McNichols

Larry McNichols, a longtime supporter of the Omaha Press Club and a familiar musical presence at OPC Gridiron Shows, died Feb. 18. He was 95.

McNichols’ career was in advertising, during which time he also completed 30 years in the Army Reserves, retiring with the rank of colonel. He also found time for a host of professional and civic activities, serving as district governor of Rotary and governor of his district of the American Federation of Advertising.

McNichols was a board member of numerous organizations, including Historic Prospect Hill Cemetery and Mid-America



Larry McNichols

Council-Scouting America (he was an Eagle Scout). He received the Order of the Beaver Award for Boy Scouts. He served All Saints Episcopal Church as an usher and lay reader for many years.

And then there was the McNichols trombone and cello. Larry played those instruments for 35 years in the Omaha Press Club Show “Orchestra” and neighborhood bands.

McNichols graduated from Omaha Central High School, Princeton University and after serving in the Korean War, he returned to graduate from Harvard Business School where he met his future wife, Lannie, whom he married in 1956.

McNichols was preceded in death by Lannie. He is survived by a son, Bill, of Dallas and daughter, Elizabeth “Eli” McNichols of Omaha.

PHONE 402-345-8008 FOR RESERVATIONS

Easter Buffet

Sunday, April 5, 2026

Seatings: 10 a.m. and 12:30 p.m.

Adults \$35 • Children \$17

Carving Station

Prime Rib of Beef

Whiskey Pepper-Glazed Ham

Entrées

Chicken Bourguignon

Lemon-Pepper Butter Baked Tilapia

Eggs Benedict

Lyonnais New Potato

Biscuits & Sausage Gravy

Seasonal Vegetable

Build-Your-Own Omelet

Multi-Topping Buttermilk Pancakes

Salad Display

Thunderbird Salad, Chef Salad,

Creamy Dill Cucumber Salad,

Potato Salad, Deviled Eggs,

Smoked Salmon Chaud-Froid,

Continental Fruit Display

Continental Cheese Display

Desserts

Pastries, Sticky Buns,

Chocolate-Dipped Driscoll Strawberries,

Homemade Coffee Cake, Cheesecake

Mother's Day Brunch

Sunday, May 10, 2026

Seatings: 10 a.m. and 12:30 p.m.

Adults \$35 • Children 10 & Under \$17

Carving Station

Steamship Round of Beef

with Horseradish Chantilly

& Au Jus

Old School Pineapple-Glazed Ham

Entrées

Chicken Crepes Supreme

Baked Tilapia Buerre Blanc

Eggs Benedict

À la carte

Build-Your-Own Omelet

Multi-Topping Pancake Bar

Salad Display

Thunderbird Salad,

Imported Cheese & Antipasto,

Cole Slaw, Potato Salad,

Deviled Eggs

Smoked Salmon Chaud Froid

Fresh Fruit Display

Pecan Rolls

Dessert

New York-Style Cheesecake

with Strawberries,

Chocolate Driscoll Strawberries,

Warm Peach Cobbler with

French Vanilla Ice Cream

OPC Scholarship Brunch

Saturday, April 25, 2026

10:30 a.m. Brunch

\$30 Inclusive

Fresh Fruit

Sticky Buns

Scrambled Eggs

Bacon

Iced Tea and Coffee

Hall of Fame Dinner

Saturday, June 6, 2026

Members \$75 • Non-members \$85

Hors d'oeuvres

Carpaccio

Bruschetta

Salad

Thunderbird Salad

Entrées

Chicken Cordon Bleu

Creamy Mushroom Risotto

and Brandied Carrots

Dessert

OPC Signature Dessert

Face on the Barroom story; continued from Page 1

tennis at Lincoln East High School before becoming a standout volleyball player at Truman State University in Kirksville, Missouri. She earned her undergraduate degree at Truman State and a master's degree from the University of Iowa.

While at Iowa, Booth began her volleyball coaching career as a volunteer assistant. In 2000, she landed her first head coaching position at Kirkwood Community College in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. After three years at Kirkwood, Booth was tabbed by Creighton Athletic Director Bruce Rasmussen to be the head coach of the Bluejays at the age of 27.

Booth took over a program that was 3-23. During her 22 years at the helm, she led them to 12 conference titles and 13 consecutive NCAA Tournament berths, culminating in a historic Elite Eight run in 2024 and a program-best No. 6 national ranking.

Throughout her career, Booth earned three National Coach of the Year honors, multiple Conference Coach of the Year awards, and induction into the Omaha Sports Hall of Fame. She is widely recognized not only for competitive success but also for her ability to build resilient, values-driven cultures that empower individuals to perform at their best.

Beyond coaching, Booth is an entrepreneur and innovator. She co-founded NeuroFuel, a mental training app focused on mindset and performance development for athletes. Booth's leadership experience spans athletics, business and innovation, with a focus on building teams, empowering people, and sustaining excellence through change.

She lives in Elkhorn with her husband, Erik, and their three daughters, Reese, Hayden and Berkeley. Reese is playing volleyball for the University of Northern Iowa, while Hayden will play volleyball next fall at Bradley University.

A native of Guthrie Center, Iowa, Flanery is a 1987 graduate of Creighton. From 1985-

1987, he was a walk-on member of the men's basketball team coached by Tony Barone. He also was a member of the Creighton golf team.

"I stumbled into coaching," said Flanery, who was originally a journalism major before shifting to philosophy. "I didn't really know what I wanted to do. I didn't have a coaching agenda."

After Flanery graduated, he was asked by Rasmussen — who was then the women's basketball coach at Creighton — to be a graduate assistant coach. He held this post for three years before moving to Loras College in Dubuque, Iowa, in 1990 to become an assistant coach under Connie Yori, a legendary women's basketball player at Creighton.

In 1992, Rasmussen stepped down as the women's head coach to become associate athletics director. Yori was brought in as head coach and Flanery returned to Creighton as her top assistant. Over the next 10 years with Yori and Flanery at the helm, the Bluejays notched a 170-115 record and made two appearances in the NCAA Tournament.

In 2002, Yori left Creighton to become head coach at the University of Nebraska, and Flanery was elevated to the head coach post. In 24 years as head coach, Flanery has become Creighton's all-time victory leader with a 469-290 record and a .618 winning percentage.

He led the Bluejays to eight NCAA Tournament appearances, including four consecutive berths from 2022-2025. The 2021-22 campaign was historic for the Bluejays as Creighton reached the Elite Eight with victories over Colorado, No. 8 Iowa and No. 10 Iowa State.

Creighton also reached the second round of the NCAA Tournament in 2013, 2017, 2018 and 2024. In 2017, Flanery led the Bluejays to their first BIG EAST Conference regular season title. In addition, Flanery won Missouri Valley Conference regular season championships in 2003 and 2013 and the 2012 MVC Tournament Championship.

Under Flanery, the Bluejays have reached 20 wins or more 12 times and have been to the postseason 18 times, including a stretch of 11 consecutive years from 2008-2018. Flanery also led Creighton to a pair of appearances in the WNIT Final Four (2003 and 2004), capturing the 2004 WNIT Championship.

Flanery and his wife, Emily, have two children, Jackson and Brynn.

Roasters for the Face event will include:

Emcee – **Bruce Rasmussen**, retired director of athletics, Creighton University;

Tom Lilly, tennis coach, Creighton University;

Mike West, president, Omaha Lancers;

Mark Jones, Ed.D., former Creighton University basketball player, vice president, Northpoint Recovery, Omaha, and mental health and sports performance consultant for Creighton athletics;

Brian Rosen, Creighton University head volleyball coach;

Angie Oxley Behrens, Creighton University assistant volleyball coach; and

Brad Bernthal, Kirsten's brother, associate professor emeritus, University of Colorado School of Law, and founder of Brain Cramp Camp

**FACE ON BARROOM FLOOR –
KIRSTEN BERNTHAL BOOTH
AND JIM FLANERY**

WHEN: WEDNESDAY, MAY 13:

5:30 P.M. – RECEPTION;

6:30 P.M. – DINNER;

8 P.M. – ROAST

COST: \$90 FOR OPC MEMBERS;

\$100 FOR NON-MEMBERS

RSVP: The event is open to the public.

CALL THE OPC AT 402-345-8008.

MEMBERS CAN CHARGE TO THEIR OPC ACCOUNT. NON-MEMBERS NEED TO PROVIDE THEIR CREDIT CARD INFORMATION.

DRESS IS BUSINESS CASUAL.

Hall of Fame story; continued from Page 1

range of disciplines within journalism and communications, reflecting the evolving nature of the industry while honoring an enduring commitment to informing the public.

The inaugural class in 2008 included 10 pioneers in the field, with careers dating back to the 19th century. Since then, the Hall of Fame has grown to include many of the most respected and influential voices in Omaha media history.

The evening will begin with a no-host re-

ception at 5:30 p.m., followed by dinner and the Hall of Fame induction ceremony. Each honoree will be invited to share brief remarks as part of the program.

Reservations can be made online at <https://bit.ly/OPCHallofFame> or by calling the Omaha Press Club at 402-345-8008, option 1. The cost of the event is \$75 for members and \$85 for non-members, which includes tax and gratuity. A 48-hour cancellation policy applies.



2026 - 2027 Officers

Joshua Gear
President
Lozier Corporation

Keith Station
President-Elect
Mayor's Office

Hunter Samuels
Treasurer
Ronald McDonald House

Jeremy Maskel
Secretary
Omaha Public Schools

Mike McKnight
Past President
WOWT

Board of Directors

(2025-2027)

Todd Andrews
Angella Arndt
Rod Howe
Roger Humphries
Liz Hruska
Dr. Robert Meyers

Salvation Army
Freelance Content Contributor
Retired
Roger Humphries Photography
Catalyst Public Affairs Analyst
Retired

(2026-2028)

Allen Beermann
Woody Bradford
Bridget Weide Brooks
Todd Lemke

Retired
Houghton Bradford Whitted
Image Building Communications
Omaha Publications

Communications Committee

Don Summerside • Gary Willis • Josh Gear
Roger Humphries • Tom O'Connor • John Fey
Bridget (Weide) Brooks • Hunter Samuels
Todd Andrews • Angella Arndt • Anne Walsh
Sandra Tursi • Elaine Allen • Katie Raine Thomas

Committee Chairs

Communications Gary Willis, Angella Arndt
Education Dr. Robert Meyers
Executive Committee Joshua Gear, Jeremy Maskel,
Mike McKnight, and Hunter Samuels
"Face on the Barroom Floor" Roger Humphries
Hall of Fame Dr. Robert Meyers
Marketing / Membership Bridget (Weide) Brooks

OPC Foundation

Melissa Matczak
President

Maria Marron
First Vice President

Tom Shaw
Treasurer

Lei Guo
Secretary

TRUSTEES

Henry Cordes
Erin Grace
Aaron Hegarty
Mehrnaz Khanjani
Chris Machian
Tracie McPherson
Brian Norton
Aaron Sanderford
Danelle Schlegelmilch
Matt Wynn

TRUSTEES EMERITUS

Elaine Allen
Chris Christen
Steve Jordon
Howard K. Marcus

WE'RE ONLINE! READ YOUR OPC NEWSLETTER AT OMAHAPRESSCLUB.COM



Every Thursday
Prime Rib Night
5:30 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Sunday, April 5
Easter Brunch
Two seatings:
10 a.m.-noon, 12:30 p.m.-2 p.m.
Adults \$35 • Children 3-10 \$17

Thursday, April 9
Book Signing:
"Unleash your Amazing"
Author Larry Keiter
No-host, cash bar
4 p.m. - 6 p.m.

Saturday, April 25
OPC Scholarship Brunch
10 a.m. social, 10:30 p.m. brunch
\$30

Sunday, May 10

Mother's Day Brunch
Seatings: 10 a.m. and 12:30 p.m.
Adults \$30 • Children 3-10 \$17

Wednesday, May 13

Face on the Barroom Floor
Creighton coaching icons
Kirsten Bernthal Booth
and Jim Flanery
5:30 p.m. reception,
6:30 p.m. dinner, 8 p.m. roast
Members \$90, non-members \$100

Saturday, June 6

Hall of Fame Dinner
Members \$75, non-members \$85

Hours of Operation

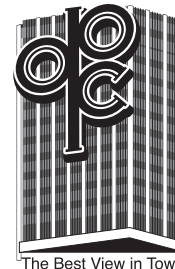
1620 Dodge St., Omaha NE 68102

LUNCH

Tuesday-Saturday
11:30 a.m. to 2 p.m.
Closed Mondays

DINNER

Thursday-Saturday
5:30 p.m. to 8 p.m.



OMAHA PRESS CLUB STAFF

Executive Director
Steve Villamonte opcdirector@gmail.com

Restaurant and Events Manager
Christine Villamonte opcchristine@gmail.com

Office 402-345-8587
Restaurant 402-345-8008
Website omahapressclub.com

NEWSLETTER COMMITTEE

Sandra Tursi Graphics Editor
Tom O'Connor Proofreader
Don Summerside Copy Editor

**Submissions for the May issue
are due on or before April 20.**

Are you looking for a perfect party setting? A lunch surrounded by brilliance?
A dinner your guests will always remember? Keep the OPC in mind.

CANCELLATION POLICY: All reservations must be cancelled 48 HOURS in advance.