

OPC NEWS

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OPC Hall of Fame to induct seven on June 6

By Gary Willis
Communications Committee

Seven outstanding journalists will be inducted into the Omaha Press Club Hall of Fame. Todd Andrews, director of integrated communications for the Salvation Army of Omaha, will emcee the event.

Those to be honored on Saturday, June 6:

- Chris Allen** – UNO Television, KVNO-FM
- Julie Anderson** – Omaha World-Herald
- Scott Buer** – KETV
- Ross Jernstrom** – WOWT, KETV
- Marcos Mora** – El Perico, Spanish Yellow Pages
- Rosalee Roberts (posthumous)** – Omaha Performing Arts, Bozell, Children’s Health-care Services, KETV



Chris Allen



Julie Anderson



Marcos Mora



Terri Sanders



Rosalee Roberts



Ross Jernstrom



Scott Buer

Terri Sanders – Omaha Star

This is the 18th year for the event (there was no induction in 2020). The inaugural Hall of Fame honored 10 pioneers in the

industry, reaching back to the 19th century.

The evening this year will begin with a no-host reception at 5:30 p.m., with dinner and the Hall

of Fame induction ceremony to follow.

Reservations can be made online at <https://bit.ly/OPCHallofFame> or call the Omaha Press Club at 402-345-8008 option 1. The event is open to the public. The cost of the event is \$75 for members and \$85 for non-members.

Prices include tax and gratuity. A 48-hour cancellation policy applies.

A MESSAGE FROM THE MANAGER

There is a new sheriff in town. We are excited to announce that renovation of our building has begun by the new owners, NuStyle Development.

The floors beneath the club are being converted to apartments, with completion scheduled by 2028. With the exception of the annual OPC summer closings, club members will enjoy continued operations and special events, with minimum distractions. Temporary walls will shield the construction activity when you visit the club.

And we are excited to say that the club has its own front-door keys for the first time in the building’s history. The front door is the revolving door of our building on the northwest corner of 16th and Dodge streets.

As for access to the club: During the day, up until 6 p.m., you can park and use the elevators of the DoubleTree garage. Press the OPC button down, and follow the hallway beneath the hotel to our building’s elevators. We have three elevators to the club, two of which bring you to our 22nd floor and one that goes to the 21st floor, where you can climb the spiral staircase or use the “up” but-



Christine Villamonte

ton to bring you one floor up. After 6 p.m., exit the parking garage on the 2nd floor, walk down the outside sidewalk to our building on the northwest corner, and use the revolving door. We no longer have a buzzer/doorbell to be let in.

Our annual summer break has changed slightly this year. NuStyle has planned an HVAC system replacement for the entire building during August and September. We will be closed during this time. No third-quarter minimums will be assessed.

Reciprocal clubs are available throughout the year. Remember to obtain an introductory letter, date of the visit(s) and reservations. Reciprocal privileges are social only – food and beverages. Payment is made at the end of the visit. Dress codes vary, so double check. Have fun with reciprocating as I hear great things from members when they come back.

Meanwhile, be sure to take a look at our events list on the back page for a fun summer at the club.

- **Christine Villamonte**
Restaurant and Events Manager

OPC Members Mixer: a toast to the next chapter

By Angella Arnd
Communications Committee

Before the Omaha Press Club temporarily closes for the building renovation project, we’re gathering one more time to raise a glass, share a meal, and celebrate the community that makes this place special.

Join us for a Members Mixer on Thursday, July 23, from 4-6 p.m. Tickets are \$20 per person and include hors d’oeuvres plus your choice of one beer, wine, or non-alcoholic drink. Dinner is not included, but it happens to be 2-for-1 Prime Rib Night — so come hungry and stay awhile!

This event is a great opportunity to support our staff, connect with fellow members, and enjoy one of the club’s longtime traditions before we temporarily close for August and September. During that time, the building will undergo apartment conversion work, along with some updates within the club space itself. We look forward to welcoming

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Ruth and Bill Scott were honored by the OPC in 2016

Past Face on Barroom Floor is lead donor on 'transformational' rural health complex

By Tom O'Connor

Communications Committee

When Bill and Ruth Scott were honored as the Omaha Press Club's 150th Face on the Barroom Floor back in 2016, artist Jim Horan depicted the Scotts – both natives of Ashland, Nebraska – standing on a manure spreader shoveling out cash to their favorite charities.

Driving the spreader is Warren Buffett, the man who hired Bill Scott in 1959 as the first employee to help manage Buffett's investment company, Berkshire Hathaway. Buffett was the OPC's Face No. 30 in 1985.

Horan noted that Ruth Scott, who grew up on a farm, likes to paraphrase a line from the movie "Hello, Dolly!" – "A pile of money is a lot like a pile of manure. It does no good until you spread it around."

Now, 10 years later, through the William and Ruth Scott Family Foundation, the Scott family continues to trot out the manure spreader. This time they were the lead donor on the Douglas A. Kristensen Rural Health Education Complex located on the University of Nebraska at Kearney campus.

Bill Scott died in 2024 at the age of 93, but Ruth – at age 95 – continues to spread the family fortune around to make our state a better place.

Of all the countless projects the Scotts have helped fund, Ruth said this might be her all-time favorite "because it is aimed at helping rural students and communities."

The complex is a game changer for the state of Nebraska. It's a partnership between UNK and the University of Nebraska Medical Center. It will allow UNMC students to earn degrees on the UNK campus in 13 different health professions taught by UNMC faculty, including medicine, nursing, pharmacy and numerous allied health spe-

cialties. In addition, UNK will offer a speech language-pathology program.

There is a huge shortage of health professionals in rural communities. Currently, about 83% of Nebraska's health care providers are located in metropolitan areas.

The idea is that by allowing students in rural Nebraska to earn their health degrees in a rural setting they will be much more likely to practice in a rural community after they complete their studies. At full implementation, it is projected that more than 600 students seeking health degrees will be

it a "historic day for rural Nebraska" and said the complex "will be transformational for the whole state."

The \$115 million complex includes an initial facility that opened in 2015 as well as a second building that welcomed students earlier this year. It is the largest satellite health science program in the nation, said Jeffrey P. Gold, MD, president of the University of Nebraska System. Dr. Gold was honored in 2022 as the Omaha Press Club's 168th Face on the Barroom Floor.

UNMC interim Chancellor Dele Davies called the complex "the opening of possibility."

He added, "This new health sciences complex stands as a promise – the promise that students should be able to pursue their dream of becoming a health care professional close to home, near the communities that shaped who they are."

In addition to the Scott Family Foundation, nearly 20 individuals and organizations contributed \$28.5 million to the project. The Nebraska Legislature played a key role in channeling nearly \$60 million in funding through the American Rescue Plan Act. The City of Kearney chipped in \$5 million, while Central Community College in Grand Island, Nebraska, contributed \$1.5 million.

An additional \$5.8 million has been set aside in a permanent endowment to provide ongoing funding for the rural health initiative.

Near the conclusion of the grand opening ceremony, the Cope Cornerstone of Excellence Award – the highest honor given by UNK – was awarded to Scott. The award was named after Ron and Carol Cope, a prominent Kearney couple who left a mark on the community through their business and philanthropic efforts. Ron Cope, who served in the Legislature, died in 1992 at the age of 80, while Carol died in 2012 at the age of 103. They were married for 52 years.

In addition, Chancellors Schnoor and Davies read a proclamation calling May 14 Ruth Scott Day at UNK and UNMC.



Ruth Scott (left) and her family foundation made the lead donation on the Douglas A. Kristensen Rural Health Education Complex on the University of Nebraska at Kearney campus. A grand opening event was held May 14 in Kearney. Scott named the complex in honor of Kristensen (right), who served as chancellor at UNK for 22 years (2002-2024) making him the longest serving chancellor in the history of the University of Nebraska. Scott and her late husband, Bill, were honored in 2016 as the OPC's 150th Face on the Barroom Floor. Photo courtesy of Kiley Cruse, UNMC.

enrolled in the UNK/UNMC initiative, with 250 students graduating annually from these programs.

UNK Chancellor Neal Schnoor, PhD, said students will no longer need to leave rural Nebraska to access "a world-class health care education."

As usual, the Scott family didn't seek the spotlight. They named the complex after Kristensen, who served as chancellor at UNK for 22 years (2002-2024), making him the longest serving chancellor in the history of the University of Nebraska.

A Kearney native who grew up in Minden, Nebraska, Kristensen was a member of the Nebraska Legislature from 1988 to 2002 and was the longest serving speaker in the history of the legislature. At the grand opening celebration on May 14, Kristensen called

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

By Joshua Gear
OPC President



Whenever I'm out and about, conversation invariably turns to the Omaha Press Club.

When asked just what OPC is, my answer is invariably some form of "we celebrate the news, news makers and news tellers of this community." This month's signature event is a great testament to that mission.

June 6, we will welcome seven new members into the Omaha Press Club's Journalists of Excellence Hall of Fame. Be it through reputation, through collaboration, through instruction or through coworking, I've had the privilege of knowing all of the honorees and I can't speak highly enough of them.

From Terri Sanders' dedicated leadership in continuing the great legacy of the Omaha Star and Marcos Mora's community building through operations like Casa de la Cultura, our honorees are celebrating history and forging connections.

From journalists like Julie Anderson, who has informed Omaha World-Herald readers of the life-saving details of medical advancements for decades to the late public relations pro Rosalee Roberts, a tireless storyteller with skills ranging from health care, food and entertainment, our honorees are adaptable, able to communicate any subject with ease.

From longtime educators like Chris Allen, who has traveled the world to promote the tenets of investigative journalism and freedom of the press, to current educator and longtime sports reporter Ross Jernstrom, who inspires Westside High School students through his tireless passion and dedication

to quality storytelling, our honorees have mentored and guided countless storytellers and professionals.

Finally, my dear friend Scott Buer, who has led the charge on visual storytelling in Omaha nearly a half-century at KETV. Film, U-matic, beta, DVCPRO and finally nonlinear editing, he's excelled at them all. The tools our honorees used evolved over their careers, but their care and dedication to the tenets of impactful journalism and honest storytelling never wavered.

So, this June 6, I hope to see you all at the Hall of Fame event. These seven honorees represent just what makes the Omaha Press Club and the communications community we thrive in special.

PHONE 402-345-8008 FOR RESERVATIONS

Members Mixer story; continued from Page 1

everyone back this fall when the Omaha Press Club reopens in October.

We're expecting many longtime members to attend the mixer, making this a wonderful evening for conversation, memories, and celebrating what the club means to all of us. Have a colleague, friend, or fellow journalist you've been meaning to introduce to the club? Bring them along — there's no better way to experience the Omaha Press Club than a night like this.

Can't attend? You can still show your support. During the two-month closure, our staff will be without their regular work, and donations are a meaningful way to let them know how much they are appreciated. Every contribution helps.

Go to: <https://fs7.formsite.com/villa/form4/index>

Select "Give a Bonus to the OPC Staff" and follow the prompts to designate your gift. You may pay online or have the amount added to your OPC member account. Or you can make a cash contribution at the July event.

We look forward to seeing you on July 23. Here's to the Omaha Press Club — and to an exciting reopening this fall.

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

Father's Day Steak Grill

Saturday, June 20, 2026
5:30 p.m. to 8 p.m.
Adults \$40 • Children 12U \$20

From the Kitchen
A la Carte Choice:
Prime Rib of Beef
Filet New York Strip
Club Steak

On the Buffet
Vienna Hot Dogs • Fried Chicken
Baked Beans • Corn-on-the-Cob
Potato Salad • Pasta Salad
Coleslaw • House Salad
Deviled Eggs

Desserts
Brownies
Strawberry Shortcake

Creighton coaching icons take their places on Barroom Floor

Two of Omaha's leading ambassadors for women's athletics were honored on May 13 as the 186th Face on the Barroom Floor.

For more more than two decades, Kirsten Bernthal Booth and Jim 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.

During Booth's 22 years at the volleyball helm, she led her teams 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.

In 24 years as women's basketball 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 consecu-

tive 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.

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. Sokol Arena has a seating capacity of 2,500 and provides an energetic atmosphere for the women's events.

Saluting and roasting the honorees at the OPC Face event were:

Bruce Rasmussen, retired Creighton athletic director; Creighton tennis coach Tom Lilly; Omaha Lancers president Mike West; Brian Rosen, Creighton head volleyball coach; Angie Oxley Behrens, assistant volleyball coach; Brad Bernthal, Kirsten's brother and associate professor emeritus, University of Colorado School of Law; and Mark Jones, former Creighton basketball player and current vice president of Northpoint Recovery who serves as a mental health and sports performance consultant for Creighton athletics.



Jim Flanery & Kirsten Bernthal Booth caricature.



Jim Flanery and Kirsten Bernthal Booth with the 180th Face on the Barroom Floor.



The roasters and honorees, from left: Bruce Rasmussen, Mark Jones, Tom Lilly, Mike West, Jim Flanery, Angie Oxley Behrens, Kirsten Bernthal Booth, Brian Rosen, and Brad Bernthal. Keeler/Christen Photos.

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OPC Foundation

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

Saturday, June 6
Hall of Fame Dinner
Members \$75, non-members \$85
5:30 p.m. social, 6:30 p.m. dinner
Members \$75, non-members \$85

**Friday, June 12
to June 21 or 22**
College baseball
championship series
Come in CASUAL, enjoy specials

Saturday, June 20
Father's Day
Steak Grill
5:30 p.m. to 8 p.m.
Adults \$40 • Children 12U \$20

Saturday, July 4
Independence Day
Club closed

Friday, July 17
KFAB Wine Dinner
6 p.m. social, 6:30 dinner
Members \$90, non-members \$100

Thursday, July 23
OPC Member Mixer
Staff Appreciation
5 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.
\$20

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.



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Don Summerside Copy Editor

**Submissions for the July issue
are due on or before June 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.