

NEWS

VOLUME 145 • NUMBER 97 JANUARY 2026 WWW.OMAHAPRESSCLUB.COM



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Feb. 19 event will recognize Omaha's version of Tom Selleck TV character

Police Chief Schmaderer to be next Face on Barroom Floor

By Tom O'Connor
Communications Committee

With his Hollywood looks and macho personality, Omaha Police Chief Todd Schmaderer gives our city an impressive flair in the law enforcement world. It wouldn't be a huge stretch to compare his character to the role of Frank Reagan, the New York City police commissioner played by Tom Selleck in the popular TV show "Blue Bloods."



Police Chief Todd Schmaderer

Schmaderer joined the Omaha Police Department in 1996 and has served as chief since 2012, making him the longest-serving police chief among all major cities. Earlier this year, he signed an agreement with the City of Omaha to extend his term as chief another five years.

His longevity is evident by the fact that he

has served as police chief under three mayors – Democrats Jim Suttle and John Ewing Jr. and Republican Jean Stothert. He jokes, "Nobody knows what political party I am."

On Thursday, Feb. 19, Schmaderer has agreed to place himself under "house arrest" when he comes to the Omaha Press Club to be honored as the 185th Face on the Barroom Floor. It promises to be a memorable night, as the OPC recognizes him as the first active police chief ever to become a Face on the Barroom Floor.

(NOTE: Tom Warren had been retired as police chief for 11 years and was serving as president and CEO of the Urban League of Omaha when he and his wife, Aileen, were honored as Face No. 160 in 2019.)

Being a Face means a lot to Schmaderer. "This is the Heisman Trophy of awards in Omaha," he said. "As chief of police, it's the kind of award you don't expect to receive. It's certainly a tremendous honor."

Police work runs in the Schmaderer family. Todd's father, Rich, is a retired police sergeant in the Omaha Police Department, while his younger brother, Brian, serves as an

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Annual Meeting will be Jan. 8

By Gary Willis
Communications Committee

Mark your calendars for Thursday, Jan. 8, the date of the Omaha Press Club Annual Meeting.

A 5:30 p.m. social featuring complimentary hors d'oeuvres will precede the 6 o'clock call-to-order. The meeting will include reports from the outgoing president, Mike McKnight, and the OPC's executive director, Steve Villamonte, plus the annual reports from committee chairs.

Also on the agenda is the election of 2026 club officers, including:

President: Joshua Gear, Lozier Corporation
President-Elect: Keith Station, Mayor's Office,

Treasurer: Hunter Samuels, Ronald McDonald House

Secretary: Jeremy Maskel, Omaha Public Schools

Immediate Past President: Mike McKnight, WOWT

Board members up for election:

Allen Beermann
Woody Bradford
Bridget Weide Brooks
Todd Lemke

Board members continuing their terms are Todd Andrews, Angella Arndt, Rod Howe, Liz Hruska, Roger Humphries, and Dr. Robert Meyers,

For those who wish to vote but are unable to attend the meeting, a proxy ballot is on page 5. Please mail the ballot to the Press Club or email it to opccchristine@gmail.com.

Sadlemyer says goodbye to KFAB morning show

By Anne Walsh
Communications Committee

Gary Sadlemyer's legendary ability to connect with audiences extends from vast numbers of radio listeners and devoted Husker fans to Omaha Press Club members – and all are thrilled to know they've not heard the last from him.



Gary Sadlemyer

His final show at NewsRadio 1110 KFAB was Friday, Dec. 12, 2025, one day shy of his 49th anniversary working at the station and 53 years in radio overall. Sadlemyer was hired at the iHeartMedia Omaha news/talk outlet in December 1976 after beginning his career at KRGH Grand Island in 1973.

According to a KFAB news release, Sadlemyer hosted the station's first live, daily talk show, anchoring "KFAB's Morning News" for more than three decades and serving several years as the station's program director. His voice is beloved by a generation of Husker fans stemming from his time on the Nebraska football broadcasts from 1980-1995.

It was around 1995 that he joined the OPC. At the behest of longtime member and former club president Tom O'Connor, Sadlemyer became a Face on the Barroom Floor Committee member, a role he still serves today.

As the emcee of numerous Face events, he says, "It's my favorite thing to do. I'd rather be the emcee than a roaster, because you can roast everyone who comes to speak at the podium!" Fondly recalling Sen. Pete Ricketts' Face event, he said of the senator's father, "I even got Joe to laugh – but don't call him Joe. You call him 'Mr. Ricketts!'"

That experience was exceeded by his own honor as the 115th Face in February 2008.

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OPC WILL BE CLOSED JAN. 13-17

active lieutenant in the OPD. He also has a nephew who is an OPD rookie police officer.

Being behind a microphone and podium is nothing new for Schmaderer, who is known for being in complete control when dealing with media. He's done nearly 100 news conferences in his 13-plus years as Omaha's police chief. He has been featured in national media outlets such as Dateline NBC, CNN, Fox News and Washington Post Live.

"When Todd does a news conference, he runs the room. It's because of his respect and accomplishments, his genuine professionalism and transparency – the media have to be nice and play fair with him," said his fiancée, Carla Liberty, who is business development director for YASH Technologies, a global IT consultant firm. Carla will be one of Schmaderer's roasters at the OPC event.

Schmaderer, who is the 32nd chief in OPD history, has had a distinguished and impactful career in law enforcement. He leads a department of 1,200 employees, including 906 sworn officers.

In addition to pioneering OPD's media strategy, he has navigated the department through a variety of critical incidents, from citywide civil unrest involving the National Guard, police corruption scandals, the arrests of two separate serial killers, officers killed in the line of duty, community-shattering child murders, and high-profile deaths involving in-custody prisoners.

Under Schmaderer's leadership, Omaha has witnessed significant advancements in public safety and police-community relations. His tenure has seen a remarkable reduction in gun violence, with homicides reaching a 40-year low, while achieving a 100% clearance rate for homicides for the last three years, an unheard-of statistic for a major city.

The department also has experienced a notable decrease in complaints against officers, a substantial increase in diversity reflective of the community, and a reduction in officer-involved shootings to their lowest level. Most notably, Omaha recorded no homicides for 120 days in 2019, none the first 133 days of 2023, and achieved a city/national record low of homicides in 2024.

An Omaha native, Schmaderer attended St. Pius X Catholic School and Roncalli Catholic High School, where he was a multi-sport athlete. He received a full-ride scholarship to play football at Wayne State College, in Wayne, Nebraska. He spent one year

playing at Wayne State as a running back/receiver/kick returner, while pursuing a degree in business.

After his first year at WSC, Schmaderer decided to follow in his father's footsteps and pursue law enforcement. He returned to Omaha and earned his bachelor of science degree in criminal justice from the University of Nebraska Omaha. In 2007, at the age of 36, Schmaderer received his master's degree in criminal justice from the University of Cincinnati, one of the leading criminal justice programs in the country. Further augmenting his expertise, Schmaderer is a



Police work runs in the family. From left: Todd's father, Rich, a retired OPD sergeant; younger brother Brian, an OPD lieutenant; and Chief Schmaderer.

graduate of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) National Executive Institute.

Business and the stock market have always been a significant interest of Schmaderer. He and his father discuss market trends and their day trading every morning on his drive to work.

Schmaderer's numerous awards include: Alumni Award for Excellence (2013 and 2017) and Lifetime Achievement Award (2024), all from UNO; Special Achievement Award (2022), Metropolitan Chiefs Association; Distinguished Service Award (2022), Omaha Police Foundation; Omahan of the Year Award (2023), Suburban Rotary of Omaha; and Law Enforcement Champion Award (2024), Special Olympics.

He is affiliated with several professional associations, including Major Cities Chiefs Association, International Chiefs of Police Association, and the Omaha Metropolitan Chiefs Association. He also serves on the board of directors of the Boys and Girls Club of the Midlands. In 2016, Schmaderer – along with Mayor Ewing – participated in Omaha's Dancing with the Stars fundraiser for children battling cancer. He won first place in the event and set a record for funds raised.

In 2024, after 2½ years of writing, Schmaderer authored and self-published his first textbook – "Synergy of Influence: Lead-

ership, Law Enforcement & the Media" – a book shaped by 10 years of reflection on his career as police chief. The book has currently been launched as a textbook resource in multiple curriculums within the UNO collegiate system.

Schmaderer lives in the Elkhorn area with Carla, a New Orleans native, and her 13-year-old daughter, Mina Merwick. Together, they share a blended family that includes three other grown children, who are college graduates with promising careers in Nebraska – Ashlynn Schmaderer, 26, Garret Schmaderer, 22, and Derek Merwick, 22.

The couple first met when Carla came to Schmaderer's office in 2018 as a government sales representative for USCellular to discuss Nebraska's first priority network for public safety. They were engaged on July 6, 2025 on a Gulf Coast trip to celebrate Carla's 45th birthday at one of their favorite beaches in Orange Beach, Alabama.

In their spare time, Schmaderer and Carla enjoy spending time with family, golfing, boating, exploring local dining and new culinary experiences, traveling throughout the United States and abroad – ideally near the ocean – attending sporting events, and relaxing at home or at the family farm in southeast Nebraska.

Roasters for Schmaderer Face event

The preliminary list of roasters includes: Emcee – **Brian Mastre**, news anchor for WOWT (Ch. 6);

Matt Kuhse, city attorney, City of Omaha; **Mike Dowd**, attorney, Dowd & Corrigan, LLC and Omaha Police Officers Association; **Scott Voorhees**, morning show host, KFAB-AM (1110);

Jim Suttle/Jean Stothert/John Ewing Jr., the three mayors Todd has worked under; and **Carla Liberty**, business development director, YASH Technologies, a global IT consultant firm, and Todd's fiancée.

FACE ON BARROOM FLOOR – TODD SCHMADERER

WHEN: THURSDAY, FEB. 19:

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.

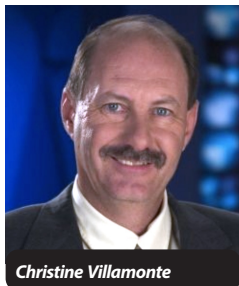
MEMBERS CAN CHARGE TO THEIR OPC ACCOUNT. NON-MEMBERS NEED TO PROVIDE THEIR CREDIT CARD INFORMATION. DRESS IS BUSINESS CASUAL.

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

The Four Seasons had a hit song, "Oh, What a Night." For the Omaha Press Club, that tune has been, "Oh, What a Year."

The Face on the Barroom Floor events brought great crowds to the OPC including more than 200 attendees for the Rev. Tom Fangman. An Education Committee exclusive with the chief justice of the Nebraska Supreme Court, Jeff Funke, drew a wide range of attorneys, prosecutors, judges and members to the Press Club for an informative hour and a half.

I should mention that my son's wedding



Christine Villamonte

rehearsal dinner was an OPC highlight for me in 2025. Rave reviews from family and friends for Steve and Christine and the service staff.

The year also created curiosity for the future of the building atop which the Omaha Press Club sits. The latest word on closing for the new ownership is sometime in January. The OPC board has set up a transition committee to offer incentives for NuStyle renters that will benefit both the Omaha Press Club and the apartment developers.

So that exciting growth lies ahead in 2026 for new President Josh Gear. He's highly motivated and has the perfect skills to guide the Omaha Press Club forward. It's been an honor to lead the board this past year.

— Mike McKnight

Omaha Press Club Hall of Fame call For nominations

Nominations are now open for the selection of inductees for the 2026 Omaha Press Club Journalists of Excellence Hall of Fame.

Nominees may be living or deceased and must have made notable Contributions to broadcast, print, or news media journalism.

They must have shown exceptional leadership, courage or contributions to the news industry.

They will have worked in the Omaha area during their careers, or they may have had reasonable careers in the area before going elsewhere.

Your name:

Phone number:

Nomination (name)



Check here if the journalist is being nominated posthumously.

Tell us why the person should be inducted into the OPC Journalists of Excellence Hall of Fame. Use a separate sheet.

Please submit by Feb. 27, 2026, to the Omaha Press Club Hall of Fame Committee, 1620 Dodge St. 22nd Floor, Omaha, NE 68102

Sadlemyer story; continued from Page 1

"I was NOT involved in my own selection," he laughed, "and it was such a fun time. My family came in from Minnesota, my kids were there, and the roasters included Sens. Chuck Hagel and Ben Nelson, and Tom Osborne."

Earlier in that decade, Sadlemyer followed longtime Omaha World-Herald columnist Michael Kelly as emcee of the fun-filled, satirical Omaha Press Club Show. His five-year stint began when the show was performed at The Rose Theater and then at the Mid-America Center.

"Jim Fogarty and John Prescott (longtime OPC members) and I would go to the Dundee Dell to write jokes for the monologues" Sadlemyer said. "Fog would throw out a germ of an idea, then Prescott would add the punch line. We laughed our asses off."

A member of the Nebraska Broadcasters Association Hall of Fame, where he was enshrined in 2011, Sadlemyer learned upon his retirement that NewsRadio 1110 KFAB named the station's broadcast studio in his honor.

Per the news release, midmorning talk host and current KFAB Program Director Scott Voorhees has moved into morning drive as Sadlemyer's replacement. He joins Sadlemyer's on-air early morning partners for the past quarter-century, Jim Rose and Lucy Chapman, and KFAB News morning anchor Craig Evans. The show provides news, weather, traffic, sports updates, business news and conversation/opinion on topics ranging from important community issues to pop culture, politics, sports and, as Sadlemyer says, "Lord knows what."

But KFAB listeners haven't heard the last from Sadlemyer. He'll still provide personalized content for station advertisers and periodically hang out or be a fill-in host on the morning show. And with his continued involvement on the OPC Face committee, members are sure to enjoy his wit at future events.

Sadlemyer is looking forward to spending more time with his children and grandchildren, while grateful for his decades-long career.

"The day-to-day work becomes routine," he said. "But then, when you look back on your career and realize you're rich in friends and family, you can say you've had a very good life."

A MESSAGE FROM THE MANAGER

Happy New Year! For all of you who have made new year's resolutions ... positivity is my choice. I always think of great things to do in my new year.



Christine Villamonte

This year is no different: Work out with weights, live life to its very fullest every day (never know when the clock is up), enjoy the small things, less rush, more eyes open to the wonderful sunrises/sunsets (your club has great sunsets!) and of course, spend time with the family and close friends.

Looking back at the club and 2025, we had some great events. Here are some of the special days and nights I am looking forward to in 2026: a whiskey tasting (Jan. 30), our quarterly wine dinners (the first on Feb. 7) with pairings, the three bountiful brunches on Easter (April 5), Mother's Day (May 10) and Santa Brunch (Dec. 13) – all with live music and inviting varieties of food.

Do not forget about our informative forums and debates, plus the scholarship

brunch. Our Hall of Fame is always full of fun with laughs/happy crying/remiscing and stories from our local best of the best, their friends and families.

Hope to see you at your club soon!

-Christine Villamonte
Restaurant and Events Manager



Santa's helpers contributing to the Dec. 14 Santa Brunch success included, front and from left, with hands on knees: Gabe, Bill, Ron and Jolee. Behind them flanking Santa are, from left: Justine, Michael, Steve, Emerald and Chloe. Photo by Christine Villamonte.

Brunch with Santa? Oh, Baby!

Santa paid his annual visit to the Omaha Press Club on Dec. 14. Members and guests were treated to a wonderful buffet loaded with food pleasing to both adults and children. Saxophonist Steve Thornburg added great ambiance and was a kid-fan favorite second only to Santa Claus himself. And then there was the view. Children enjoyed the 22nd-floor panoramas, including views of the nearby Mutual of Omaha tower construction and the frozen river and airport in the distance.



Some babies melted down, others chilled out when they met Santa. The "screamer" is 1-year-old Catherine Walsh, and the "super chill" is 4-month-old Liam Hanley.



Photos by Anne Walsh

**PHONE 402-345-8008
FOR RESERVATIONS**

Bourbon Tasting

Friday, Jan. 30, 2026
5 p.m.-7 p.m.
\$55

Charcuterie
Cheese Smoke Gouda
Antipasto
Assorted Dried Fruits
Crackers & Croustades
Chocolate Petit Fours,
Nut Brittle



Valentine's Day Dinner

Saturday, Feb. 14, 2026
6 p.m.
\$100 (tax included)

Appetizer
Brie Pear & Apricot

Amuse
Clam Chowder

Salad
OPC Thunderbird

Sorbet
Strawberry

Beef
Filet Mignon Maître d'Hôtel
& Madeira

or
Prime Rib au Jus Chantilly
Garlic Duchess Potato

Seafood
Alaskan King Salmon
Beurre Blanc, Risotto

Poultry
Chicken Piccata
Roasted Rosemary New Potato
Chef's Vegetable on All

Dessert
Peanut Butter Chocolate
Ice Cream Tort Framboise
or
Cheesecake & Driscoll Strawberry

OPC MEMBER PROXY BALLOT

Members not attending the annual meeting Jan. 8 may vote by returning the ballot below to reach the Omaha Press Club by 4 p.m., Wednesday Jan. 7.
See instructions below.

OFFICERS

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President

Joshua Gear For Against

Allen Beermann For Against

President-Elect

Woody Bradford For Against

Keith Station For Against

Bridget Weide Brooks For Against

Treasurer

Todd Lemke For Against

Hunter Samuels For Against

Secretary

Jeremy Maskel For Against

Immediate Past President

Mike McKnight

Board members continuing their terms: Todd Andrews, Angella Arndt, Rod Howe, Liz Hruska, Roger Humphries, Dr. Robert Meyers

Fax this completed ballot to (402) 345-0114 or mail to the Omaha Press Club, 1620 Dodge St. 22nd Floor, Omaha, NE. 68102-1561. Absentee ballots **MUST** be received by 4 p.m. Wednesday, Jan. 7.

NOTE: *If you plan to attend the annual meeting, do not return this proxy ballot.*

2025 - 2026 Officers

Mike McKnight
President
WOWT

Joshua Gear
President-Elect
Lozier Corporation

Hunter Samuels
Treasurer
Ronald McDonald House

Jeremy Maskel
Secretary
Omaha Public Schools

Dr. Robert Meyers
Past President
Retired

Board of Directors

(2024-2026)
Allen Beermann Retired
Woody Bradford Houghton Bradford Whitted
Todd Lemke Omaha Publications
Bridget (Weide) Brooks Image Building Communications

(2025-2027)
Liz Hruska Catalyst Public Affairs Analyst
Joshua Gear Lozier Corporation
Angella Arndt Freelance Content Contributor
Rod Howe Retired
Roger Humphries Roger Humphries Photography

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 Dr. Robert Meyers, 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

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	

Melissa Matczak
President

Maria Marron
First Vice President

Tom Shaw
Treasurer

Lei Guo
Secretary

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



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

Thursday, Jan. 8
OPC Annual Meeting
5:30 p.m. social, 6 p.m. meeting
No-host bar

Week of Jan. 13-17
Annual winter closing

Friday, Jan. 30
Bourbon Smoking/Tasting
5 p.m.-7 p.m.
\$55

Friday, Feb. 7
Winemaker's Dinner
\$90 OPC members, \$100 non-members

Saturday Feb. 14
Valentine's Dinner
\$100 per person inclusive

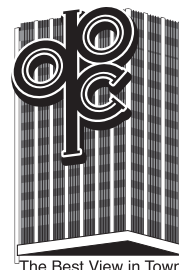
Thursday, Feb. 19
Face on the Barroom Floor
Police Chief Todd Schmaderer
5:30 p.m. reception,
6:30 p.m. dinner, 8 p.m. roast
\$90 OPC members, \$100 non-members

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

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Steve Villamonte opcdirector@gmail.com
Restaurant and Events Manager
Christine Villamonte opcchristine@gmail.com

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Restaurant 402-345-8008
Website omahapressclub.com

NEWSLETTER COMMITTEE

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

**Submissions for the February issue
are due on or before January 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.