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## Veteran WOWT-TV reporter, John Chapman, to be honored April 24 as Face on Barroom Floor

**By Tom O'Connor**  
Communications Committee

**E**very newsroom needs a John Chapman.

For the past 39 years, Chapman has been a fixture at WOWT-TV (Ch. 6). On April 24, Chapman will be recognized for his stellar career when the Omaha Press Club honors him as the 181st Face on the Barroom Floor.

“John is beloved in the newsroom,” said Mike McKnight, president of the Omaha Press Club and a reporter at WOWT for 49 years. “He has an infectious laugh. When things are most serious in the news world, you always can count on John to break the tension with his laugh.”

Chapman said the Face recognition was a “total surprise” to him. “I was shocked,” he said. “I didn’t expect it at all. I’m very honored.”



John Chapman

A native of Danville, Illinois, Chapman migrated west to Sioux City, Iowa to attend Morningside College on a football scholarship. He played wide receiver for four years and also participated in basketball and track for one year.

Morningside, a small private school, was a member of the North Central Conference at the time, competing against much larger schools such as the University of Nebraska Omaha, North Dakota and North Dakota State, South Dakota and South Dakota State.

“We fought hard,” he said. A career highlight, he jokes, was that he was able to run his pass routes in practice against a Morningside cornerback, who went on to earn all-conference honors. “I liked to tell him that I made him who he was,” Chapman said.

Following college, Chapman landed his first reporting job at KMEG-TV, the CBS affiliate in Sioux City. He later moved to KTIV-TV, the NBC affiliate in Sioux City. He wore several hats at KTIV, serving as a “one-man band” reporter/videographer, filling in as anchor on the news and sports desks, working as weekend assignment edi-

tor and even delivering the weather when needed.

In 1986, opportunity knocked and Chapman was hired by Steve Murphy, the legendary WOWT news director who was honored in 1990 by the OPC as its 44th Face on the Barroom Floor.

During the 1990s, Chapman split his time between the general assignment reporting duties and the weekend sports anchor desk. He covered the Nebraska football team during the dominant years when the Huskers won back-to-back national championships.

As a general assignment reporter, Chapman has covered everything from parades to politics. He played a role in covering the recall of an Omaha mayor, the fall of the scandal-laden Franklin Credit Union, historic floods and storms that changed the lives of thousands of area people, as well as the

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## Mayor finalists will debate again on April 17 at Omaha Press Club



Debate moderator Brian Mastre, right foreground, questions the five mayoral candidates on March 11 at the Omaha Press Club. Mayor Stothert and Douglas County Treasurer John Ewing, the top two vote getters in the April 1 primary election, will debate again at the Press Club on April 17 prior to the May 13 general election. See story on Page 3. Photo by Gary Willis.

## Scholarship Awards Brunch on April 26

**T**he Omaha Press Club Foundation will recognize Nebraska’s outstanding journalism students at its annual Scholarship Awards Brunch.

The April 26 event will begin at 10:30 a.m. at the Omaha Press Club. About two dozen students -- from the University of Nebraska Omaha, the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Creighton University, and a small Nebraska college yet to be determined -- will receive scholarships this year.

Omaha World-Herald reporter and foundation trustee Henry Cordes will emcee the scholarship ceremony. Select scholarship recipients will provide remarks on behalf of their schools.

Tickets are \$30 and must be purchased by 5 p.m. on April 17. A link to make a reservation and purchase a ticket can be found on the foundation web site: [opcfscholarships.org](http://opcfscholarships.org).

# College World Series to celebrate 75 years in Omaha

By Joshua Gear

Communications Committee

Jack Diesing set up the unique challenge of his presentation at the start of the March 20 Noon Forum.

"It's kind of difficult to fit 75 years into 20 minutes, but we're going to do our best," he said to the gathering, introducing the discussion of College World Series of Omaha, Inc. The nonprofit is a unique operation, a board dedicated to bringing businesses and community leaders together to ensure the success of Omaha's signature collegiate sporting event.

"It allowed the business community to cost-effectively support the event and also get involved," said Diesing, the CWS chairman, president and treasurer. Founded in 1967 by Jack's father, CWS of Omaha, Inc. was a one-of-a-kind solution to collaborating with the major players in delivering and executing the baseball championship event.

Throughout its history, the operation oversaw a number of facility upgrades to Rosenblatt Stadium, commissioned and installed the iconic Road to Omaha statue and created the opening festivities for the series.

The 2007 decision to move the event to North Downtown and the new ballpark brought changes for the group, resulting in the hiring of paid staff to the nonprofit. Diesing called the move a major challenge, but one that he feels has been validated by the tremendous success the event has seen since.

## Chapman story; continued from Page 1

invasion of violent street gangs to the metro area.

Chapman also covered many stories of positive community events and touching personal stories of triumph and perseverance. "John is well connected, especially in North Omaha," McKnight said. "He always has an eye on the North Omaha community."

In 2022, Chapman was inducted into the Omaha Press Club Journalists of Excellence Hall of Fame. He also has won numerous awards for his reporting.

Now in his mid-60s, Chapman has no immediate plans to retire. He joked that he hopes his career will last "as long as Mike McKnight's."

"We used to have 10 percent of people say they were disappointed we moved downtown," he said. "Now, it's 99.9 percent that think this is the greatest idea we could ever make. We took it to the future, we're downtown where all the activity is."

A true family affair, Jack Diesing took over as chairman from his father, John Diesing Sr., in 1989. His daughter, Lisa, now serves on the board, working with CWS of Omaha, Inc. staff to ensure the event's sustained future and success in Omaha, despite the constantly shifting landscape of college athletics.



**Making plans for a special CWS are Jack Diesing, Lisa Diesing, and Amy Hornacker.**  
Photo by Roger Humphries.

"The NCAA is going through a lot of changes. Baseball is going through a lot of changes. All sports are going through a lot of changes," Lisa said, alluding to the possibility of a post-NCAA future. "We have to start thinking about, if the NCAA isn't our partner after 2036, we want to make sure we have the relationships elsewhere. So, if it's not the NCAA Men's College World Series, we're hosting the Men's Baseball Championship."

Chapman married his high school sweetheart, Nancy Collins. They have three children and five grandchildren.

## FACE ON BARROOM FLOOR – JOHN CHAPMAN

**WHEN: THURSDAY, APRIL 24;  
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.**

Lisa mentioned the CWS team's efforts to build and maintain relationships with various athletic conference directors, fostering partnerships with leaders like SEC Commissioner Greg Sankey and ACC Commissioner Jim Phillips.

The Diesings were joined at the Noon Forum by Amy Hornacker, CWS of Omaha Inc. executive director, who took the opportunity to share the group's vision and plans for celebrating the event's 75-year anniversary in Omaha this summer. Competition is scheduled from June 13 – June 22/23.

"The 75th anniversary has a lot to do with the event's relationship with the community," Hornacker said, promising colorful signage, sidewalk logos, and a free celebratory event for the public to attend. "It's a really cool year, and we're really excited to celebrate."

Jack Diesing told the room he's proud of the community's support for the College World Series, praising the event's interconnectedness with the city.

"Louisville is synonymous with the Kentucky Derby. Augusta is synonymous with the Masters. Omaha is synonymous with the College World Series," Jack said. "If you think about it, that's pretty good company."

## Correction:

John Diesing Sr. was chairman and president of the College World Series from 1964 to 1988 and in 1967 founded CWS of Omaha, Inc. Ed Pettis was the first CWS chairman when the event moved to Omaha in 1950 and served until his death in 1963. The CWS leadership sequence was stated incorrectly in the February and March newsletters.

## Roasters set for Chapman Face event

Four people with strong connections to WOWT will serve as roasters.

They include:

Emcee: **Brian Mastre**, anchor/investigative reporter, WOWT;  
**Roger Hamer**, producer/photographer, WOWT;  
**Mike Plews**, retired chief photographer, WOWT; and  
**Nick Bohan**, multi-media specialist, Methodist Hospital, former chief photographer, WOWT.

## A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

An exciting year lies ahead for the Omaha Press Club, with many opportunities for members to enjoy the club atmosphere and learn new things along the way.

As many of you know, the former First National Bank headquarters on which the OPC sits atop is being sold to NuStyle Development out of Woodbine, Iowa. Todd Heistand, president of NuStyle, tells me closing of the purchase is close as the company waits on some survey work.

Both Todd and Project Manager Greg Rothermel have been great to work with



Mike McKnight

during the beginning of the process. They are very cognizant of the Press Club history and importance in the Omaha area and beyond. Their initial plans include working around OPC events with the least amount of change possible to the interior of the club.

The OPC committee working with them has been very encouraged by the communication and cooperation.

Please take advantage of upcoming dinner specials and events to keep OPC financially strong. And when you are there, thank Christine, Steve and the staff for their loyalty and hard work.

**-Mike McKnight**  
OPC President

## Stothert, Ewing will debate at OPC April 17

With the field of five trimmed to two, the second of the 2025 mayoral debates at the Omaha Press Club will take place April 17. Mayor Jean Stothert and Douglas County Treasurer John Ewing were the top two vote getters in the April 1 primary election and will head the ballot in the general election on May 13.

The debate from noon to 1 p.m. will be sponsored again by the Press Club and the League of Women Voters of Greater Omaha. The moderator will be WOWT reporter/anchor Brian Mastre. Lunch service will begin at 11 a.m.

WOWT will livestream the debate on the following platforms: WOWT.com; First Alert 6 News smartphone app; 6 News WOWT Facebook page; and First Alert 6 YouTube channel. A recording of the debate will remain available indefinitely on WOWT's YouTube channel.

Parking for debate guests is suggested at the DoubleTree garage. It is free for OPC members, who should bring their tickets to the club for validation.

## PHONE 402-345-8008 FOR RESERVATIONS

### Easter Buffet

Sunday, April 20, 2025

Two seatings: 10 a.m. and 12:30 p.m.

Adults \$36 • Children 3-10 \$17

#### *Carving Station*

Prime Rib of Beef

Whiskey Pepper-Glazed Ham

#### *Entrées*

Chicken Bourguignon

Lemon Pepper Butter-Baked Tilapia

Eggs Benedict

Lyonnaise 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

#### *Dessert*

Pastries, Sticky Buns,

Chocolate-Dipped Driscoll Strawberries

& Homemade Coffee Cake, Cheesecake

### Mother's Day Brunch

Sunday, May 11, 2025

Two settings: 10 a.m. and 12:30 p.m.

Adults \$36 • Children 3-10 \$17

#### *Carving Station*

Steamship Round of Beef

with Horseradish Chantilly  
and Au Jus

Old School Pineapple-Glazed Ham

#### *Entrées*

Chicken Crepes Supreme

Baked Tilapia Buerre Blanc

Eggs Benedict

Build-Your-Own Omelet

Multi-Topping Pancake Bar

Lyonnaise Potatoes • Seasonal Vegetables

#### *Salad Display*

Thunderbird Salad,

Imported Cheese & Anti Pasta,

Coleslaw, 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

## HOW TO FIND US

**OMAHA PRESS CLUB**  
**1620 DODGE STREET, 22ND FLOOR**  
**OMAHA, NE 68102**  
**402-345-8008**

THE OMAHA PRESS CLUB IS IN THE FIRST NATIONAL BANK BUILDING (NOT THE TOWER) AT 1620 DODGE STREET IN THE HEART OF DOWNTOWN OMAHA. OUR LOCATION IS ADJACENT TO THE DOUBLETREE HOTEL.

DOUBLETREE GARAGE: YOU MAY PARK IN THE GARAGE ON 16TH AND DODGE STREETS, NORTHEAST CORNER.

AFTER PARKING, TAKE THE GARAGE ELEVATOR DOWN TO THE G (THE GROUND OR OMAHA PRESS CLUB) LEVEL.

IF ARRIVING AFTER 7 P.M. MONDAY THROUGH FRIDAY OR ALL DAY ON THE WEEKEND, PRESS 2 IN THE ELEVATOR, LEAVE THE GARAGE AND WALK DOWN TO THE BANK BUILDING ENTRANCE AT THE NORTHWEST CORNER OF THE 16TH AND DODGE INTERSECTION (LOOK FOR THE ATM AND FIRE HYDRANT).

AT THE DOORS, THERE IS A BLACK BOX. BUZZ IN AND SAY, "OMAHA PRESS CLUB." FOLLOW THE SIGNS STRAIGHT AHEAD THROUGH THE HALLWAY AND PAST THE SECURITY DESK TO THE ELEVATORS ON THE LEFT. ONLY TWO ELEVATORS GO ALL THE WAY TO THE TOP OR 22ND FLOOR, AND THEY ARE DEDICATED EXCLUSIVELY TO THE PRESS CLUB.



## 2025 - 2026 Officers

### Mike McKnight

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WOWT

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### Dr. Robert Meyers

Past President  
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## Board of Directors

### (2024-2026)

Allen Beermann	Retired
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Todd Lemke	Omaha Publications
Bridget (Weide) Brooks	Image Building Communications

### (2025-2027)

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Angella Arndt	Freelance Content Contributor
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Roger Humphries	Roger Humphries Photography

## Communications Committee

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Gary Willis, Angella Arndt

### Education

Dr. Robert Meyers

### Executive Committee

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### "Face on the Barroom Floor"

Roger Humphries

### Hall of Fame

Dr. Robert Meyers

### Marketing / Membership

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### TRUSTEES

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John Chapman

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Peggy Rupprecht

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**WE'RE ONLINE! READ YOUR OPC NEWSLETTER AT [OMAHAPRESSCLUB.COM](http://OMAHAPRESSCLUB.COM)**



### Every Thursday

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

### Thursday, April 17

Mayoral Debate  
11 a.m. lunch, \$19  
Noon to 1 p.m. debate

### Sunday, April 20

Easter Brunch  
Two seatings  
10 a.m. to noon, 12:30 p.m. to 2 p.m.  
\$36 adults, \$17 kids (3-10 years)

### Thursday, April 24

Face on the Barroom Floor  
John Chapman  
\$90 OPC members, \$100 non-members  
5:30 p.m. reception; 6:30 p.m. dinner

### Saturday, April 26

OPC Scholarship Awards Brunch  
10:30 a.m. doors open, 10:45 a.m. brunch,  
11 a.m. program  
\$30

### Sunday, May 11

Mother's Day Brunch  
Two seatings  
10 a.m. to noon, 12:30 p.m. to 2 p.m.  
\$36 adults, \$17 kids (3-10 years)

### Thursday, May 15

Noon Forum, Patrick Haggert  
State Broadband

### Monday, May 26

Club closed for Memorial Day

### Saturday, May 31

OPC Hall of Fame  
\$75 OPC members, \$85 non-members

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.

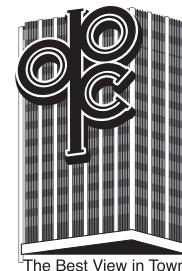
**CANCELLATION POLICY:** All reservations must be cancelled **48 HOURS** in advance.

## Hours of Operation

1620 Dodge St., Omaha NE 68102

### LUNCH

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



The Best View in Town

### DINNER

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

## OMAHA PRESS CLUB STAFF

### Executive Director

**Steve Villamonte** ..... [opcdirector@gmail.com](mailto:opcdirector@gmail.com)

### Restaurant and Events Manager

**Christine Villamonte** ..... [opcchristine@gmail.com](mailto:opcchristine@gmail.com)

Office ..... 402-345-8587

Restaurant ..... 402-345-8008

Website ..... [omahapressclub.com](http://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.**

