



2025
**AWARDS
BANQUET**

**COLLEGE OF JOURNALISM
AND COMMUNICATIONS**

2025 AWARDS BANQUET

APRIL 2, 2025

WELCOME

Hub Brown, Dean

DINNER

2025 HALL OF FAME INDUCTION

Hub Brown, Dean

FACULTY AND STAFF AWARDS

Hub Brown, Dean

CJC LEGENDS INDUCTION

Spiro Kiouisis, Executive Associate Dean

GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH AWARDS

Marcia DiStaso, Associate Dean

ADVERTISING

Huan Chen, Chair

JOURNALISM

Harrison Hove, Interim Chair

MEDIA PRODUCTION, MANAGEMENT, AND TECHNOLOGY

Roxane Coche, Chair

PUBLIC RELATIONS

Myiah Hutchens, Chair

MEDIA PROPERTIES

Rob Harder, Director of Operations

COLLEGE-WIDE AWARDS

Hub Brown, Dean

2025 AWARDS BANQUET

HALL OF FAME INDUCTION

Presented by Hub Brown, Dean

Alvin J. Cowans

B.S. Public Relations 1977

Rena Callahan Langley

B.S. Journalism 1991

Richard “Rich” Preuss

B.S. Telecommunication 1996

Dawne Widener-Burrows

B.S. Journalism, Public Relations 1976

FACULTY AND STAFF AWARDS

Presented by Hub Brown, Dean

Outstanding Doctoral Mentor Award

Benjamin Johnson

Director, STEM Translational
Communication Center; Associate
Professor, Department of Advertising

Faculty Research Award

Rachel Grant

Assistant Professor,
Department of Journalism

2024 Faculty Research Award

Huan Chen

Associate Professor and Chair,
Department of Advertising

Teacher of the Year Award

Cynthia Barnett

Senior Lecturer and Environmental
Journalist in Residence;
Director, Climate and Environment
Reporting Initiatives

Adjunct Teacher of the Year Award

Larry Krutchik

Department of Public Relations

Faculty Mentor of the Year Award

Harrison Hove

Interim Chair and Senior Lecturer,
Department of Journalism; Interim
Director, Innovation News Center

Faculty Service Award

Mickey Nail

Senior Lecturer and Professional-In-
Residence, Department of Public Relations

Professional Advisor of the Year Award

Thomas Garvey

Academic Advisor

Staff Superior Accomplishment
of the Year Award

Thomas Garvey

Academic Advisor

CJC LEGENDS INDUCTION

Presented by Spiro Kiouisis, Executive Associate Dean

Faculty | **Debbie Treise**

Staff | **Jody Hedge**

GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH AWARDS

Presented by Marcia DiStaso, Associate Dean

The Julie Dodd Outstanding Graduate Student Teaching Award

Brittany Shaughnessy

Outstanding Student Research Award

Sophie Xiaofan Wei

Outstanding Master's Student: Online

Vineeth Patel

UNDERGRADUATE AWARDS

ADVERTISING

Presented by Huan Chen, Chair

Outstanding Advertising Scholar

Nicole Knowles

Joseph R. Pisani Service Award

Erica Ford

W. Robert Glafcke Award

Madison Calvert

Richard W. McGinnis Professional Promise Award

Michelle Anders

John Sutherland Great Ideas Award

Jake Tabor

Marshall Respass Award

Khalida Clark

UNDERGRADUATE AWARDS

JOURNALISM

Presented by Harrison Hove, Interim Chair

Outstanding Journalism Scholar
Luena Rodriguez-Feo Vileira

John Paul Jones Jr. Award
Lauren Brensel

Elmer Emig Award
Ashleigh Lucas

H.G. "Buddy" Davis Award
Vivienne Serret

Jean Chance Service Award
Brooke Davidson

Jon Roosenraad Society of Professional Journalists Award
Ella Thompson

WJXT-TV Award
Bailey Korinek

MEDIA PRODUCTION, MANAGEMENT, AND TECHNOLOGY

Presented by Roxane Coche, Chair

Outstanding Telecommunication Scholar
Katherine Batteese
Andrea Landa-Cruz

Major Garland Powell Award
Alexander Bobadilla

May Burton Award
Sophia Abolfathi

F. Leslie Smith Management Award
Stevencia "Stevie" Estime

UNDERGRADUATE AWARDS

PUBLIC RELATIONS

Presented by Myiah Hutchens, Chair

Outstanding Public Relations Scholar

Kathryn Anderson

Frank F. Rathbun PRSSA Award

Maria Caballero

Charles Wellborn Service Award

Rebecca Weinstein

Jack Detweiler Professional Promise in Public Relations Award

Grace Moffett

Florida Public Relations Association Award

Ceci Edelberg

MEDIA PROPERTIES

Presented by Rob Harder, Director of Operations

Kenneth A. Christiansen Award

Bianca Smith

Frank Counts TV Award for Outstanding Television
News Production and Creative Services

Daniel Haviv

Jon Quattlebaum Award

**Kirsten Maselka
Charlize Ramos**

Ralph L. Lowenstein Broadcast News Award
for Excellence in News at WUFT-FM

Ailee Shanes

Doris Bardon Award for Overall Excellence
in Broadcasting at WUFT-FM

Sofia Zarran

Walter "Red" Barber Award

Ethan Eibe

UNDERGRADUATE AWARDS

MEDIA PROPERTIES *continued*

Excellence in Digital Media Award

Valentina Sandoval

Excellence in Media Leadership

Gracey Davis
Jessica Cuenca

Excellence in Multimedia Meteorology Award

Matthew Clark
Benjamin Gancarz-Davies

Excellence in Spanish-Language Media Award

Isabella Rivera

COLLEGE-WIDE AWARDS

Presented by Hub Brown, Dean

Dean's Cup for Scholarship

Kathy Anderson
Katherine Batteese
Nicole Knowles
Andrea Landa-Cruz
Luena Rodriguez-Feo Vileria

Dean's Cup for Service

Stevencia "Stevie" Estime

Dean's Cup for Professional Promise

Bailey Korinek

Ruth and Rae O. Weimer Award

Sophia Abolfathi
Ceci Edelberg

HALL OF FAME



Alvin J. Cowans **B.S. Public Relations 1977**

Alvin J. Cowans, CCUE, has been the President and CEO of McCoy Federal Credit Union in Orlando since November 1985. He has worked in the financial industry since 1978, joining McCoy Federal in 1983 as Senior Vice President before becoming President and CEO at the age of 30.

Cowans earned a Bachelor of Science in Journalism from the University of Florida in 1977. He was a four-year letter winner for the Florida Gators football team (1973–1976), served as co-captain in 1976, and was drafted by the Pittsburgh Steelers in 1977. He was inducted into the University of Florida Gator Athletic Hall of Fame in 2003.

He is a graduate of the Chamber of Commerce Leadership Orlando Program, the Florida Credit Union League Management Institute, and CUNA's Advanced Management Institute. He also holds the designation of Certified Credit Union Executive.

Cowans served 17 years as a director for the League of Southeastern Credit Unions in various roles, including chairman. He was appointed by the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta (District 6) to its Community Depository Institutions Advisory Council (CDIAC) and later served as District 6 Chairman, representing the district in Washington, D.C. Additionally, he served a three-year term on the Federal Reserve's Consumer Advisory Council and nine years as Region III Director for the National Association of Federal Credit Unions.

Currently, Cowans serves on the City of Orlando's Finance Committee and as Chairman of the Orange County Sports Incentive Committee. His numerous recognitions include the 2021 Onyx Magazine Men of Honor award and the 2025 Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity / I.S. Hankins Foundation Drum Major Award for Business.

Cowans is a member of the University of Florida Athletic Association Board of Directors and the Gator Booster Board of Directors. He is married to Shirley Smith Cowans and has two sons and five grandchildren; Dr. Alvin Jeffrey Cowans, II, wife Nikki, children Ava and Aubrey, and Marcus A. Cowans, wife Keshara, children Marcus A. Cowans, II, McKinley and McKayla.

HALL OF FAME



Rena Callahan Langley **B.S. Journalism 1991**

Rena Langley is the senior vice president of Communications and Public Affairs for Disney Signature Experiences and Disney Consumer Products. She leads teams in Communications, Public Relations, Corporate Social Responsibility, and Government and Industry Relations for all Disney Signature Experiences lines of business- including Disney Cruise Line, Disney Vacation Club, Adventures by Disney, National Geographic Expeditions and Storyliving by Disney – along with Disney Consumer Products, Games & Publishing. Prior to this role, she was the senior vice president of Communications and Public Affairs for Walt Disney World Resort.

Active in her community, Langley is the board chair for the Orlando Economic Partnership and serves on the boards of both the Florida Chamber of Commerce and The Nature Conservancy in Florida. She is also a member of the UFCJC Public Relations Council.

HALL OF FAME



Richard "Rich" Preuss **B.S. Telecommunication 1996**

Rich Preuss is an Emmy and Peabody Award-winning television director and producer specializing in live and live-to-tape programming. He began his career at UFCJ, directing Gator Growl and news broadcasts for WUFT. While at UF, he was selected for the Television Academy's prestigious internship program.

Over the past 25 years, Preuss has directed a wide range of variety television, including in-studio comedy shows, large-scale award ceremonies, red carpet specials, comedy specials, dog shows, cooking competitions, corporate events, e-sports, and even rocket launches. His direction of Patriot Act with Hasan Minhaj on Netflix earned widespread acclaim.

In 2024, Preuss directed a Dolly Parton special for CBS, a comedy series starring Sarah Silverman for TBS, the Peabody Awards, the Grammys Premiere Ceremony, the Creative Arts Emmys, the Billboard Music Awards, and a live Smashing Pumpkins concert at Wrigley Field. He also directed The Game Awards, a live special featuring performances by Snoop Dogg and Twenty One Pilots, with presentations by Harrison Ford and The Muppets. The event set a record with 154 million live streams.

Committed to fostering new talent, Preuss has hosted Television Academy internships and mentors young professionals launching their careers in television.

HALL OF FAME



Dawne Widener-Burrows **B.S. Journalism, Public Relations 1976**

Dawne Widener-Burrows is the founder of two prominent communications and advertising research firms in the Washington-Baltimore area: WBA Research, Inc. (established in 1987) and Widener Research, LLC (established in 2005). WBA Research quickly became one of the largest market research firms in the Mid-Atlantic region, serving clients such as the got milk? campaign, National Public Radio, The Washington Post, and Johns Hopkins University.

Before launching her businesses, Widener-Burrows was Vice President and Director of Research at Needham, Harper & Steers (now DDB), where she worked on award-winning advertising campaigns for McDonald's.

A dedicated supporter of UFCJC, she has served on the CJC Advertising Advisory Council for 11 years, culminating in her role as chair. She also contributed to establishing The Agency at UF and was appointed to the CJC Dean's Leadership Council in 2024.

Widener-Burrows is actively involved in nonprofit work, particularly with the Spina Bifida Association (SBA), where she serves on the Board of Trustees. Her research for SBA has been published in multiple medical journals and presented at national conferences.

Amid her professional and philanthropic endeavors, Dawne remains committed to education and mentorship. She and her husband Larry have been long-term sponsors of many US Naval Academy midshipmen and women, offering guidance, support, and a home away from home for students.

CJC LEGENDS



Debbie Treise

Debbie Treise retired in 2023 after a 31-year tenure, where she served as an assistant professor and ascended to associate in 1997 and professor in 2002. She was named associate dean of Graduate Studies in 2003 and senior associate dean of Graduate Studies and Research in 2013. She stepped down as senior associate dean in 2019 and continued teaching in the Advertising Department.

Among her major accomplishments are development and implementation of the STEM Translational Communication Center, Professional Master's program, Science/Health master's track, the three-study dissertation, and advocacy for a support system for grants including hiring a staff member to support grants full-time. She received \$1.4 million in grants from funding organizations such as NASA, the Kaiser Family Foundation and UF's Clinical and Translational Science Institute. Debbie was the first CJC professor to receive a University of Florida Research Faculty fellowship. She won the College Research Award twice and received UF's Outstanding Doctoral Mentorship Award in 2010 and 2019.

Former Dean Diane McFarlin said of Debbie: "Throughout her time at CJC, her leadership style has been consistently inclusive and consultative. She is an adept collaborator, both within the College and externally, which has resulted in opportunities for our growth that might not otherwise have presented themselves."

CJC LEGENDS



Jody Hedge

Jody Hedge retired from CJC as Graduate Division program assistant in 2020 after nearly 30 years at the College. In that time, she supported more than 2,000 master's students and more than 250 doctoral students. She possessed an extensive knowledge of university graduate school rules, established many of the division's administrative processes and demonstrated genuine compassion for students, faculty and fellow staff.

Former Graduate Division Associate Dean Tom Kelleher said, "Jody has been the heart and soul of our graduate program for three decades – and every single master's and doctoral student who has walked the halls of Weimer and earned a degree in that time has benefited from her wisdom, guidance and encyclopedic knowledge. And faculty have relied on her even more for guidance on everything from how to get students registered at orientation through making sure our new Ph.Ds. have their hoods ready for commencement."

Debbie added, "I had the honor and privilege to work with Jody for 16 years – the brains and memory of the Grad Division while I was there. She is one of the most caring, kind and thoughtful women I have ever known. A wonderful spirit that will be sorely missed by anyone who ever met her."

HISTORY OF COLLEGE AWARDS

Ruth and Rae O. Weimer Award for Outstanding Graduate of the College

The College's top awards each year are the Weimer Awards, named for Rae O. Weimer, the founding director and first dean, and his first wife, Ruth.

A man who had no college degrees, Weimer led the College to national prominence by the force of his personality and vision. He came to UF in 1949 and by the time he retired as dean 19 years later, he had transformed the College from a three-man academic unit into the second largest college of its type in the nation and sent almost 2,000 graduates on their way. He spent 25 years in the newspaper industry before coming to UF and was the managing editor of New York PM, the nation's first modern newspaper without advertisements.

Weimer was beloved by students, alumni and faculty alike. He was known to fight for his students and faculty, and to hire top journalists as faculty members even when the University objected to those who didn't have top degrees in their field.

Weimer died in November of 1996 at the age of 93 and is survived by a daughter, son and two grandsons. Ruth preceded him in death in 1979 and his second wife, Wilma, died in February of 2015.

GRADUATE AND RESEARCH AWARDS

The Julie Dodd Outstanding Graduate Student Teaching Award

This award recognizes the accomplishments of award-winning Journalism Professor Julie Dodd, one of the finest graduate student teachers in the College's history. Dodd, who retired in 2016, epitomized the value of great teaching. The award honors Dodd's dedication and 28 years of teaching.

ADVERTISING DEPARTMENT AWARDS

Joseph R. Pisani Award for Service in Advertising

Joe Pisani, who joined the Advertising faculty in 1973, served as chair of the department for a record-breaking 18 years. Pisani managed the department at a time of record-high enrollment. He retired from the faculty in 2005. Pisani still lives in Gainesville and visits the College often.

W. Robert Glafcke Award for Leadership

The Award for Leadership in the Department of Advertising is named for Robert Glafcke, who was on the College faculty in the early 1970s. He was very focused on building young leaders through his work with student organizations. He was named publisher of the *Houma Daily Courier*, a New York Times regional newspaper in Houma, La., in 1982. After leaving the newspaper business, Glafcke moved to Atlanta and opened a printing facility. He died in the late 1980s.

Richard W. McGinnis Award for Professional Promise in Advertising

Richard William McGinnis, B.S. Advertising 1958, is a major donor to The Agency and Advertising Department. While a student, McGinnis worked for the UF Sports Publicity Department. After graduating, he worked in the advertising field, including 21 years with Turner Advertising and Turner Communications in Atlanta. He retired in 1983 and then ran a small advertising agency for five years.

John Sutherland Great Ideas Award

One of the national leaders in advertising higher education, John Sutherland was chair of the Advertising Department from 2001 to 2013, when he retired from UF after more than 35 years of service. The award recognizes an exceptional creative thinker who has demonstrated innovative ideas that have the potential to significantly impact advertising problems.

Marshall Respass Award for Outstanding Advertising Graduate

The Department of Advertising's top award is named for Marshall Respass, a printer from Jacksonville who was a strong supporter of what was then the School of Journalism during the Weimer era. Records are limited, but it is believed he owned Respass Printing & Engraving and died sometime in the 1960s.

JOURNALISM DEPARTMENT AWARDS

John Paul Jones Jr. Award for Magazine/Feature Writing Excellence

The magazine/feature writing excellence award is named for John Paul Jones Jr., B.S. Journalism 1937, who, in 1948, was the third faculty member hired by the College. Jones followed Weimer as dean, serving from 1968-76, and it was during his tenure that the College broke into separate departments and plans began for a new building that would become the current Weimer Hall. Jones was a leader in the newspaper industry, serving as the secretary-manager of the Florida Press Association for 16 years. A prolific writer, he created *Guide to North Florida Living* magazine in 1981 and ran it until 1997. He died in 2001.

Elmer Emig Award for Professional Promise in Journalism

The Professional Promise Award in the Department of Journalism is named for Elmer Emig, the first head of the department. When journalism became part of the UF College of Commerce and Journalism in 1927, then Dean Walter Matherly hired Emig. He headed the department for nearly 25 years. In addition to his faculty work, Emig wrote editorials for Florida newspapers, and helped organize UF's chapter of Sigma Delta Chi. He died in 1956.

H.G. “Buddy” Davis Award for Promise in Reporting and Editing

Most alumni from the 1950s through the 1980s have a story to tell about H.G. “Buddy” Davis, B.S. Journalism 1948, M.A.M.C. 1952. This award is named for Davis, who taught almost every journalism course during his tenure. On the Journalism faculty from 1954 until he retired in 1985, Davis also wrote editorials for the Gainesville Sun from 1962-1989. He was awarded a Pulitzer Prize in 1971 for a series of editorials he wrote in 1970 calling for tolerance during school desegregation in Alachua County. He died in 2004 at the age of 80.

Jon Roosenraad Society of Professional Journalists Award

The award for a top graduate in journalism is named after the Society of Professional Journalists, a leading industry association. The award was renamed the Jon Roosenraad Society of Professional Journalists Award in honor of the former CJC Journalism Department professor and chair who passed away in 2023.

Jean Chance Service Award

Professor Jean Chance taught for 33 years in the College of Journalism and Communications. Besides serving on many College and University committees, she served as a judge for numerous newspaper and magazine writing competitions, and was faculty adviser for student chapters of the Society of Professional Journalists and Women in Communications Inc. In 1982, she was awarded the College Faculty Service Award. Since retiring from the University in 2003, she has served on the board of Campus Communications, Inc., publisher and chair of *The Independent Florida Alligator*.

WJXT-TV Award

The top award for students in television news is named for Jacksonville television station WJXT-TV. Florida's second television station and Jacksonville's first, WJXT (then WMBR) went on the air in 1949. For years, it was the CBS affiliate serving the North Florida area. The station has long been considered one of the top news stations in the Southeast and numerous College alumni have worked at the station.

MEDIA PRODUCTION, MANAGEMENT, AND TECHNOLOGY DEPARTMENT AWARDS

Major Garland Powell Award for Service in Broadcasting

Major Garland Powell was the first station manager of WRUF, which went on the air as an AM station in 1928. It was among the first five radio stations in Florida. The state of Florida had just been hit by fierce hurricanes in 1926, which washed away an era of statewide prosperity and land speculation, and a group of businessmen wanted to use the radio waves as a way of luring people back to the Sunshine State. Powell was faced with the daunting task of commercializing the station and keeping it on the air after the Great Depression hit in the early 1930s. One of Powell's earliest finds was Red Barber, who went on to become one of America's most beloved and popular radio sportscasters.

F. Leslie Smith Management Award

The top award for students in the Media Management Track is named for Leslie Smith, B.S. Telecommunication 1961, retired Telecommunication Department chair and faculty member. Smith joined the faculty in 1982 and taught in the management sequence until his retirement in 2005. The award was created in his honor in 2003.

May Burton Award for Excellence in Production

The award for excellence in broadcast production is named for May Burton, an early pioneer in educational television at WUFT-TV in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Burton taught summer courses each year on educational television for local schoolteachers, and broadcast many in-class television lessons for the public schools. She died at a relatively young age in the 1960s.

PUBLIC RELATIONS DEPARTMENT AWARDS

Frank F. Rathbun PRSSA Award

Frank Rathbun, B.S. Journalism 1936, M.A.M.C. 1971, joined the faculty in 1968, primarily teaching public relations, magazine and feature writing, and writing for mass communications. He was a long-time faculty adviser to the UF Public Relations Student Society of America chapter and retired in 1978.

Charles Wellborn Award for Service in Public Relations

A beloved faculty member for over 19 years, Charlie Wellborn was the “guru of magazines.” Wellborn was the architect of many courses in the College, including editing and graphics, and business/technical communications. The Florida Magazine Association created the “Charlie Award” to recognize the top entry in each category of its annual magazine contest. He was a retired Lt. Colonel in the U.S. Army and often shared stories from World War II. He died in 2002 at the age of 77.

Jack Detweiler Award for Professional Promise in Public Relations

The Professional Promise in Public Relations Award is named for Jack Detweiler, B.S. Journalism 1952, Ed.D. 1969, who was a longtime faculty member of the Public Relations Department and served as department chair during the late 1980s/early 1990s. He joined the faculty in 1965 and retired in 2004. In his early years, Detweiler was known more to the College’s journalism majors, serving as the director of student publications where he helped advise the *The Alligator* during the years immediately prior to the newspaper becoming independent and moving off campus.

Florida Public Relations Association Award

The award for the top student in the Department of Public Relations is named for the Florida Public Relations Association, the leading association for public relations professionals in the state. Founded in 1938, FPRA is the oldest public relations organization in the United States. Today, the association boasts nearly 1,500 professional and student members at chapters across the state.

MEDIA PROPERTIES AWARDS

Jon Quattlebaum Award for Outstanding News Student at WUFT-TV

Jon Quattlebaum, B.S. Telecommunication 1990, was a popular Telecommunication student and one of the News Five anchors on WUFT-TV. After graduating, Quattlebaum worked as a reporter at both a Sarasota television station and WINK-TV in Fort Myers. In 1994, while on a trip to Phoenix to interview for another reporting position, he died at the age of 26 of injuries suffered in a hiking accident on Camelback Mountain.

Ralph L. Lowenstein Broadcast News Award for Excellence in News at WUFT-FM

The broadcast news award for WUFT-FM is named for Ralph Lowenstein, the visionary dean of the College from 1976-1994. He guided the College as it completed and moved into Weimer Hall in 1980, worked tirelessly for a more diverse student body, developed the Brechner Center for Freedom of Information and significantly expanded the College’s private support. He passed away in 2020 at the age of 90.

Kenneth A. Christiansen Award for Service to Both WUFT-TV and WUFT-FM

Kenneth A. Christiansen, WUFT-TV's first station manager, was internationally renowned for his knowledge of educational television when he arrived in 1958, having served as a consultant in India, England and the Far East. The award in his honor is given to a student who is exemplary in service to both WUFT-TV and WUFT- FM. Christiansen also served as chairman of the Broadcasting Department until he retired in 1977. He died in 1996 at the age of 82.

Frank Counts TV Production & Creative Services Award

Frank Counts, who retired in 2010 after more than 37 years, was a Telecommunication assistant professor and production manager for WUFT-TV. Counts joined the faculty in 1972 and taught hundreds of students interested in radio and television broadcast production.

Doris Bardon Award for Overall Excellence in Broadcasting at WUFT-FM

Doris Bardon, Alachua County activist and author, was one of the founding members of public radio station WUFT-FM. She was part of a team of community leaders that created a plan and solicited funding in 1981 to create a radio station serving listeners in North Central Florida. The award honors a student who excels in all areas of the broadcast operation.

Walter "Red" Barber Award - WRUF

Any student with an interest in sports yearns for the coveted W.L. "Red" Barber Award for the top student in sports at WRUF-AM. One of the nation's most famous broadcasters, Red Barber, B.S. Journalism 1930, served as sports director for CBS and broadcast 13 World Series and six All-Star Games. He joined the staff at WRUF in 1929 after reading a scholarly paper over the air. He was the voice of the Brooklyn Dodgers from 1939 to 1953, and retired in 1966 as the voice of the New York Yankees. He had the distinction of broadcasting baseball's first night game and the sport's first televised contest in 1939 in Brooklyn. Barber is widely credited with playing a major role in the acceptance of Jackie Robinson's arrival to the major leagues in 1947. Barber was awarded an honorary degree from UF in 1970 and inducted into the College Hall of Fame that same year. He died in 1992.



**COLLEGE OF JOURNALISM
AND COMMUNICATIONS**