

## Cabrera Embodies Trust and Truth in an AI Era

By Betsy Cantwell  
President, Washington State University

We are living in a moment when voices can be cloned, images fabricated, and “facts” manufactured at the click of a button. In that environment, trust is no longer assumed. It is earned. And that is what makes Ana Cabrera’s career so instructive.

*From her beginnings at WSU’s Murrow College to the national stage, Ana Cabrera has built something increasingly rare: credibility. Not through spectacle or shortcuts, but the hard way; story by story, source by source, decision by decision.*

At a time when deepfakes blur reality and algorithms can generate headlines in seconds, Ana’s commitment to accuracy, context, and humanity stands apart. Her voice is real. It is accountable. And it matters because a functioning democracy depends not just on information, but on public confidence in the people who deliver it.

Ana’s achievements are a point of pride for Washington State University. But they are also a reminder of what we are here to do. Across our system, we prepare graduates not simply to use powerful tools, but to use them responsibly. Whether they go on to lead newsrooms, advance biomedical research, or design human-centered AI systems, we expect them to act with integrity, judgment, and care for the public good.

That is the enduring responsibility of a modern land-grant university. Technology will continue to evolve—and we intend to be at the forefront of that evolution. But some things do not change. Our students must be able to think critically, question what they see, and distinguish signal from noise. They must understand how to use AI and when and when not to rely on it.



WSU President Betsy Cantwell

*At WSU, we are meeting that challenge head-on. We are preparing future journalists to work alongside emerging technologies while remaining guardians of truth.*

We are embedding digital fluency across disciplines so that students writing code, policy, or prose do so with purpose and accountability. And we ground that work in the same ethic that defined Edward R. Murrow himself: tell the truth, serve the public, and hold the line.

Ana Cabrera has done exactly that. Reporting from moments that mattered, she has shown that trust is not a relic of another era. It is the most valuable currency we have right now.

On behalf of the WSU community, I offer Ana my warmest congratulations on this Lifetime Achievement Award.

Her career sets the standard, and her example challenges us as educators, journalists, and citizens to live up to it as we prepare the next generation of Cougs to lead and serve with integrity in whatever future they inherit.

*Two Murrow College graduates and Lifetime Achievement Awardees, a quarter-century apart, built by the same legacy.*

## The Truth Still Matters: Educating Ethical Communicators in the Spirit of Edward R. Murrow

Designed by Ben Pingel

By Bruce Pinkleton  
Dean, Edward R. Murrow College of Communication

In 2026, truth competes for attention in an endless scroll of distraction. Artificial intelligence can now hallucinate quotes, fabricate faces and pictures, and create entire stories out of code. Internet search engines promise relevant information but often deliver sales pitches. Algorithms curate news feeds to reflect already-held beliefs.

Edward R. Murrow’s words remain both a warning and an invitation:

*“This instrument can teach, it can illuminate; yes, and it can even inspire – but it can do so only to the extent that humans are determined to use it to those ends. Otherwise, it’s nothing but wires and lights in a box.”*

Murrow understood that truth demands effort, and that discomfort is its uneasy companion. His warning is both prescient and pressing as we consider the future.

### Murrow’s Legacy: A roadmap for the new generations of professional communicators

Murrow’s legacy is not a relic but a roadmap. From his rooftop broadcasts during the Blitz to his stand against McCarthyism, he showed us that our first loyalty must be to the truth emboldened by ethical courage and conveyed through professional excellence.

It’s the Murrow standard that guides us as educators. As our communication environments and opportunities evolve, we will see important changes in how we educate our students and in what we teach them.

- Technology will be an omnipresent collaborator, and we will use AI to teach and to create customized communication messages and environments.

- Spatial and immersive media will be a routine part of our communication efforts, and we will use them to communicate in more meaningful and effective ways.
- Given the ability of AI to create artificial messages, message credibility will be of paramount importance and will require communicators to be transparent in terms of information source provenance and credibility assessment.
- Successful communication will require interdisciplinary understanding and combinations of expertise in what were formerly unaffiliated fields.

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**ETHICAL COMMUNICATORS** CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

- Understanding audiences and producing evidence of message impact will continue to grow in importance.
- New communication platforms and channels we have not yet imagined will emerge, evolve, and grow in use and importance.

In response, communication education will allow and

recognize self-taught expertise and will likely include goal-directed, problem-solving courses allowing students to tackle challenges for an entire semester or even a year. This education may take place as part of a team or as a program created for an individual student.

Students will look to combine previously unrelated areas

of learning and expertise resulting in unique preparation for tailored professional applications. Some skills we currently teach will continue to retain their importance or we will combine them with other abilities resulting in new skill sets used to narrowly target specific areas of content to audiences.

In place of or in addition to a specific degree, a portfolio of demonstrated competencies will provide critical evidence of students' abilities. In this environment, experiential learning will be a critical aspect of communication education.

As communication education evolves, Murrow's standard – ethics, courage, and professional excellence – will

also remain the standard of communication education. Combining technical skills with the human element of conscience that Murrow carried into his broadcasts will be a touchstone of our work as professional communicators in a world where accuracy, credibility, and responsibility are the critical conditions of success. ■■■

**Curiosity and Passion Drive Undergraduate Research**

By Joy Wanja  
Ph.D. Candidate

Research often begins with curiosity. Washington State University's Edward R. Murrow College of Communication is helping undergraduate students to channel their curiosity to discover new ideas, sharpen their skills, and find their voices through collaborative research experiences that prepare them for careers beyond the classroom.

For many students that journey begins with a willingness to ask questions and explore unfamiliar ideas. Murrow College Professor Jessica Willoughby said curiosity is the most important ingredient.

"An interest in asking and exploring questions is one of the best things someone can bring to research. There is always so much we can learn, and an interest in the process of learning goes a long way toward helping move research forward," said Willoughby.

Undergraduate research at Murrow is often sparked by a student's personal interest in a topic and shaped through mentorship with faculty members. With guidance from professors, those early ideas can evolve into class projects, papers, or collaborative research initiatives.

Willoughby describes the process as one that requires consistency and determination, with mentorship tailored to each student's abilities, motivation, and interests.

Murrow College Assistant Professor Nicole O'Donnell echoes the importance of curiosity, noting that the habits developed through research often carry directly into professional work. For example, she cites curiosity and a willingness to show up as critical habits that can help guide a student to professional success.

"Many projects include extra

meetings, hands-on training, and attention to detail. Students gain a great deal from participating in research," O'Donnell said.

The research itself can take many forms. Willoughby said undergraduate students frequently contribute to real-world research projects in meaningful ways.

"I have had undergraduates work on interview projects, conducting interviews and helping analyze data. I have had students help develop surveys, implement them, and collect data. Some of the research process involves reading, finding, and reviewing literature," she said.

Those experiences help students develop practical skills that extend well beyond academic research.

Student research is frequently integrated into the classroom by Murrow College faculty. Willoughby, who co-leads the Media, Adolescents and Cannabis (MAC) Research Lab with Professor Stacey Hust, occasionally collaborates with undergraduate students at various research levels, including designing promotional posters for health campaigns. Additionally, O'Donnell works with students



Professor Jessica Willoughby talking with student in the Murrow College.

in her COMSTRAT 485 class to conduct survey and focus group research that informs the design of their strategic communication campaigns.

For Willoughby, undergraduate research is also deeply personal. As a Murrow alumna, she credits those early research opportunities with helping shape her own career.

"Undergraduate research helped me find my path to Murrow," said Willoughby. "Learning about research in COMSTRAT 312 opened a new area for me. Honing those research methods skills furthered my interests. But it

wasn't until I participated in an undergraduate research project at Murrow College, examining the effects of alcohol advertising, that I realized how fun research is and how many practical applications it has. I encourage people to get involved. Learn about research by being part of it. It's also a great way to have an impact," she said.

Today, Murrow College faculty continue that tradition by mentoring the next generation of researchers - carrying forward Edward R. Murrow's legacy of curiosity, mentorship, and a shared commitment to excellence. ■■■

**The Murrow Fellows: A Bold Plan**

By Ben Shors  
Chair, Journalism & Media Production, Professor of Practice

The Murrow News Fellowship launched with a simple but ambitious goal: place journalists into newsrooms that desperately need them. It's fitting work for a program bearing Edward R. Murrow's name.

Our 16 fellows have already produced more than 3,000 stories in less than two years, covering everything from state government to local school districts, from proposed tax increases to

immigration concerns affecting Latino communities. In one case, a fellow's reporting on a homeless services center facing closure led to a \$2 million investment from a reader to keep it open. That's the power of local journalism.

It's a rare bright spot in the often-bleak landscape of local news. This crisis in local news isn't just a journalism problem. It's a problem that extends deep into civic life in Washington. When

communities lose local news, they lose community connections, accountability for their governments, their schools, and the decisions that shape their daily lives.

That's why we are partnering with Report for America to build something unprecedented: a program to ensure every one of Washington's 39 counties has reliable, professional reporting by 2029. By partnering with Report for America – which has placed more than 850 journalists nationwide and helped newsrooms raise over \$60 million in local support – we're combining proven models to create something bigger. This is a project about building a sustainable local news infrastructure for the future.

*Beginning next year, we'll be placing new Murrow fellows across Washington, prioritizing news deserts and underserved communities first.*

As a land-grant university, we know that geography shouldn't determine access to information. Rural residents deserve the same accountability journalism as people in Seattle. These fellows will be employed directly by their newsrooms with our support, ensuring editorial independence while expanding coverage.

This five-year, \$10 million initiative leverages public funding from the Washington Legislature with philanthropic

support and newsroom buy-in. Murrow College has the opportunity to create a national model, and other states are watching what we do. If we can show that strategic public investment combined with private dollars and community engagement can build sustainable local journalism, it creates a blueprint that can be replicated across America.

Every community deserves to know what's happening in their schools, their county government, their local economy. We're making sure that becomes reality in Washington, and we are proud to lead this work from Murrow College. ■■■

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# The Future Of News

**By Ben Shors**

Chair, Journalism & Media Production, Professor of Practice

In 1958, Edward R. Murrow warned that television risked becoming mere “wires and lights in a box,” a technological marvel squandered on the trivial.

Murrow’s speech lamented human abdication of powerful technology, human greed dictating action. The fear surrounding AI runs deeper: that human choice itself will be engineered out of the equation. Will we, as Murrow implored us, harness this technology in service of democracy, or will we merely optimize our own decline?

That’s too dark, too apocalyptic. It fails to credit each of us with the power and responsibility to decide what comes next. The outcome is not foreordained, but will be negotiated, daily, hourly, click by click.

To grasp what lies ahead, we can turn to the past, of course. History demonstrates that human choices determine outcomes, not technology. Radio could have remained pure diversion, yet Murrow wielded it to transport the realities of World War II into American living rooms - from the sounds of the London Blitz to the horrors of Buchenwald. What mattered was not the sophistication of the medium, but the determination of journalists to enlighten rather than merely entertain.

AI arrives bearing the seductive promises of unprecedented efficiency, limitless scale, and algorithmic precision. Its systems can parse millions of documents, detecting patterns invisible to human perception, generating summaries in an instant. Yet journalism’s crisis

is not fundamentally one of efficiency. It is a crisis of trust.

Public confidence in mass media has eroded to historic lows. This collapse did not occur because news arrived too slowly or lacked technological sophistication, but because people came to feel that journalism no longer sees them - a fracture exploited by the profession’s critics, both those acting in good faith and those decidedly not.

Consider what stands to be lost. A human reporter does not merely accumulate facts - they sit across from a grieving parent, attend the Friday night game, forge trust through years of sustained presence in a community. When a local reporter covers a city council for a decade, residents know their name, recognize their

face, and understand their stake in the community’s fate. When that reporter errs, there exists someone to hold accountable, someone who will answer.

The gravest peril is not that AI will supplant journalists entirely. It is that we will drift, half-awake, into a news ecosystem that feels polished, efficient, and fundamentally hollow, providing information absent from illumination and connection.

AI has the power to augment human capabilities without supplanting human judgment. Journalism must keep humanity at the center, not as nostalgic sentiment, but as recognition of what renders journalism indispensable.

Murrow observed that technology could “teach,

illuminate, inspire - but only to the extent that humans are determined to use it to those ends.” We are forever on the precipice of something great or tragic, and that is not intended to dismiss the seismic change that this new technology foretells. But it is a reminder that while we possess more sophisticated wires and brighter lights, Murrow’s fundamental test endures. The technology will do what we instruct it to do, or so we hope. The question is whether we possess the wisdom and will to direct it toward something worthy of the democratic ideals that journalists endeavor to serve.



# The Future of Public Media: A Conversation Worth Having

**By Cara Williams Fry**

General Manager, Northwest Public Broadcasting

Not long ago, I reached out to several former colleagues - people who, like me, spent much of their professional lives in public media and still care deeply about where it goes next, even though most now work outside the system. I asked four questions about relevance, funding, change, and what should ultimately guide public media in the years ahead. What came back felt less like a survey and more like conversations we’ve had for years - honest, thoughtful, and grounded in a shared belief that public media still matters.

In fact, many of us believe public media is more important in 2026 than ever before. Over the past 12 months alone, this has been a huge topic of conversation with hundreds of hours of discussion by thousands of people across the nation. There is no single right answer, and neither I nor

the colleagues I reached out to are fortune tellers. But we can ground our view of the need to change in a bedrock mission that still holds.

Public media has always mattered most when it offered what others did not: educational programming for children, thoughtful journalism, cultural storytelling and perspectives often overlooked elsewhere. The question today is simple: what is missing now? In a world of speed and noise, fact-based journalism matters. Context matters. Trust matters. Programming that helps children learn and grow still matters.

But relevance today is not just about content - it is about connection. We must stop thinking we’re delivering information to a waiting public and begin to find ways to make the public partners in public media. It’s not just a strategy;

it’s a service. We can, for example, welcome the voices of everyday people on-air. We can respond to what we hear in so many ways that people want: a regular focus on uplifting stories, and more focus on what is happening in their cities, towns and neighborhoods. Using all the tools we have - audio, video, newsletters and conversations - we can give people a sense of hope. When we do, people will join us on the journey.

The loss of federal funding was the final kick that galvanized an urgent need to change. Funding will remain a challenge, but not an unsolvable one. The future will belong to organizations that diversify membership, major and planned giving, endowments, foundations, and new collaborative models. Sustainability will come not from one source, but from many.

This also calls for greater collaboration and broader partnership. We must think beyond our traditional boundaries and work more intentionally with community organizations - understanding our strengths and connecting with partners who bring different strengths, reach different audiences, and see challenges from new perspectives. Working together, serving together, and embracing new ways of working will strengthen our future and expand our impact.

Across every response from my colleagues, one word stood out: listen. Public media cannot decide in isolation what communities need - we must ask, hear, and respond. Listening leads to convening, bringing people together for civil discourse and shared problem-solving. And it requires humility. Not everything we create is precious. As much as possible, the people we serve should be partners in what we create.

We must recognize that public media cannot serve every community in the same way. America is diverse and

each community deserves thoughtful, intentional engagement. Our work must better reflect and reach younger and more diverse audiences - including those who may feel distant from, or even skeptical of public media. We need to embrace technology and to use it in a way that audiences trust and understand. This is not a choice between screens and experiences; it must be both. Broadcast still matters. Digital is essential and growing. In person gatherings are irreplaceable. Across the board, people want the same thing: authentic connection, real voices, and genuine human interaction.

**So where do we go from here?**

*We listen. We show up. We bring people together. We stay humble.*

*We tell the truth.*

*We tell human stories that connect rather than divide.*

*We tell stories about our communities that no other organization can.*

*And we tell our own story - clearly, honestly, and often.*

Most importantly, we do this together. There are not enough of us to go it alone. The future of public media will be shaped not by strategy alone, but by all - leaders, journalists, producers, fundraisers, partners, neighbors and communities - choosing to move forward together.

If we lean in with purpose and compassion, the future of public media is not something that will happen to us. It is something we will build together.



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## Q&A With Ana Cabrera

Interviewed By Brett Atwood  
Associate Professor of Practice

As the Edward R. Murrow College of Communication celebrates the 50th Murrow Symposium, the college will honor one of its own. National broadcast journalist and MS NOW anchor Ana Cabrera, a 2004 Murrow alumna, has returned to Pullman this week to receive the 2026 Edward R. Murrow Lifetime Achievement Award in Journalism.

Cabrera's career has taken her from local reporting in Spokane and Denver to covering some of the most consequential national and international stories of the past decade. In advance of the milestone event, Cabrera shared reflections with Murrow College in this exclusive Q&A about her time as a student, the role the Murrow Symposium played in launching her career, and the values that continue to guide her work today.

**Q: This year's Murrow Symposium marks its 50th anniversary, and you're returning to receive the Lifetime Achievement Award. What does this full-circle moment mean to you?**

It's surreal. It's deeply humbling. I'm honored beyond words.

Murrow's storied legacy and lasting mission has always been

my guiding light. I'm so grateful for the education, experience and robust journalism foundation I received at The Murrow College (The Murrow School of Communication in my day) that continues to fuel my work now two decades later.

Dean Pinkleton was a professor of mine when I was in college. He and other professors, like Glenn Johnson and Marvin Marcelo, opened my eyes to the excitement and power of reporting. They provided such tremendous expertise and offered essential resources and hands-on experience that propelled me into an incredibly impactful and fulfilling career journey. For this, among many reasons, I can't imagine receiving a more meaningful award.

It's incredibly special to join the whole Murrow College family to accept this award at such a milestone Symposium, during what I believe is one of the most challenging and consequential times in the history of journalism.

**Q: As a Murrow student, what experiences most shaped your understanding of journalism – either in the classroom, the newsroom, or at the Symposium?**

Quality professors were key. First, because they focused on what was most important. They highlighted the public service mission of journalism and the importance of informing and educating, shining light on disheartening situations, giving voice to the vulnerable, marginalized and oppressed of society, and most importantly, finding the truth by following the facts wherever they may lead.

Having professors who taught not only those critical tenets of essential reporting, but also, the skills for strong interviewing, smart script writing, and impactful storytelling sets The Murrow College apart. I felt well prepared for the work after college.

Professors like Glenn Johnson and Marvin Marcelo held us to high standards, while giving my classmates and me wiggle-room to try some different things as we learned the craft. Their passion and support made learning fun and helped launch me at full sprint into this career. I've even reached back out to them at different points after college to get advice. They're not just professors, they're mentors, and in some ways, I consider them friends.

**Q: You've credited the Murrow Symposium with helping you connect with professionals early in your career. Is there a specific memory or interaction from the Symposium that influenced your path?**

One of my most memorable moments was the Murrow Symposium of my junior year in college. I barely made it to a resume critiquing session where I met Traci Zeravica, who was an assistant news director at KHQ-TV at the time. She gave me some good advice that I took to my internship that summer and helped build a resume tape.

I leaned on that connection as I began my job hunt my senior year of college. Before I left Pullman to head back to Colorado upon graduation, I emailed Traci to let her know that Spokane was a "target market" for me at some point along my career journey and I'd love to keep in touch. I asked if I might visit her for one more opportunity to get feedback on my work.

Turns out, the stars aligned. KHQ had a reporter opening, with a good bench of veteran reporters already on staff. My informal meeting turned into a job interview. I applied for the position and got the gig... all thanks to that one chance meeting at the Murrow Symposium.

**Q: You began in local news at KHQ-TV and KMGH-TV before moving to national networks. What did local journalism teach you that still anchors your work today?**

I loved my time in local news. Talk about community-oriented journalism. I learned how to build sources by building trust with the community. I learned the value of demonstrable live-shots to connect with viewers. I learned how to work quickly to gather facts and interviews under daily deadline pressure. I learned a lot about the importance of being a team.

As a reporter I worked closely with photographers, producers and editors - and we relied on each other - to elevate each individual story and each newscast. As an anchor, I got to collaborate with a variety of colleagues on-air as part of an ensemble to help viewers feel like part of a news family.

Working in both Spokane and Denver also gave me experience covering a diverse range of stories that required different approaches to storytelling. I developed stronger interviewing skills in conversations with local residents, as well as with state and local leaders.

I also covered my share of breaking news, which helped strengthen my "think on your

feet" muscle that I now use almost daily bouncing between press conferences, hearings, and breaking news during my two-hour show on MS NOW.

This mosaic of experiences created a strong foundation from which to build as I've continued to grow professionally.

**Q: Your Emmy-winning coverage of the High Park Fire was an early milestone. What did reporting in that crisis teach you about clarity and responsibility in fast-moving situations?**

Natural disasters are always urgent, always full of emotion, and always present abundant opportunities for impactful storytelling.

I've covered wildfires, blizzards, tornadoes, historic floods and hurricanes. They all come with unique challenges logistically and emotionally. I ask myself, "what do my view need to know and what do they want to know?"

In the High Park Fire, job number one was communicating information to help people stay safe. What kind of fire activity was happening, who needed to evacuate, what was being done to help save lives and save property? We looked to officials to help answer a lot of those questions. We also relied on experts, like meteorologists. And we detailed what we could see and hear with our own eyes and ears. We recorded video and took photographs of all aspects of the firefight so viewers could understand the magnitude of devastation.

Of course, the people at the heart of the story also drive the reporting in these situations. We sought interviews with those forced to evacuate. We went to shelters where volunteers were helping to meet immediate needs. We went on ride-a-longs with residents once they were able to return home. As journalists, it's our job to tell THEIR stories and bear witness to their fear, desperation, grief and resilience. We should always strive to capture the humanity in moments of tragedy and triumph as the fragility of the human condition and the strength of the human spirit are often revealed.

**Q: What advice would you offer Murrow students attending this year's Symposium who hope to build meaningful careers in journalism?**

Be true to yourself. Authenticity connects. Tell stories your way.

Take risks. It's how you grow and can have greater impact.

Deliver the news, don't be the news.

Your credibility is crucial. It's not about always being first. It's about being right. You have to double check. You have to know the full story to tell it the responsible way.

Seek trusted sources of information. Find the experts.

Vet and verify, especially with AI these days. Don't rush to highlight or share a viral video. Make sure it's authentic. Don't retweet or repost a story from someone else unless you know it's true.

Understand the motivations of people pitching you. What's their goal? And what value does the story have for the audience?

Be curious! There's always more to learn and understand.

Show empathy. Treat all those you interview with respect.

Have command of the facts... the data, the law, the historical context. Let the facts lead your reporting.

**Q: Looking ahead, what gives you confidence about the future of journalism – and what do you hope this next generation carries forward from the Murrow legacy?**

Our industry is evolving quickly to adapt to technological changes and the way people are consuming news. We're trying to navigate the proliferation of social media and a societal pivot from broadcast and cable to streaming. But this disruption has the real potential for meaningful innovations to capture content and distribute the news in ways that allow us to reach larger, more diverse audiences.

We're also blasting into the realm of artificial intelligence, which comes with a lot of uncertainty. But this technology may prove to be a useful tool, which can help make us more efficient, and free us up to use more of our time doing the reporting and gathering the news, and using our brainpower in creative ways to develop more impactful storytelling.

But at the heart of it are journalists who are freethinkers, who are curious, who enjoy storytelling, who find purpose in pursuit of the truth in order to serve a public that's thirsting for facts and understanding of their world.

Of course, leadership matters. I'm confident that students in the Murrow College are learning from the best. With incredible professors providing hands-on learning opportunities, I know that quality education is building a strong foundation for the next generation. And these are the journalists that will carry the Murrow torch forward.



The 2026 Edward R. Murrow Award  
For Lifetime Achievement in Journalism  
Presented to:  
**Ana Cabrera**

## Research That Matters, Mentorship That Transforms: Murrow College Research and Graduate Programs

By Ryan Thomas  
Associate Professor

The Edward R. Murrow College of Communication at Washington State University stands as a nationally recognized hub for innovative, collaborative, and impactful research.

The Murrow College's research profile is defined by work that not only advances theory but also addresses real-world challenges. Murrow faculty are known for conducting applied research with broad public and civic health implications, producing scholarship that informs policy, strengthens communities,

and improves lives. Murrow faculty and graduate students collaborate on projects spanning media effects, health communication, journalism, political communication, and digital media, ensuring that research emerging from the college resonates far beyond academia.

This impact is matched by national recognition. Academic Analytics' comparison of Murrow College to 107 peer institutions places it among the elite programs in its field. Based on the Scholarly Research Index, Murrow ranks within the top 5% of communication

colleges nationwide in research productivity. Faculty members are highly prolific, regularly publishing multiple refereed articles each year in top-tier academic journals. Their work is also widely recognized and influential: Academic Analytics ranks Murrow within the top 6% nationally in citations per faculty member and total citations per faculty member.

Central to this success is the college's residential graduate program and its strong culture of mentorship and collaboration. Graduate students are fully integrated into active research teams,

working closely with faculty who are leaders in their areas of expertise. This environment fosters not only methodological rigor and intellectual growth, but also a shared commitment to producing meaningful, impactful scholarship.

The outcomes reflect this investment in students. Ph.D. alumni have secured faculty positions at leading institutions such as Rutgers University, the University of Arizona, and Texas Tech University, helping shape the future of communication education and research. Others have translated their training

into influential roles across the private, public, and nonprofit sectors, where their work informs strategy, policy, and practice. Similarly, graduates of the MA program have gone on to top doctoral programs and successful careers in public relations, marketing, journalism, and related fields.

Across degrees, both current students and alumni of Murrow's graduate programs exemplify the college's mission: advancing collaborative research, fostering meaningful mentorship, and generating real-world impact. ■■■

## Spokane NBC Affiliate KHQ-TV Helped Launch Cabrera's Career

By Joy Wanja  
Ph.D. Candidate

As Emmy Award-winning journalist Ana Cabrera returns to Washington State University this week to receive the 2026 Edward R. Murrow Lifetime Achievement Award in Journalism at the 50th Murrow Symposium, it marks a full-circle moment in a career that began on the Palouse. The milestone also reflects the impact of Spokane NBC affiliate KHQ-TV, which has a longstanding partnership with the Edward R. Murrow College of Communication and a history of helping launch the careers of aspiring broadcast journalists. Cabrera's path - from Pullman to the national stage, including her current anchor role at MS NOW - stands as one of its most notable examples.

As a Murrow College student, Cabrera attended the Symposium and met a recruiter from KHQ - a conversation that soon led to her first job in broadcast journalism. From those early days reporting in Spokane to anchoring major national broadcasts, Cabrera has built a career defined by

curiosity, credibility and a deep commitment to storytelling.

Patricia McRae, a Murrow graduate who spent more than four decades in broadcast journalism, said hiring Cabrera remains a defining highlight of her 41-year career. McRae worked as a television director before later serving as president of KHQ Inc. and Cowles Montana Media Co. prior to retiring in 2023.

During her time leading the Spokane-based media company, McRae helped mentor young journalists entering the field - including Cabrera, whose talent stood out almost immediately.

"She was young, but she could handle complex, hard news stories, ask good questions, and keep her composure at all times," McRae said. "Whether she was covering breaking news or someone's 99th birthday, she had the same enthusiasm. She was down-to-earth, driven to keep learning, and she never declined any story or task assigned to her."

McRae also remembers Cabrera's poise during the hiring process.

"She came across as focused yet really caring," McRae said. "There was an ease to her conversation. She asked us good questions. She had a sense of how to get us to [open up], and that was what we were looking for. She did very well on the writing test, too."

From the beginning, McRae said Cabrera had the qualities of a strong broadcaster.

"It was her ability to connect with viewers," McRae said. "She was a good storyteller and an excellent reporter who knew how to put people at ease, even in uncomfortable interviews."

That impression was first formed during Cabrera's meeting with KHQ representatives at the Murrow Symposium.

"This person has the 'it' factor," McRae recalled a colleague saying after interviewing Cabrera at the event before inviting her to Spokane for a follow-up meeting that ultimately led to a job offer.

Once in the newsroom, Cabrera quickly proved she belonged. McRae said her intelligence, curiosity and willingness to learn allowed her to master in weeks what often takes months.

Off camera, colleagues remember Cabrera for the same warmth that later helped define her on-air presence.

"Behind the scenes, Cabrera always wore a smile and had a great sense of humor with the staff," McRae said. "She treated everyone with the same respect - whether it was a studio camera operator or a main anchor. She had this way about her of really connecting with everyone on the staff or in the TV station that was really caring and genuine."



Ana Cabrera began her career working as a reporter for KHQ in Spokane, Washington. ■■■

Cabrera graduated from WSU with degrees in communication and foreign languages and cultures. Today she remains closely connected to Murrow College as a distinguished alumna and member of the Murrow Professional Advisory Board.

Years later, she returned to Pullman in 2017 as the Murrow Symposium keynote speaker, reflecting on how attending the event as a student helped broaden her perspective and build connections in the media industry.

That first meeting with a KHQ recruiter ultimately set her on the path to becoming one of the country's most recognized broadcast journalists.

As a fellow Murrow graduate, McRae said the shared connection between alumni remains one of the college's defining strengths.

"The Murrow College is one of the best journalism schools in the country, and we recruited heavily from it," McRae said. "I'm proud to share that connection with Ana."

Looking back on her career in journalism, McRae said the profession remains as vital as ever - and she encourages Murrow students to pursue it with passion and integrity. ■■■

"Journalism is still such an important industry," she said. "We need to hold government agencies, local leaders and politicians accountable for their actions without bias. We report on local communities, and we need to do that with truth and balance."

Her advice to the next generation of Murrow graduates is simple.

"Show up, work hard, don't complain, and be passionate about this industry. There will always be a great story to tell, whether it's breaking or investigating a story, and no matter the format: podcasting, streaming, or broadcast. Passion and positivity create success, along with good writing," she said.

For Cabrera, that journey began with an internship, a drive to learn and a willingness to chase stories wherever they led.

Now, as she returns to Pullman to receive Murrow College's highest honor, her story reflects the same lesson she first learned as a student: journalism careers often begin with a single connection and the courage to pursue it. ■■■

The Murrow College  
Professional Advisory Board  
congratulates

**ANA CABRERA**  
Class of 2004

Recipient of the  
2026 Edward R. Murrow  
Lifetime Achievement Award



## The Future of Strategic Communication in an Age of Synthetic Voices

By **Stacey Hust**

Associate Dean of Faculty Affairs & College Operations, Professor

Three to five hundred words about the future of the strategic communication industry. That's the assignment. It's an interesting and difficult exercise to question what the future will hold for an entire industry when it seems as though the industry is at an unprecedented nexus in what appears to be a pivotal transition point in our history. It's the kind of assignment that one mulls over, writes, edits, deletes, reconsiders, writes more and deletes again.

Of course, it would be far easier to turn to an AI-powered assistant and have it complete this assignment. It is so tempting for students, industry practitioners, and faculty to use AI-powered assistants to help generate ideas or clarify writing. In fact, within seconds after I asked Microsoft Copilot to provide me with "250 words about the future of strategic communication," it gave me a

well-written statement about rapid technological change and audience fragmentation. It extolled the importance of the "human dimensions of communication."

The first statement was technical and dry, so I asked it to be bolder and more forward-thinking. It returned a powerful and inspiring argument in which strategic communicators are influential catalysts whose success is dependent on trust, authenticity, and values-driven communication. Copilot next suggested it could make this statement even more provocative, and I followed its lead. The next statement was daring, thought-provoking, and ridiculously bold. It relied on hyperbole and unsupported claims as it proclaimed the importance of credibility and truth. It argued that the strategic communication industry had to evolve or face extinction in a media landscape

crowded with "synthetic voices" and "manufactured realities."

When I directed Copilot to rewrite the statement in the voice of Edward R. Murrow, the system appeared to draw extensively from his work to reproduce recognizable phrases and stylistic markers. So much for avoiding synthetic voices. It is particularly ironic that artificial intelligence proclaimed the importance for strategic communicators to value human dimensions of communication, authenticity, and trust while simultaneously eschewing those tenets to create its product.

Perhaps one of the most compelling arguments that Copilot produced was that strategic communicators will need to earn belief in an environment "where belief is hardest to win."

I argue that strategic communicators, then, must

be the most authentic voice even though it is tempting, and far easier, to rely on artificial intelligence to do the work. They will need to clearly define their core values and have the tenacity, grit and courage to uphold those values.

Strategic communicators have an opportunity to be the central drivers of an accurate and genuine organizational voice. To accomplish this goal, they

will need to be astute, keen observers of the world. They will need to possess critical thinking skills and convergent intelligence. They must be well-read and media literate so they can discern fact from fiction and recognize references to pre-existing texts. Ultimately, a commitment to life-long, interdisciplinary learning through which they find *their* voice will be critical. ■■■



Students in COMSTRAT 383 explored how communicators can counter misinformation and disinformation, joined by alumna Lacey J. Faught ('10), CEO of Spry and co-author of *Down the Rabbit Hole*, who shared insights on creating credible, optimized digital content. Photo credit: Rebecca Cooney

## Online Education Programs Uphold the Murrow Standard

By **Imran Haider**

Director of Online Programs, Assistant Professor of Practice

The Murrow College of Communication began with robust in-person education. As it always has, Murrow College continues to adapt to society through innovative, student-centric ideas. Murrow Online Programs were established in 2014 and since then, the college has not only modernized its namesake's legacy but also created an essential connection between academic rigor and the

evolving needs of students around the globe.

The suite of Murrow's online programs includes the undergraduate majors in Integrated Strategic Communication and Media Innovation, and the M.A. degrees in Strategic Communication and Health Communication and Promotion. These programs bring the same mentality, approach,

and content as the in-person student experience. Unlike many institutions that outsource their digital curriculum, Murrow online courses are designed and taught by the same award-winning faculty who teach on campus. This ensures that online students receive the same high-level instruction in ethics, research, and multimedia content creation as on-campus students.

The programs are consistently ranked among the best in the nation by U.S. News & World Report. Our reputation is built on a curriculum that prioritizes the application of information in the professional world. Students don't just study theory, they build data-driven communication plans and manage digital campaigns. In the last five years, students

have achieved an impressive 87% completion rate.

Online is more than just an alternative delivery method; it is essential to the college's teaching mission. In the spirit of Edward R. Murrow's commitment to an informed citizenry, these programs remove geographical and financial barriers. By offering in-state tuition to all online M.A. students, the college empowers diverse learners, from rural professionals to active-duty military, to earn a top-tier degree.

The online platform serves as an ecosystem for digital-first communication. It allows the department to quickly integrate new media tools and analytics into the curriculum, keeping the college at the forefront of industry trends.

Online programs significantly broaden the "Murrow Network," connecting current students with an array of working professionals across dozens of career industries. This creates robust opportunities of mentorship and employment that strengthens the college's reputation and overall standing.

By blending the strength of legacy with the flexibility of modern technology, Murrow Online ensures the college remains an industry leader. We are creating the opportunity for students to achieve academic, professional, and personal growth - regardless of their geographic location.

## From an Idea to a Program: Murrow's Legacy at WSU Vancouver

By **Nanu Iyer**

Director of Integrated Strategic Communication (Vancouver), Associate Professor of Practice

When Kyle Knowlton first heard that Washington State University Vancouver might be launching a new communication major, the program didn't officially exist yet. It was late 2015, and the Integrated Strategic Communication program was still being developed. But that didn't stop him.

Knowlton reached out to faculty member Nanu Iyer to express his interest in joining the program. At the time, Iyer explained that the major was

still in the works and had not yet been formally approved. Most students might have waited until the degree appeared in the catalog. Knowlton took a different approach.

He began enrolling in communication courses anyway.

"I remember telling Kyle that the program wasn't officially offered yet," Iyer recalls. "But he was convinced this was the degree he wanted to pursue."

Knowlton's determination would make him part of the program's history. When the Integrated Strategic Communication major officially launched at WSU Vancouver in Spring 2017, the courses he had already taken became part of the new curriculum. In 2018, Knowlton became the program's first graduate.

The program itself had been in development since Fall 2015, when the Edward R. Murrow College of Communication began expanding its presence at the Vancouver campus. Offering the degree through Murrow College was significant. Named after legendary broadcast journalist Edward R. Murrow, the college carries a long tradition of excellence in journalism and communication education. For students in Vancouver, the new program meant access to that same

respected Murrow education while preparing for careers in the rapidly evolving world of strategic communication.

The faculty worked to design a curriculum that reflected the changing demands of the communication industry. The goal was to prepare versatile communicators - professionals who could create compelling content, think strategically about messaging, and navigate the growing influence of digital media and social platforms. The program blended Murrow's long-standing emphasis on ethical communication with modern skills needed in advertising, public relations, and digital media strategy.

Early interest from students like Knowlton signaled strong demand. Enrollment grew quickly in the program's early years before the COVID-19

pandemic slowed momentum for many academic programs nationwide. Still, the foundation built in those early years has allowed the program to continue evolving and serving students preparing for communication careers.

Today, Knowlton works as branch operations manager at Fastenal, a global industrial supply company. Looking back, his decision to pursue a program that had not yet officially launched helped shape the path for the students who followed.

In many ways, his story reflects the spirit of the Murrow legacy itself that is centered on curiosity, initiative, and a willingness to step forward when something new is just beginning.

■■■

## From Murrow College to the Global Stage: A Q&A with Roger Nyhus

Interviewed by **Brett Atwood**  
Associate Professor of Practice

*The WSU Alumni Association is pleased to honor former U.S. Ambassador and business leader Roger F. Nyhus ('90) with the WSU Alumni Achievement Award, the university's highest alumni honor, in recognition of a career that reflects the highest standards of excellence in communication and public service.*

Nyhus most recently served as U.S. Ambassador to Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean, representing the United States across seven nations at the intersection of diplomacy, global security, climate resilience, and international cooperation. He is now founder and CEO of AMBO Strategy, a bespoke global consulting firm focused on helping CEOs and other senior executives navigate high-stakes issues and solve complex problems.

Prior to his diplomatic service, Nyhus founded and led Nyhus Communications for nearly three decades, advising global corporations, nonprofit organizations, and public leaders on complex communications and advocacy challenges.

Collectively, these accomplishments embody the Murrow Standard—defined by clarity, integrity, and courage across all forms of communication. In this exclusive Q&A, Nyhus reflects on the experiences, mentors, and principles that shaped his path from Murrow College to the global stage, and on the enduring role communication plays in leadership and public service.

**Q: Looking back on your time at Murrow College, what experiences or lessons most influenced the path your career ultimately took?**

The ABCs of professional writing, which I learned at Murrow College, have served as the foundation of everything I've done in my career. The world would be a better place with more accuracy, brevity and clarity in all communications.

My experience as a reporter for "The Daily Evergreen" confirmed my love for news and journalism. Having practical experience at WSU gave me an advantage as I started my career as a reporter at The Associated Press and a PR professional.

I learned the power of networking and connections at WSU. Through my membership in student groups like the Public Relations Student Society of America, I met working professionals who not only awarded me scholarships and internships but they helped me find jobs.

**Q: Was there a particular class, mentor, or opportunity at Murrow that helped you understand what kind of communicator you wanted to become?**

Hands down – Roberta Kelly, my newswriting professor. She taught me how to write, tell stories and establish a high standard of excellence. We remain friends today.

**Q: How did Murrow's training prepare you for the responsibilities and high-stakes communication environments you later navigated in government and global organizations?**

The state of our world, nation and even journalism itself is tenuous. The Murrow College has an important role to play in navigating a positive and productive path forward — by instilling in students and the community the values of Edward R. Murrow: truth over comfort, courage in the face of power, bearing witness, elevating democracy through journalism, and maintaining independence and journalistic integrity. I am proud to carry the Murrow legacy forward and hopefully inspire others.

**Q: You built Nyhus Communications into one of the largest Native American-owned companies in the state. What guiding principles shaped the firm and your approach to leadership?**



Roger Nyhus (left), a 2026 Washington State University Alumni Achievement Award recipient, poses during the 1990 WSU commencement ceremony.

At Nyhus Communications, our motto was "communicate. advocate. innovate." My team and I made Nyhus an indispensable partner to leading clients who wanted to change the world for the better. From working with South African President Nelson Mandela, to opening Four Seasons Seattle, to promoting Alaska Airlines as "Seattle's Hometown Airline," Nyhus made a difference for our clients as well as Seattle and Washington State. After nearly 30 years building and running the company, I sold it to become a U.S. Ambassador. I am in the process of starting a new high-stakes consulting firm now – AMBO Strategy.

**Q: You have advised leaders across business, government, and the nonprofit sectors. What distinguishes effective counsel in complex environments?**

Listening, learning quickly, seeing patterns and telling the truth – even when it's not convenient or comfortable.

**Q: What advice would you offer current Murrow students who aspire to careers with global reach or public impact?**

Follow your passion. What energizes you – politics, sports, working for a big-brand company? Or starting your own business? I was 26 when I started Nyhus Communications. I grew up in a middle-class family in rural America. Anything is possible.

**Q: When you consider your career as a whole, what do you hope emerging communicators take away from your journey?**

I am constantly inspired by the students I meet. Their stories, curiosity, dreams. Each of us defines success a bit differently. In my case, if you dream big, work hard, maintain high standards, nurture your mentors and connections, and keep moving forward, the world will open and your dreams can come true.

## Where Possibility Meets Connection: Why Symposium Matters

**Marcia Steele Hoover**  
Murrow Professional Advisory Board Chair

I didn't go to Symposium when I was in school, and I can't tell you exactly why.

At the time, I was focused on what was right in front of me. It's easy to believe opportunities are endless when you're standing at the beginning of everything.

But Symposium is about more than opportunity. It's about The Murrow Standard.

This isn't just an event - it's an opportunity to build on Murrow's legacy and define your future path.

Symposium brings together some of the best minds in communication. Hundreds of professionals are in one place,

sharing their experiences, discussing emerging trends and reflecting on the past and future of our field. It's an experience you won't get just anywhere.

Over the next two days you will have access to professionals who have been where you are. They were once students with big ambitions and questions about the future. They've navigated the path you're about to take. And now, you have the rare chance to sit down with them. Ask them how they got their start. Learn about their successes - and their mistakes. This isn't just about listening to keynotes and panels; it's about conversations that might change your life.

You may not see it now, but those casual hallway chats or brave introductions could lead to your next internship, project or career opportunity. You'll realize, years from now, that one question sparked something bigger than you could have imagined.

The Murrow Symposium isn't just another event. It's an intersection of access, possibility and connection. Go with curiosity. Go even if you're not sure what's next. Go because these conversations, these moments, are rare and powerful.

This is your chance to shape your future - make the most of it.

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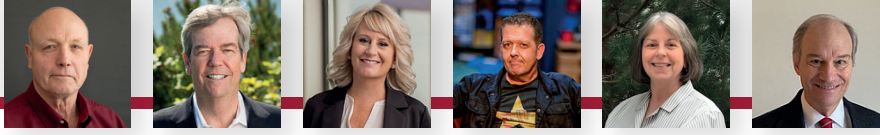
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## Past Awardees HALL OF ACHIEVEMENT

### 2025



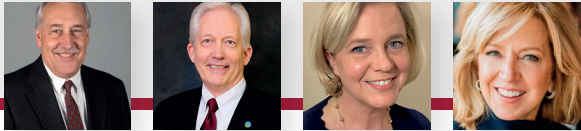
Bruce Amundson Paul Casey Marty Dickinson Scott Hallock Roberta Kelly Bill Swartz

### 2015



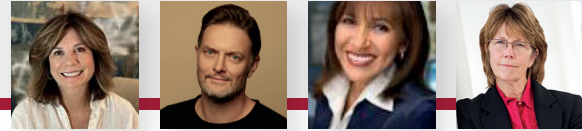
Rick Boyce Art Eckman Chris Hampel

### 2024



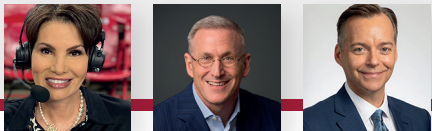
Tom Holmberg Glenn Johnson Tiffany Paup Sanders Liz Pritchard

### 2014



Kerry Brock John "Ibby" Ibsen Bertha Lynn Beth Tuura

### 2023



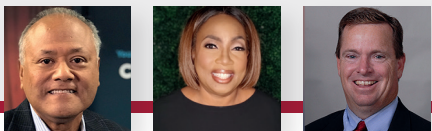
Cindy Brunson Robert Dove Roger Nyhus

### 2013



Dennis Franklin Eric Johnson Gary Petersen

### 2022



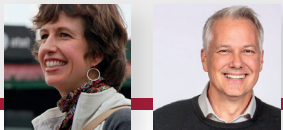
Enrique Cerna Carolyn Sawyer Bill Stevens

### 2012



Craig Dewey Nicole Mirante-Matthews Guy Seese Barry Serafin Peter Van Sant DJ Wilson

### 2021



Janie McCauley Mark Wright

### 2011



Tracy Barry Steve Montgomery Shirley Skidmore

### 2019



Ana Cabrera Jerry Isenhardt

### 2010



Kathy Brock Jeri McDonald Richard J Warsinske Kay J. Wight

### 2018



Bill Brubaker Lorie Dankers Roberta Ulrich

### 2009



Tom Hunt Tricia Raikes Keith Shipman

### 2017



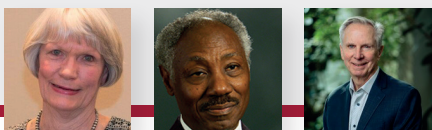
Bob Brunkow Dave Huddleston Steve Lutz

### 2008



Ron Carter Kenji Kitatani Gary Larson Tim Pavish Michael Shepard Patrick M. Scott

### 2016



Cheri Brennan John E. Davis Tom Norwalk

### 2007



Ted Baseler Kathi Goertzen Mike Harney Keith Jackson Art McDonald Jay Rockey



## Sherry Nebel

### 2026 HALL OF ACHIEVEMENT

Sherry Nebel is a 1976 WSU Murrow graduate, earning a degree in communication, specializing in journalism and public relations. While at Washington State, Sherry was an active member of Alpha Chi Omega, she was president of the WSU Public Relations Student Society of America, and served on the student-run Lecture Artist Series committee.

After graduation, she joined KIRO-TV, the CBS affiliate in Seattle. Besides her television news writing and producing, she also was involved in the production of special reports and news documentaries.

In 1985, she was offered a communications/public relations position with The Boeing Company, working in the defense and space side of the business, where she led internal and external communications for several of the company's programs for the U.S. Navy. For a

decade, Sherry served in Boeing's corporate offices where she held numerous positions, including public relations manager and director of media relations. Sherry managed the local, national and international media activities and directed the external communications activities of senior executives, including Boeing's chairman and chief executive officer.

During her corporate stint, Sherry completed the Seattle Chamber of Commerce Leadership Tomorrow program and was graduated from the San Francisco Academy, a nationally recognized post-graduate level leadership development program for public relations and communication executives.

In 2001, she was tapped to lead global communications for Connexion by Boeing, which provided in-flight Internet access on

commercial airplanes, other airborne platforms and for the commercial shipping industry. Her team's responsibilities included public relations; media relations; executive, employee and Web communications; advertising; branding; customer relations and community relations.

Sherry spent her final Boeing years leading Global Communications for the airplane side of the business. She retired from Boeing in 2010. Failing her first attempt at retirement, her second retirement came in 2019 after an unexpected but wonderful multi-year stint with Seattle nonprofit Wellspring Family Services in donor stewardship and advising the organization on communication strategies.

Following both retirements, Sherry remained extremely active in the community, serving on the board of

directors for Seafair, the Murrow Professional Advisory Board, and continuing her long, post-board of directors relationship with Wellspring as a volunteer. Additionally, she serves on board of the Woman's Century Club.

Sherry is the proud wife of a Cougar graduate, Bob, and the mother of a 2012 Washington State University grad. Bob and Sherry are doting grandparents to two young boys.



Sherry Nebel working at Boeing video shoot.



## Greg Witter

### 2026 HALL OF ACHIEVEMENT

Greg Witter is a veteran of the communications arena with more than four decades of work across a wide swath of the communications landscape: newspaper reporter, U.S. House and Senate press secretary, managing director of corporate communications for a major airline, digital news media entrepreneur, strategic communications consultant and, currently, adjunct instructor in the master's of public affairs program at Seattle University.

He is the co-founder and executive editor of Cougfan.com, the award-winning CBS Sports affiliate covering Washington State athletics. The site was founded in 1998 with a commitment to tell the story-behind-the-story through deep reporting and the cultivating of key sources. Cougfan attracts nearly 20 million page views per year, and has employed dozens of Murrow College students over the last 27 years.

As a student at Washington State from 1980-84, Witter worked as reporter and editor for an array of outlets,

including the Palouse Daily News and Seattle Times, as well as the WSU News Bureau and what is now the Cougar Athletic Fund. With an assist from Chuck Cole, his faculty adviser in the Murrow School, he landed his first job out of college at the Tri-City Herald in Kennewick, serving as the newspaper's business writer. From there, he moved to Washington, D.C., as a press secretary and legislative aide to U.S. Senate and House members from the Pacific Northwest.

Witter joined Alaska Airlines in 1989 and spent 15 years there in a series of increasing leadership roles in media relations, internal communications, video production, government affairs and shareholder communication. As managing director of corporate and strategic communications, he directed the airline's public response to the Flight 261 tragedy in January 2000, leading a group of 56 whose speed, clarity and caring in the wake of the accident received wide third-party praise. His idea

to use the internet as a key crisis communications tool to combat misinformation and directly talk with the public was hailed as groundbreaking by professional observers. He has served as a guest lecturer on crisis communications at the National Transportation Safety Board and other organizations and universities.

For 19 years, Witter operated a boutique public relations firm providing strategic messaging and media relations counsel to corporations, small businesses and individuals. His work included a senior role for the operating parent of Sports Illustrated magazine and SI.com, spearheading communication around three mergers, and leading internal and external communications around COVID-triggered layoffs and budget cuts. Another interesting endeavor in his consulting work was co-authoring the hardcover autobiography *596 Switch* about the rise of former WSU football standout Ryan

Leaf and the history-making Cougar team of 1997.

Witter holds a master's degree in public administration from Seattle University and a bachelor's in communications (journalism sequence) from Washington State University's Murrow College. He is an emeritus member of the Murrow College Advisory Board, and spent nearly a decade on the WSU Foundation Board of Trustees.

Witter grew up in Spokane and hails from a devout family of Cougs. He and his wife Anne McGonigle live in Seattle and have two grown children.



Greg Witter (left) in front of the United States Capitol, Washington, D.C.

## The Murrow Innovation Community: Where Ideas Become Practice

By Brett Atwood

Associate Professor of Practice

When faculty members at the Edward R. Murrow College of Communication began imagining the Murrow Innovation Community (MIC) nearly a decade ago, the goal was clear: create a place where students could learn by doing - together. Today, that vision is increasingly visible in a newly renovated, multi-purpose hub that reflects how communication professionals work and collaborate.

Located in Jackson Hall, the Murrow Innovation Community is a flexible, student-centered

environment that brings together Crimson Creative, the college's student-run public relations and advertising firm; an Adobe Lab; creative collaboration spaces; and new recording booths designed for interviews, podcasts, and multimedia storytelling. The space also includes JKSN 71, home to the Murrow Newsroom, which supports professional reporting, teaching, and experiential learning across journalism, advertising, and public relations.



Students collaborate at the Adobe Creative Jam event, held as part of the Murrow Innovation Community initiative. Photo Credit: WSU

*The MIC was established in 2017 as a strategic initiative to address a growing challenge in communication education: preparing students for a rapidly evolving, digitally driven industry.*

Early faculty leadership helped shape the MIC as an innovation ecosystem grounded in experiential learning, mentorship, interdisciplinary collaboration, and access to professional-grade tools. While the initiative has continued to grow and evolve, that core mission remains intact.

For students, the impact is tangible. In Crimson Creative, students work with real clients, collaborate outside of class hours, and produce professional-quality campaigns in an agency-style setting. Associate Professor Justin Barnes describes the MIC as an incubator for creativity, noting that the visibility of students actively working draws others in and sparks curiosity. "It mirrors how students will work in industry," he said, "and that's made a meaningful difference in both the quality of the work and the student experience."

The MIC is also home to Murrow News 8, Pullman's only nightly newscast, produced, written, anchored, and crewed entirely by students. As part of COMJOUR 465, Murrow News 8 gives students hands-on experience producing a full broadcast - both on camera



Professor Rebecca Cooney (right) collaborates with former student Alex Hagen as part of the Murrow Innovation Community. Photo Credit: Rebecca Cooney

and behind the scenes—while delivering original reporting to the community on Cable 8. The program has earned national recognition, including a student Emmy from the National Academy of Television Arts & Sciences and a Best Newscast award from the Society of Professional Journalists.

"The MIC represents our commitment to preparing students for the real world of modern communication work," said Ben Shors, chair of journalism and media production. "It's a dynamic working space that mirrors the actual practice of communication professionals, which aligns with our mission of preparing students for the workforce."

Student organizations benefit as well. The renovated spaces

serve as a home base for Murrow Ad Club and PRSSA meetings, guest speakers, and collaborative project work. Assistant Professor Molly Schotzko notes that the environment encourages creativity, connection, and a strong sense of belonging - key ingredients for student success.

Ultimately, the Murrow Innovation Community is about more than square footage or technology. It is about creating the conditions for "the magic that happens," as Schotzko puts it, when students feel empowered to create, collaborate, and belong. As Murrow celebrates 50 years of the Murrow Symposium, the MIC stands as both a reflection of that legacy and an investment in the future of communication education.

## More Than Advice: From Classroom Lessons to Real-World Paths at Murrow

By Joy Wanja

Ph.D. Candidate

Navigating degree requirements, academic advising, and career planning can feel overwhelming for many college students - especially those balancing coursework, jobs, and questions about life after graduation. At Washington State University's Edward R. Murrow College of Communication, students turn to the Murrow Center for Student Success (MCSS) as a central hub for guidance, connection, and confidence-building support from their first semester through graduation.

The center is more than an advising office. It is a physical and virtual space designed to help students plan their academic paths, explore career opportunities, and feel a sense of belonging within the college community. From course planning to internships and professional development, the center supports students as they move from the classroom to the professional world.

The bright, warmly colored space - often featuring theme music and occasional treats - is staffed by knowledgeable

advisors and Murrow student ambassadors who offer practical, professional guidance for day-to-day student life. Moses Henning, president of the Murrow Ambassadors, said the trust and shared bond among students help transform classroom experiences into lifelong connections.

"I have felt tremendously lucky to be surrounded by people who share the same love and appreciation for Murrow College as I do. Being part of something bigger than myself and having the opportunity to support my fellow Murrow peers has been highly fulfilling. The ambassador role has helped me refine my leadership skills. I have seen every aspect of what our college has to offer, and I can say for certain that we are truly one of a kind," said Henning, a multimedia and media innovation student.

Henning also points to the impact of everyday interactions among students. "One of the best parts of being an ambassador is helping the next generation of Cougs realize their potential. On numerous occasions, by

engaging in simple acts such as initiating a conversation or inspiring someone to exceed their expectations, I have seen students transform into outstanding peer leaders. Another amazing thing is students signing up for clubs or groups they might not have considered or even known about had it not been for the ambassadors," he added.

That engagement with Murrow advisors and ambassadors fosters a strong sense of belonging, helping students identify their strengths, develop new skills, and connect their academic experiences to real-world pathways in journalism, public relations, and strategic communication.

Sara Stout, Murrow College Assistant Dean of Student Affairs, describes the college's advising approach as a close-knit family structure built on three pillars: support, guidance, and care.

Student ambassadors provide peer support and help create a welcoming, community-focused environment where students can study, connect, and engage with staff, Stout said. "New advisors are trained to be student-ready, meeting students where they provide the support and guidance they need to succeed - especially first-generation students, who make up 30% of Murrow's student population," said Stout, noting the stability of the MCSS team, which includes a lead advisor with nearly two

decades at the college, an assistant dean with more than 11 years of Murrow experience, and an advising director who has served for five years.

"The Murrow Center for Student Success aims to be the community center for students who need one. Our goal is to be a place where students feel they belong, even when other parts of college life can feel overwhelming and often unfriendly. The center's staff, along with the ambassadors and other students, have organically become a living symbol of the Murrow Family mantra. It is very inspiring to be part of and to see our goals and dreams realized in this way," Stout said.

Looking ahead, Stout said Murrow College plans to further strengthen the ambassador program and expand opportunities for students. "In the coming year, we will focus on strengthening the Murrow Ambassador program. We have strong student leadership that will remain at WSU for another year. We also hope to launch a new curriculum that offers very exciting opportunities for Murrow students," she added.

Murrow College Director of Advising Jeremy Watson describes student advisors as advocates who take a guided, cooperative approach - helping students complete core requirements early while maintaining flexibility as they progress through their majors.

"I like to present students with opportunities to earn a minor, double major, or certificate, ultimately letting them decide what their educational journey will look like," said Watson, adding that adaptability, career coaching, and professional competency are increasingly important in an evolving job market.

"Many students believe being career-ready means having a solid resume and handling interview questions. While that may help you get into a job, it may not necessarily set you up to move into target career positions. There are many other facets of career readiness, from crafting a personal brand to networking to professional development and beyond. Additionally, the number of outside-the-class opportunities available at Murrow that will help students become career-ready is staggering," Watson concluded.

Henning encourages students to see the Murrow Center as both a resource and a home - and to help carry the Edward R. Murrow legacy forward.

*"If you need support, visit the Murrow Center - you belong here. If you want to help our Murrow family thrive, apply to be an ambassador this spring. Go Cougs!"*



Dan Rather, 2012 Edward R. Murrow Lifetime Achievement Honoree.

## 50 Years of the Murrow Symposium: A Living Legacy of Connection, Courage and Communication

By Brett Atwood  
Associate Professor of Practice

For over half a century, the Murrow Symposium has brought some of the most influential voices in media and communication to Washington State University, creating a bridge between classroom learning and the realities of a rapidly evolving industry. What began in 1973 as a modest panel discussion honoring Edward R. Murrow has grown into one of the university's most enduring traditions – a forum where truth, ethics and professional mentorship converge. As the Symposium marks its 50th anniversary in 2026 under the theme “The Murrow Standard,” its history reflects not only the evolution of journalism but also the enduring power of connection between students and the professionals who shape the field.

The inaugural Symposium set the tone for decades to come. Titled “Threats to the Public's Right to Know,” the 1973 event featured prominent figures including CBS News

journalist Eric Sevareid and public broadcasting leader Henry Loomis. Even in its earliest days, organizers aimed to create conversations that extended beyond theory, grounding discussions in real-world challenges facing journalists and communicators.

Lou Gellos, who helped plan one of the first symposiums, remembers the sense of ambition that surrounded those early efforts. “Well, we certainly, I don't think, realized how big it would become,” he said. “And so here's the first one. And then it was, well, what should we do? Who should we invite, and what should we talk about?” Bringing nationally recognized journalists to Pullman signaled that the program carried real significance from the start.

By the late 1970s and early 1980s, the Symposium had become a cornerstone of the Murrow experience. In 1983, the event commemorated what would have been Murrow's 75th birthday, featuring keynote speaker

Diane Sawyer and a panel moderated by Fred Friendly. Discussions explored “The Murrow Heritage: A Challenge for the Future,” reinforcing the event's commitment to ethical journalism during a period of rapid change in media.

Students were not simply observers. Alumni frequently recall how access to industry leaders transformed their understanding of what a career in communication could look like. Paul Nickell, who attended the Symposium in 1976, remembers engaging directly with CBS News President Richard Salant. “What impressed me was that, as a 20-year-old, I could have a conversation with a network news person on a one-to-one basis,” he said – a hallmark of the Symposium's emphasis on accessibility and mentorship.

The introduction of the Edward R. Murrow Lifetime Achievement Award in the 1990s expanded the Symposium's reach and visibility. The first-ever recipient, ABC News correspondent Sam Donaldson in 1997, set a precedent for honoring leaders whose careers embodied Murrow's values. Two years later, Murrow alumnus Keith Jackson received the award, highlighting the event's role in celebrating graduates who carried the Murrow tradition into the professional world.

As the new millennium began, the Symposium increasingly became a platform for confronting global issues through the lens of journalism. In 2001, CNN anchor Bernard Shaw addressed audiences at Beasley Coliseum, reflecting on the press's role in times of conflict and political change. Two years later, the posthumous recognition of Wall Street Journal reporter Daniel Pearl underscored the risks journalists face in pursuit of truth and the Symposium's commitment to honoring courage in the field.

The 2008 Symposium added a tangible symbol to the Murrow legacy with the arrival of Edward R. Murrow's office door, now displayed in Goertzen Hall. For many students, the door has since become a rite-of-passage landmark – a physical reminder of the standards Murrow set for generations of communicators.

Throughout the years, award recipients such as Helen Thomas, Dan Rather and Ann Curry reinforced the Symposium's reputation as a gathering place for journalism's most respected voices. Roger Nyhus remembers meeting Thomas during her visit to campus. “She's just such a legend... and she carried pocket Constitutions and she would hand them out to students,” he said. “I have a pocket constitution from Helen Thomas and I had her sign it and it's very meaningful.”

While the event's scale and prestige grew, alumni emphasize that its core purpose has remained student-centered. Sherry Nebel, who attended during the early years, describes how the Symposium evolved from a single lecture into a multi-day experience focused on career development. “It has evolved so beautifully in the past decades that it is now this huge event that is truly focused on students,” she said, highlighting networking opportunities and workshops that allow students to engage directly with industry professionals.

For many students, those encounters become career-defining moments. Ana Cabrera, this year's Edward R. Murrow Lifetime Achievement Award recipient, credits the Symposium with helping launch her professional journey. “I went to the Murrow Symposium and participated in the workshops... and I met a woman named Traci Zeravica,” she said, describing how a résumé critique session led

to her first reporting job in Spokane. “That would have never happened if Traci and I didn't already have a relationship... it really does pay off to take a chance to put yourself out there.”

The 50th Symposium arrives at a moment when conversations about media ethics, free speech and public trust remain as urgent as they were in 1973. Edward R. Murrow's grandson, Ethan Murrow, reflects on how the values associated with his grandfather continue to resonate. “Because of the moment that we're living in, I think one of those standards has to be sticking up for free speech,” he said, noting that the responsibility of journalists to inform the public remains unchanged even as technologies evolve.

Looking back, alumni like Greg Witter recall the inspiration they felt as students listening to industry leaders discuss Murrow's influence. “That was an unforgettable experience... listening to these people talk not just about their experiences in the industry but also talk about Ed Murrow (and) what a unique and special individual he was,” he said.

As the Symposium celebrates its golden anniversary, its legacy is measured not only by the prominent figures who have visited Pullman, but by the generations of students whose careers were shaped by conversations, mentorship and moments of inspiration. From its origins as a single panel discussion to its present-day role as a hub for dialogue across journalism, public relations, advertising and communication technology, the Murrow Symposium continues to uphold the standard set by its namesake – reminding each new generation that ethical storytelling and courageous communication remain essential to a healthy society.

## Centennial Legacy Edition

By Paul Mark Wadleigh  
Retired, Professor  
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Edward R. Murrow had a job to do, and at every juncture he did what he saw as the right thing. He took risks that at the time seemed outrageous. He didn't do it for the adrenaline or fame. He did it because, as his friends and colleagues of the day have said, he had the highest personal standards and he was not afraid of anything.

He reported history, but the way he did it also created history. For example, according to Murrow biographer Bob Edwards, when American public opinion had changed enough for the U.S. Congress to pass the Lend-Lease Act in 1941, which ended official American neutrality and openly

supported Great Britain in its war with Germany, British Prime Minister Winston Churchill privately gave the credit to Edward R. Murrow and his radio broadcasts.

Murrow invented what we now know as the ideal of broadcast journalism. As a result, he left the Murrow College of Communication a legacy that he would have attributed to his education and to the guidance of Ida Lou Anderson, his speech teacher and mentor at Washington State College.

WSC was one of the first colleges to get a commercial radio license, broadcasting as KFAE in 1922, and changing its call letters to KWSC about

the time Murrow became a WSC freshman in 1926. Ida Lou Anderson, in addition to speech and drama, also taught the new medium of radio broadcasting. In those days, radio was largely a live affair and considerable vocal and performance skill was required to deliver a program over the air.

Journalists who later would work with Murrow have said one of the gifts Murrow brought to the profession was his brilliant sense of drama. Murrow once said, “A word is worth a thousand pictures.” He proved it through his radio broadcasts.

The technologies of communication have advanced dramatically since his time here. Today's students in the Edward R. Murrow College of Communication work across integrated broadcast and digital platforms, gaining hands-on experience with high-definition audio and video production,

streaming and on-demand media, cloud-based collaboration and distribution, digital publishing systems, distance learning technologies, and mobile and wireless communication tools.

The human part of communication, however,

has not changed. Traditional concepts of rhetoric, ethics, civic engagement, and critical thinking were part of communication education in the early part of the 20th century and continue in the Murrow College's curricula today. ■■■

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## National Student Advertising Competition: Real Clients, Real Stakes, Real Learning

**By Justin Barnes**  
Associate Professor of Practice

The National Student Advertising Competition (NSAC) is recognized nationally as the premier collegiate advertising competition, offering more than 2,000 students each year the opportunity to build an integrated advertising, marketing, and media campaign for a real corporate client.

Organized by the American Advertising Federation (AAF), NSAC challenges student teams to step directly into the role of professional agency partners. Each year, a corporate sponsor provides a detailed case study outlining its brand, marketplace, and a current real-world marketing challenge. From there, students conduct in-depth research, analyze competitors, identify strategic opportunities, and develop a fully integrated campaign that addresses the client's needs.

At Washington State University's Murrow College of Communication, participation

in NSAC is one of the most immersive experiential learning opportunities for students interested in advertising, marketing, and strategic communication. Team members collaborate across disciplines, taking on specialized roles in strategy, research, creative development, media planning, and analytics. The work unfolds over an intensive timeline that mirrors professional agency processes and expectations.

The competition culminates in a formal campaign pitch delivered to a panel of industry professionals. Judging is conducted by advertising, marketing, and communications leaders, with national-level judges selected directly from the corporate client and its advertising agencies. This professional scrutiny challenges students to defend their ideas, articulate strategic reasoning, and present creative solutions with clarity and conviction.

NSAC's competitive structure is equally rigorous. Student teams—formed through AAF college chapters—compete at the district level within one of 15 geographical regions. District winners advance to the semifinals, where teams vie for one of eight spots at the national finals. Each stage raises the stakes and sharpens students' ability to adapt, collaborate, and perform under pressure.

Beyond competition results, NSAC's true impact lies in preparing students for professional careers. Participants gain hands-on experience with client briefs, data-driven insights, integrated campaign planning, and high-stakes presentation—skills highly valued across the advertising and communications industries.

As Murrow College celebrates the 50th Murrow Symposium, NSAC stands as a powerful example of the college's commitment to experiential, industry-aligned education. Through real clients and real challenges, NSAC transforms classroom learning into professional readiness, equipping students to thrive in an ever-evolving communication landscape.



Faculty Advisor Justin Barnes with Murrow's National Student Advertising Competition team.



Faculty Advisor Molly Schotzko with Murrow Ad Club members. Photo by student Philip Hazeley, director of web and social media/WSU Murrow Advertising Club.

## Advertising Club Reestablished at Murrow College, Expands Creative Opportunities for Students

**By Molly Schotzko**  
Assistant Professor of Practice, Faculty Athletics Representative

The Murrow Ad Club has been reestablished at Washington State University's Edward R. Murrow College of Communication, creating new opportunities for students to gain flexible hands-on advertising experience and connect with peers interested in the dynamic field of advertising.

The club was relaunched in 2024 after students expressed interest in an advertising-focused student organization. The idea emerged in a large lecture course on the principles and practices of advertising, where students showed enthusiasm for a flexible, out-of-class opportunity to build community and gain more experience.

Recognizing the opportunity, Molly Schotzko, assistant professor of practice at Murrow and the course instructor, became the club's faculty advisor the next semester. With a motivated group of student leaders, she helped guide the effort to become a registered student organization.

"Students wanted a space where they could build a stronger student community and explore out-of-class opportunities in advertising earlier in their college careers," Schotzko said.

"Murrow already offers excellent hands-on opportunities through coursework for juniors and

seniors, but this club provides another entry point for students who are curious about advertising and want to start building skills and community right away. It also provides leadership opportunities for juniors and seniors through executive and director roles, and hands-on creative roles."

The Murrow Advertising Club offers a creative and collaborative environment where students build portfolio work, gain experience working in teams, and organize events like Murrow Mentor Talks and a Murrow Symposium pre-event for Advertising majors, helping students maximize their Symposium experience.

The organization also provides networking opportunities with industry professionals and Murrow alumni, while fostering a supportive community among students interested in advertising, branding and creative strategy.

Since its relaunch, the club has quickly attracted interest from across campus. More than 50 students have joined the email list, and there are no prerequisites for attending general meetings and joining guest speakers, making the organization accessible to anyone interested in advertising and creative communication. Club dues are kept low, allowing students to explore and take advantage of opportunities that interest them.

For some students, the club has already played a pivotal role in shaping their academic and professional paths.

"Ad Club completely transformed the trajectory of my college experience," said Kate Alexander, a senior advertising major and vice president of marketing for the Murrow Ad Club. "I entered my junior year unsure of my place in Murrow and uncertain about how to secure an internship or land a role after graduation. Through Ad Club, I not only found clarity — I found purpose."

Alexander helped design the club's logo and contributed to shaping its branding and long-term vision.

"My hope is that the work I've contributed continues to live on for years to come," she said. "Our mantra is bringing advertising students together, building community, growing confidence and creating countless memories ahead," said Alexander.

Beginning in fall 2026, Tony Thompson, assistant professor of practice at Murrow, will step in as the club's new faculty advisor, continuing the momentum built during the organization's relaunch.

Students and alumni can follow the Murrow Ad Club on Instagram at @MurrowAdClub for updates on events, projects, and student work.



Faculty Advisor Brianna Perry with PRSSA 2025-2026 executive board.



Faculty Advisor Cara Hawkins-Jedlicka (right) with Bateman Team, Spring 2026.



Cable 8 students on the set of Crimson Corner.

## PRSA: A Bridge Between Murrow and the Profession

By Michelle Galey

Assistant Professor of Practice

The Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) exists for a simple reason: the field moves fast, and communicators need both strong fundamentals and a professional community that keeps pace with change. PRSA supports students and professionals through mentorship, ethics, professional development, and real-world learning opportunities.

At WSU's Edward R. Murrow College of Communication, PRSA's student affiliate, PRSSA, serves as an important bridge between the classroom and the profession. PRSSA gives Murrow students a place to practice what they learn through real professional experiences: writing

and pitching, developing campaigns, managing client relationships, presenting strategically, and building portfolio-ready work. Through workshops, guest speakers, and networking events, students gain a clearer sense of what it means to do PR work that is both effective and ethical.

This year, Murrow's PRSSA chapter has expanded its focus on career readiness through hands-on programming and collaboration. In partnership with Ad Club, students have welcomed guest speakers Marcia Steele-Hoover and Wendy Wagner and hosted workshops on personal branding, LinkedIn optimization,

and resume development, along with a recent professional headshot session. Upcoming opportunities include a virtual workshop with Seattle-based Firmani & Associates and continued engagement with PRSSA members and alumni at the Murrow Symposium.

"It's been exciting to see students take ownership of their professional growth – whether that's refining their personal brand, strengthening their resumes, or collaborating on projects like the PRSSA website redesign," said Brianna Perry, PRSSA faculty advisor. "These experiences are helping them feel more confident and prepared as they enter the field."

PRSSA also provides a pathway into national-level, client-based work through the PRSSA Bateman Case Study Competition. This semester, Murrow students are developing a campaign on behalf of ACCESS Newswire. The

competition spotlights ACCESS Newswire's new educational program, which gives college professors free access to the platform so students can gain hands-on experience with press release distribution, media pitching, and coverage tracking across channels. Murrow's team will soon move into the implementation phase – putting strategy into action to drive adoption by professors nationwide, build awareness among universities, and position ACCESS Newswire as a trusted partner for institutional news distribution, media services, and newsroom needs.

PRSA/PRSSA's connection to ethics is especially timely. PRSA's Code of Ethics reinforces values that matter now more than ever – honesty, advocacy, expertise, loyalty, and fairness – at a moment when communicators are often dealing with misinformation, polarization, and evolving tools such as AI. PRSSA helps students translate

these standards into practical decision-making: what to say, how to say it, and how to lead when the stakes are high.

Murrow's PRSSA chapter also reflects the Cougar spirit of leadership and service. It is named in honor of Jay Rockey, a respected PRSA leader and mentor whose commitment to the profession helped shape opportunities for future communicators.

PRSA has been an integral part of the Murrow College experience for several years. Just recently, former and current national PRSA leaders shared personal stories about how PRSA networks have shaped and supported their careers during a panel at the 2025 Murrow Symposium. This is just another example of what PRSA and PRSSA do at their best: connect people, strengthen practice, and build a community that extends well beyond graduation. ■■■

## Shaping Future PR Pros: Murrow Students Take on Bateman Case Study Challenge

By Cara Hawkins-Jedlicka

Associate Professor of Practice

The Bateman Case Study Competition is the Public Relations Student Society of America's (PRSSA's) signature case study competition, created to help students sharpen their PR skills through an applied, real-world communications challenge. At the Edward R. Murrow College of Communication, the Bateman competition is offered as a two-semester course for a select team of students—typically juniors and seniors—chosen through a competitive application process. This year's

team includes Annie Cox, Joey Farrish, Kira Holmberg, Emma Huber, and Kate Sargent. They are guided by faculty advisor Cara Hawkins-Jedlicka, with support from Murrow College Ph.D. student Ron Price, and professional advisor Kendall Hoy, a Murrow alum from the class of 2020.

The Bateman experience gives students the opportunity to grow both professionally and personally. "Being in Bateman has been such an amazing and fun opportunity to expand my knowledge in the PR industry,"

said Holmberg. "We get to do a lot of hands-on work that will help prepare us for our future careers, such as doing in-depth research, interviews, focus groups, building surveys, and more."

This year's case focuses on driving adoption of the software platform, ACCESS Newswire. Teams are tasked with creating a campaign to promote ACCESS Newswire's educational program, which provides college professors with free access to the platform so students can gain real-world experience with press release distribution, media pitching, and coverage tracking.

The team spent the fall semester conducting secondary research and gathering primary insights through one-on-one interviews with professors, student focus groups, and a survey of PR professionals. They

also demonstrated initiative by seeking help from faculty and staff, including Assistant Professor Michelle Kistler for survey design and the library for secondary research support.

"The Bateman competition has been such a great way to get involved with Murrow College. It has expanded my professional network and enabled me to establish and nurture new relationships with my peers and professors. Throughout the development of the ACCESS Newswire campaign, my skills in research and public relations have been refined. Competing in such a competition as this has changed the way I look at my future career and opened doors that were previously closed," said Sargent.

Using their research, the team ran its recent campaign from February 2 to March 2,

followed by the submission of a comprehensive campaign book on March 16. The campaign needed to adhere to strict budget guidelines: no more than \$300 in expenses and up to \$1,000 in in-kind donations. The team developed its goals, objectives, and a strategy, and created all content for the tactics, such as hosting events, developing a website, and launching a TikTok presence. Most importantly, they demonstrated measurable impact. The final book included an eight-page summary and up to a 50-page appendix. Any team that places in the top three among more than 50 national teams, will present their work to PRSSA judges on May 7.

For these students, Bateman is more than a case study. It is a hands-on opportunity that shapes careers and creates connections. ■■■

## Cable 8 Productions: Student Driven. Industry Bound

By Marvin Marcelo

Associate Professor of Practice

It's Cable 8's 40th anniversary, and we want you to help us celebrate everything Cable 8 has accomplished. Cable 8 Productions is more than just a student-run club; it's the stepping stone for future media professionals. Since 1986, the organization has given students hands-on experience in everything from video production and reporting to marketing and event planning.

Over the years, Cable 8 has become an integral part of the Murrow College's communication and broadcasting programs, helping students build real-world skills that prepare them for successful careers

in television, film, and digital media.

### How Cable 8 Got Started

Cable 8 Productions was founded by WSU professor Neal Robison and a group of students who wanted more than just what they learned in class. They saw the importance of hands-on experience and created a space where students could produce and air their own content on the local cable channel 8. One of their first shows, "Live at Eight," was written up in Rolling Stone magazine! Today, Cable 8 is completely student-run, offering a mix of news, sports, entertainment, and original student programming.

### Awards and Recognition

Over the years, Cable 8 Productions has racked up many impressive awards, including Student NATAS Emmy Awards, Gracie Awards, and College Broadcasters Inc. (CBI). These awards showcase the high quality of the student work, both in terms of creativity and technical skill. Many alumni credit Cable 8 with helping them land major jobs, from broadcast journalism to TV production and digital content creation. Some even come back to share their success stories and tell current members how Cable 8 gave them a leg up in their careers.

### Real Experience, Real Results

What really sets Cable 8 apart is the hands-on experience it offers students. Whether you want to be in front of the camera as a host or reporter, or work behind the scenes as a producer, director, editor, lighting technician, or sound engineer, you get the chance to work on real projects that

go beyond what's taught in the classroom. There are also roles in marketing, fundraising, and operations, providing students with a well-rounded understanding of how the media industry operates. This experience not only helps build a strong portfolio but also prepares students for the ever-changing world of media creation.

### A Launchpad for Careers

Cable 8 Productions has long been known as a steppingstone for students wanting to break into the television and film industry. Many alumni have gone on to work as producers, directors, cinematographers, editors, and writers for major media companies such as Disney, Amazon Web Services, Apple TV, Fox, ABC, CBS, NBC, ESPN, CNN, and more.

Alumni often say that their time at Cable 8 gave them the skills, confidence, and industry connections they needed

to land these jobs. Beyond technical skills, Cable 8 offers a chance to build a network of peers and mentors, a crucial part of success in the news and entertainment business.

### Cable 8's Future

As Cable 8 celebrates its 40th anniversary, it remains a vital resource for students, providing the tools they need to thrive in the media industry. With its track record of producing award-winning content and launching successful careers, Cable 8 remains one of the most influential student-run organizations on the WSU campus.

*Cable 8 Students are currently running a 40-for-40 fundraiser (\$40k for 40 years of service) to help purchase new equipment for the next generation of content creators. Let's help them celebrate and achieve their goal. ■■■*



Associate Professor Justin Barnes with the Crimson Creative group.

## Crimson Creative: Preparing Students for Industry Through Real Agency Work

By Justin Barnes  
Associate Professor of Practice

Crimson Creative is a student-run advertising, marketing and public relations firm within the Murrow College of Communication that gives students direct experience producing professional work for real clients – often under the scrutiny of industry executives and alumni.

Structured as a 400-level, three-credit course, Crimson Creative operates as a functioning agency rather than a traditional student club. Students work in client teams, manage professional correspondence, track hours, meet deadlines and deliver completed creative products over the course of the semester. The emphasis is on execution, accountability, and momentum.

Each year, Crimson Creative supports a broad range of corporate, nonprofit and university partners. Recent and ongoing clients have included Capstone Financial, Vector

Vodka, the Moscow Food Co-op, Virus Snow Sports, the Terry Buffington Foundation, HeartWay (HaRT3S), WSU RISE, WSU Extension, and several WSU research labs. Deliverables span branding, campaign strategy, video production, digital storytelling, and strategic communication support.

Client projects move quickly from onboarding to execution. Teams meet directly with founders, nonprofit leaders, and researchers to define scope and expectations before advancing work through planning, production, and delivery. The pace mirrors industry environments where timelines are fixed and outcomes matter.

Crimson Creative's work is regularly showcased to professionals beyond campus. In previous semesters, students presented completed projects during visits from the Murrow Advisory Board, including

alumni executives from organizations such as Nike, Disney, and Microsoft. These presentations underscore the high level of professionalism expected from student teams and reaffirm the program's real-world stakes.

Students credit the experience with bridging the gap between coursework and career readiness and many even use their applied experience in Crimson Creative to build out a working portfolio that can be used post-graduation.

Faculty oversight focuses on guidance and mentorship, helping students translate theory from across the Murrow curriculum into applied work that serves real organizational needs. The result is a learning environment where students graduate with polished portfolios, professional confidence, and a clear understanding of how communication works beyond the classroom. ■■■

## At Murrow News 8, Students Learn to Lead the Newsroom

By Matt Loveless  
Assistant Professor of Practice

"Murrow News 8," the student-produced news initiative at Washington State University's Edward R. Murrow College of Communication, offers students a first step into professional-quality storytelling and broadcast production. For more than 40 years, broadcast news and production students have collaborated to create award-winning shows and stories. As the media landscape continues to evolve, Murrow journalists remain at the forefront of that change.

Broadcast news and production courses provide an educational experience unlike any other on the WSU campus. In academic terms, "Murrow News 8" functions as a daily group project with an immovable deadline – one

that can be viewed anywhere in the world with an internet connection. Now livestreamed on YouTube, "Murrow News 8" serves as an on-demand news source for the WSU campus, covering breaking news, the campus community and surrounding cities. As of 2026, the Murrow News 8 YouTube news channel has generated more than 10,000 hours of viewership and 2.2 million impressions.

That success is driven by a commitment to local, investigative storytelling. Many Murrow journalists were among the first on scene following the 2022 Moscow murders. Student reporting on that story appeared in true-crime programs, podcasts and streaming series on NBC, CBS,

Netflix, HBO Max and Amazon Prime. Other recent student reporting on COVID-19, college sports realignment and a courtroom fight for the survival of the Pac-12 Conference provided regional and national exposure for student journalism at WSU.

"Murrow News 8" continues to stand out among its peers, earning "Best Newscast" honors from the Northwest Chapter of the National Academy of Television Arts & Sciences year after year. Individual stories and students have received awards for reporting, videography and editing. A 2022 story examining the impact of "Sam's Law," along with a deeper look into hazing policies on the WSU campus, earned a national reporting award from the Society of Professional Journalists.

Just as foundational to Murrow as the newscast itself is the innovation it inspires. Students pioneered fully remote newscast production during the pandemic. A new

4K-compatible control room and an updated studio set help maintain a professional-quality look. In 2026, students debuted one of the first vertical newscasts in journalism education. As audiences increasingly consume news on mobile devices, "Murrow News 8" continues to evolve, producing content designed for the palm of your hand – work that helps shape broadcast journalism programs across the country.

These successes are merely the beginning. Recruiters for stations and companies across the nation know the secret, routinely checking in on the talent coming out of the program. For decades, professional newsrooms have sought out Cougs because they leave here ready for the job. Among all of the changes and advances "Murrow News 8" makes at Murrow, that's something that will never change. ■■■



Lights, cameras, and teamwork. Murrow News 8 preparing for another live newscast.

## Murrow College Levels Up: Students Take the Spotlight in WSU Esports Partnership

By Michelle Kistler  
Assistant Professor of Practice

Murrow College is gearing up for its first official esports event: the Pac-2 Smack Down, a WSU vs. Oregon State University tournament on Saturday, April 11, in Goertzen Hall Auditorium, Room 21. For the first time in 20 years, Goertzen 21's sliding wall will open as a live studio audience, bringing the space to life as originally envisioned.

With this event, Murrow College is "leveling up," embracing the growing popularity of esports. Students will get the chance to enter the game through hands-on experience in broadcasting, promotions, and event production, with the assistance

and tutelage of Murrow's skilled faculty and staff.

The partnership began organically when COMSTRAT 301 (Foundations of Persuasion) student Camden Pennington, then WSU Esports president, met with Assistant Professor Michelle Kistler to discuss ways to promote the team and address its needs. Their conversations sparked meetings with Murrow faculty and leadership, laying the foundation for a formal collaboration. Kistler leads project management, while Murrow IT System Administrator Devin Gay oversees all

technical aspects. Over the past year, work with current WSU Esports President Tomer Dagan has solidified the partnership, now formalized through a Memorandum of Understanding.

Through this collaboration, students gain practical experience producing live esports broadcasts, creating and executing PR campaigns, and coordinating event logistics. Cable 8 Productions and Crimson Creative have provided technical expertise and media support, for example, while the planned Murrow Sports Broadcasting



WSU Esports students coordinate live gameplay and streaming from the program's production set up.

and Promotion Club promises even more structured opportunities for students to develop skills in sports media, communications, and event production.

Looking ahead, Murrow College and WSU Esports aim to expand regional

tournaments, broaden student participation, and establish the college as a hub for esports broadcasting and strategic communication. Together, Murrow College and WSU Esports are setting the stage for the future of student-driven media, innovation, and live-event excitement. ■■■

## Global Lessons: Learning on the Road, Weaving Culture of Storytelling

By Joy Wanja  
Ph.D. Candidate

Away from classrooms and lectures, Murrow College students have the unique opportunity to explore the world by immersing themselves in new cultures and spaces - a chance to blend creativity with inspiration. Through multiple experiential learning programs, Murrow students can study abroad, pursuing adventures that blend education and creativity. Global experiential learning options currently available include Murrow Global Expeditions and the Backpack Journalism program, while other offerings (such as the Rural Journalism Project) offer more domestic opportunities closer to home.

Sydnee Bielecki, a recent Murrow College public relations graduate, travelled to Greece from May to June 2024 as part of an experiential learning program and describes the experience as memorable and broadening the professional approach to working in diverse cultural settings.

"I learned not only how to adapt in a different country, but to embrace the cultures of people in that country. Adapting to a new country can be scary, but I found it to be extremely rewarding, and it taught me that change is necessary to grow and learn in life," said Bielecki.

Murrow College scholarly assistant professor Alison Boggs notes that the experiential learning trips have made students more aware and sharpened their ability to ask the right questions to produce compelling news stories. Students gain a sense of urgency, whether they're navigating public transportation in Berlin or trying to land an interview with refugees in Yerevan, Armenia.

"When I have been with students in a foreign country, reporting stories, I notice that all their senses are alert," said Boggs. "They need to pay more attention just to understand what they're seeing or hearing. They have a strong vested interest in understanding what's happening around them and what people are saying, because they know they will need to understand it well enough to explain it to others, especially when interviewing people through a translator."

Boggs also recognizes that these experiential trips put students in direct contact with real-world professional settings and dilemmas that shape their storytelling.

"The 2025 study abroad trip coincided with the 80th anniversary of the liberation of the former Buchenwald concentration camp, which is

now the largest memorial of its kind in Germany, welcoming half a million visitors per year, many of them high school groups," Boggs said. "We also reported on the famous radio report by our college's namesake, Edward R. Murrow, upon the camp's liberation in April 1945."

This year, the Backpack Journalism program, led by Boggs, traveled to Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, to report on the growing international demand for Washington apples, especially the Cosmic Crisp, developed at Washington State University. According to Boggs, students focused on the production, sale, marketing, export, and import of Washington apples, providing them with a firsthand account of the global interconnections in the journey from Washington producers to Vietnamese consumers.

According to Boggs, who is also Murrow's coordinator of global programs, the students learn to explore multi-platform storytelling, a valuable and versatile skill in the media industry. "In Germany last year, while visiting the Buchenwald Memorial, three students told a similar story in three different ways - one via video in a 'travelogue' style, another in traditional print, and a third

through personal interviews for a radio program," Boggs said.

This summer, the Murrow Global Expeditions will also embark on a three-week epic storytelling journey to Greece and Bulgaria, led by Murrow faculty members Justin Barnes and Nicole O'Donnell, giving students a chance to explore how centuries of writing, photography, and narrative bridge the past and present. The students will visit the Temple of Demeter, the Athens Island Tour, and the medieval village of Chalki.

Murrow College Dean Bruce Pinkleton noted that these unique creative media opportunities help students explore careers in strategic communication and journalism, preparing them to work cross-culturally in the United States or internationally. Despite the university's rural location, Pinkleton affirms that Murrow College is committed to helping students explore strategic communication and journalism industries in major U.S. markets and abroad.

Each year, about 20 students participate in the storytelling in Greece and Bulgaria study abroad program, completing strategic communication projects for real-world clients. Students also travel to Phoenix, Arizona, to report on Major

League Baseball's spring training; Los Angeles to learn about careers in creative media and advertising; and to New York City, to visit strategic communication agencies and media organizations and network with alumni, according to Pinkleton.

Boggs notes that this experiential component of the Murrow Global program is fulfilling for professors, shaping students into global citizens who challenge themselves to meet the media industry's challenges and encouraging them to become professional journalists and communicators.

"The students absorb complicated information, work into the night transcribing interviews or editing photos, and learn to gain their sources' trust, despite cultural and language barriers," Boggs said. "Participating in these programs always gives me hope for the future of journalism, when I see our students evolving into our profession's next generation."

*For students who are interested in learning more, a full list of travel and experiential learning opportunities can be found at <https://murrow.wsu.edu/student-travel-opportunities/>*

## Op-Ed: Silencing the Watchdog: How Democracies Slide into Darkness

By Jennifer Henrichsen  
Assistant Professor

The United States has long celebrated the freedom of the press, enshrined in the First Amendment. And yet, the current administration is waging war on these fundamental freedoms in myriad ways. Journalism, which has long held a normative role holding powerful actors and interests to account, is under significant attack from all angles, as democracies decline and authoritarian regimes rise in power. As democracies die, press freedom erodes and journalism safety deteriorates. Manifest threats and attacks afflict journalism as an institution and its role in democratic society, from political economy concerns, to legal threats, and physical and online abuse.

Media consolidation has led to layoffs and closures, contributing to news deserts in communities across the United States and reduced media pluralism. Media

capture (i.e., when news media advance commercial or political concerns of state or non-state actors rather than holding them accountable), has accelerated. Recently, CBS settled a dubious lawsuit brought by the Trump Administration even though CBS's journalists were on strong legal footing. The reason? CBS's parent company, Paramount, wanted (and got) the FCC's Trump loyalists to back the \$8 billion merger between Paramount and Skydance. In other words, big money talks.

Alongside political economic pressures, legal harassment of the press is proliferating. In January, the FBI searched The Washington Post journalist Hannah Natanson's home and seized her electronic devices. Her crime? Being the "federal government whisperer." The government admits she was not the target of their investigation and yet they raided her home and took

her devices, implicating 1,200 confidential sources and failing to acknowledge a federal law in their search warrant request - the 1980 Privacy Protection Act, which ensures essential protections for journalists and newsrooms from government searches and seizures.

Less than a month later, former CNN journalist Don Lemon was charged with violating the Freedom of Access to Clinic Entrances (FACE) Act and the Conspiracy Against Rights statute while reporting on a protest in Minnesota. These statutes are rarely used and never have been used before on journalists. By prosecuting journalists for being at a protest, it threatens not only the journalists' First Amendment rights, but all First Amendment rights.

As legal threats escalate, physical assault and abuse against journalists continue to intensify, with journalists

harmed while covering protests, rallies, or even innocuous topics in their own communities. Online harassment, doxxing (i.e., when private information is leaked to harm), and mob censorship ("online vigilantism aimed at disciplining journalists") are increasing with young female journalists often facing the brunt of such abuse.

These attacks have significant repercussions. Journalists are experiencing mental health crises and self-censorship, precipitating departure from an already precarious profession. And yet, the very fact that journalists are under intensifying attack reveals the vital importance of journalism to democracy.

Scholar James W. Carey argued that journalists cannot be indifferent or objective when it comes to democracy. He insisted that, "It is their

one compulsory passion, for it forms the ground condition of their practice. Without the institutions or spirit of democracy, journalists are reduced to propagandists or entertainers."

It is essential then, amidst all this precarity, uncertainty, and crisis that journalists embrace the mantle of pro-democracy journalism. Journalists are not stenographers - they are courageous defenders of truth and facts. Journalists are not isolationists - they serve the public by informing and engaging them, so that people can actively participate in civic and democratic life.

The darkness enveloping our society threatens to suffocate and extinguish our democracy. Journalism is a flashlight that illuminates the darkness. Let's flip on the switch before the batteries run out.

## Ethan Murrow on Legacy, Storytelling, and the Murrow Standard

Interviewed by Brett Atwood  
Associate Professor of Practice

Ethan Murrow, grandson of iconic broadcast journalist Edward R. Murrow, offers a thoughtful reflection on legacy, ethics, and the enduring values that define excellence in journalism. Speaking in advance of the 50th Annual Murrow Symposium, Murrow discusses how his understanding of his grandfather's influence developed over time, why collaboration is central to meaningful reporting, and how the "Murrow Standard" continues to resonate amid today's complex media landscape. His insights bridge past and present, connecting the foundations of journalism to the challenges facing the next generation of communicators.

**Q: Do you have any early or vivid memories of Edward R. Murrow – not just as a public figure, but as your grandfather?**

I really knew my grandfather through my grandmother and my father, because Ed passed away when he was all too young because of lung cancer. So, he was a fixture in our lives (myself and my siblings) in a really rich way – through stories, through rewatching and re-listening to old broadcasts and photography.

I mostly grew up understanding that my grandmother had played a central role in the media output that was happening during World War II, especially. She was very humble and would not talk about that much. She was also a journalist and really participated in a lot of the reporting from London back to the United States.

My dad was really interested in reminding my brother and I that while there was all this incredible and well-deserved attention to Ed in terms of the great work that he did, because my grandmother was a woman, her contribution was, for the most part, forgotten. And so it was an incredible way to understand who he was, because as I grew to learn more about his reporting and the teams that he worked with. It was, of course, like any great project, a collaboration.

There were so many amazing reporters working at that time, across Europe, and he happened to gain a lot of accolades by doing a lot of work at the forefront publicly. But he was often re-reporting what his incredible team members were out there researching and scavenging from what they could. And there were a lot of women who were also a part of those projects, too. So, my early memories are really tied into this understanding that it wasn't just him.

My dad, because he grew up around [Ed's] "celebrity," was really dedicated to removing himself from that world. He really wanted a more private and peaceful life. And he was concerned that we would only see the star power of our grandfather, and miss the fact that there was a lot of integrity and ethics behind what he was doing, [and] that it wasn't just him. It was a partnership of a lot of different people.

So, my early memories of him are all through black-and-white photography. We didn't have a TV growing up, which is kind of ironic. I heard vinyl recordings of some of his reports from early radio from London, and we had a lot of still images around the house. So he was kind of an iconic figure in our lives, but in a way that maybe is a little bit surprising. It was a much more sort of slow experience of learning who he was...it was a slow kind of osmosis through my grandmother and my father over time.

**Q: Was there a moment when you personally began to understand the magnitude of Edward R. Murrow's influence on journalism and public discourse?**

Well, there were some awkward times as a teen in high school where teachers had grown up listening to or watching my grandfather. And I was embarrassed by their attention to both me and my brother. At the time, I didn't appreciate it... and I found it embarrassing.

But I think the time when I really started to understand how powerful his work had been, for so many people, was when we went to the Museum of Television and Radio (now the Paley Center for Media) in New York where they house a lot of the archives. I was in my early teens, and I remember looking at the list of all of the different radio programs and broadcasts on television, and just suddenly seeing the enormity of his involvement.

That really got me interested in diving in on my own rather than just listening to the stories from my family. I have found over the years that the radio broadcasts are what really stick with me, because they're of a time that is harder for me to envision.

As a child of moving images growing up in the '70s and '80s, it is hard to imagine what it must have been like to only experience those stories through radio. I find it incredibly odd, but also a really moving experience to think about how much people were relying on his voice for information about their loved ones, about all the different conflicts that were going on. And I've enjoyed

sharing things like that with my own kids now, because it's sort of the same for them. The thought of listening to the news only through radio is a bit otherworldly to them and I'm impressed that those stories still hold a lot of credibility because they relate to so many things that we're experiencing now in terms of conflict in the world.

**Q: From your perspective, what distinguishes Edward R. Murrow's work from that of other journalists of the 20th century?**

I guess I would first say that I'm not a journalist, so in many ways, I don't feel completely able to say in a full way why his work has continued to be so profound.

From my own experience, I think a real strength is storytelling. Of course, the topics that he was dealing with, the moments that he was involved in...that plays such a huge role. But, I think at the heart of it all, Edward R. Murrow was a storyteller. He seemed to love a good story, and was trying to figure out the best way to bring it down to a key, delightful little nugget that people could really understand.

I've come to understand how much of an impact (broadcaster and WSU professor) Ida Lou Anderson had on him in terms of learning about public speaking and about constructing a narrative - that influence was really amazing. And to see the thread from her work with him as a student up to when he was first broadcasting is a wonderful story.

It is really cool to know that work that he did led right back to WSU. I think that's one of the reasons why WSU has continued to be such a special place for our family and it is a place that we are excited to support.

**Q: This year's Murrow Symposium focuses on the "Murrow Standard." What does that standard mean to you personally?**

Because of the moment that we're living in, I think one of those standards has to be sticking up for free speech. I think that's certainly something Ed and the team around him cared a lot about. They were rightfully proud of their stance to protect the freedom of the press, and to protect the media's ability to stand apart from the government.

I think we see threats to that every day...and it's incredible that we still have to talk about that today. However, Ed probably wouldn't be surprised, because he certainly talked a lot about how history repeats itself, and that there are tyrants everywhere. And so it's journalists' job to work within the societies they are a part of to try and let people know what's going on and make the choices for themselves.

There was also a tremendous

amount of courage. When I read back about what Ed and (his wife) Janet and all of the other reporters were doing, there was a lot of bravery there. They really stood up and stuck up for telling the truth as best as they could.

I think what's so interesting to me about his legacy is that it's also a flawed legacy. He wasn't perfect. He made mistakes. There were times where he inserted his own opinion because he felt that it had to happen to really make the story what it was. That's vital to remember because if we hold reporters up to be some sort of perfect standard of objectivity, that's absurd. Nobody can do that. That willingness to kind of look within is also a really big part of what he hoped to stand for. If you listen to some of his last speeches, that was something he was talking a lot about.

**Q: How do you think Edward R. Murrow might respond to today's fragmented, algorithm-driven media environment?**

Even when Ed was working for CBS, there was such trouble between journalists and the big business of the network. I suspect there would be a part of his kind of sassy, opinionated spirit that would appreciate the fact that citizens were trying to do things for themselves. That spunk and motivation to be problem solvers is a side of contemporary journalism he would find interesting, but I think he would also be very troubled by the fact that there's so little fact-checking and context and background around so many of these pieces, which are mostly opinion pieces.

It's a double-edged sword, and I think it's something we're all trying to negotiate.

One thing that I've been really heartened by is the Murrow Backpack Journalism

program. That was one of the first times in a long time that I have interacted with the realm of journalism through our family legacy and thought, oh, this is something Ed would love. This really feels like it is training people to tell stories in a really granular way, in local areas that they are attached to where they can really benefit the communities that they are part of. That gave me some optimism for the future. Students are being trained to be very nimble in how they operate to tell a story, and that seems like the thing that we probably all need. That's something Ed would relate to because nimble is exactly what they were during World War II to try to get to sources and to try to navigate through difficult and often inaccessible areas to get to the story. I see some correlation between this program and who he was. It is exciting to see that parallel.

**Q: Can you share a bit about your own creative work and whether Edward R. Murrow's legacy influences it?**

I am a professor at Tufts University. I teach drawing and painting and work with graduate students in the Master of Fine Arts program. The other half of my career is as a studio artist where I mostly work with drawing and painting.

My work is narrative-driven. I'm interested in storytelling, and conversations around humans' propensity to try and control narratives in the realm of history. And so I do see some connections in that work to my grandfather, my dad, and my grandmother. I feel like the writing is kind of the through line for three generations, at least, from my grandfather down to my siblings and I and perhaps to our own kids.

To learn more about Ethan Murrow and his work, visit <https://bigpaperairplane.com>.



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Bob Stout



# From Promise to Possibility: Scholarships at Murrow College

**By Brett Atwood**  
Associate Professor of Practice

For generations of students at Washington State University's Edward R. Murrow College of Communication, scholarships have done far more than offset tuition costs. They have opened doors by allowing students to pursue internships, reduce work hours, and fully engage in the experiences that define a Murrow education.

As the Murrow Symposium marks its 50th year, the role of scholarships stands out as one of the college's most enduring investments in student success. Many Murrow students balance demanding course loads with jobs, leadership roles, and

professional development opportunities. Scholarship support provides breathing room and allows time to focus on learning, storytelling, research, and service while reinforcing a sense that others believe in their potential.

That belief can be transformative. For sophomore public relations major Jasmyn Ramirez, receiving a Murrow scholarship had an impact that extended well beyond financial support.

"The Murrow scholarship I received gave me confidence," Ramirez said. "Knowing

someone is supporting you is a reason to keep trying your best."

Her experience reflects what many recipients describe: scholarships offer both tangible assistance and a powerful vote of confidence at a pivotal moment in their academic journey.

Murrow College scholarships are made possible through the generosity of alumni, friends, and partners, many of whom are graduates of the college themselves. These benefactors understand the value of a Murrow education and often take a personal interest in the students they support. In many cases, scholarships become gateways to mentorship, professional connections, and long-term engagement with the Murrow community.

Applying for Murrow College scholarships begins with the WSU General Scholarship

Application (found at <https://murrow.wsu.edu/scholarships>), which opens online each fall. Students are encouraged to update their application information every January so their materials reflect their most current achievements. While completion of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) is not required for Murrow scholarships, it is recommended, as it allows students to be considered for certain need-based awards.

According to Sara Stout, Assistant Dean of Student Affairs, increasing student participation in the scholarship process is a current priority.

"Murrow-specific scholarships are impactful for Murrow students as they try to put together the funding package that will contribute to their success here in Murrow and at WSU," Stout said. "However, we are seeing a decline in the numbers of qualified students

applying for scholarships. We close our scholarship application window at the end of February, and we want more Murrow students to apply."

To be eligible, students must be admitted to a Murrow College major, maintain a minimum cumulative WSU GPA of 2.7, and submit their application by the published deadline. Scholarship selections are made in the spring and summer, with awards distributed during the following academic year. Recipients are expected to enroll full time and to engage in stewardship activities, including providing acknowledgments and occasional testimonials.

At its core, the Murrow College scholarship program reflects a shared commitment to student success. Fifty years into the Murrow Symposium's legacy, scholarships remain one of the most direct ways the Murrow community invests in its future – one student at a time. ■■■

## KEYNOTE BIOGRAPHIES



### Ambassador Roger Nyhus

Ambassador Roger F. Nyhus is the CEO and founder of AMBO Strategy, a high-stakes consultancy helping CEOs and global leaders manage important priorities and solve complex issues.

A professional problem solver, Ambassador Nyhus has served as a trusted adviser and crisis counselor to top

global business, government and nonprofit leaders, including CEOs of Fortune 500 companies.

He most recently served as U.S. Ambassador to Barbados, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada, and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines from 2023-2025.

Ambassador Nyhus brings an entrepreneurial, private-sector perspective to all his roles. Previously, he served as founder and CEO of Nyhus Communications, a successful nearly 30-year-old, Seattle-based strategic communications, advocacy and marketing consultancy. He sold his firm in 2022.

A proud member of the Chinook Indian Nation, Ambassador Nyhus was one of only five Native American ambassadors in U.S. history.

*April 7 | 9:00 AM Opening Keynote*

*"Lessons from Barbados - and Rhianna"*



### Mike Flood

Mike earned his bachelor's degree in industrial education from Washington State in 1974, working construction to make his way through college. Upon graduation, he joined the US Coast Guard and attended Navy Flight School. In his 20-year Coast Guard career, Mike flew C130s, Dassault Falcon jets, and H-60 Jayhawk helicopters. His Air Station administrative duties included managing public relations, finance, administration, and operations. While in the service,

Mike attained a master's degree in education from the University of North Carolina.

In an interlude where he and his wife left the service to adopt children, Mike owned and operated Western Flyer Air Service in Fort Scott, Kansas. After two years of crop dusting, he got back into Coast Guard aviation from which he retired as a commander in 1997. Upon retirement, Mike was asked by his WSU friend Paul Allen of Microsoft fame to work on the campaign to build a new

stadium and keep the Seattle Seahawks from moving to Los Angeles. Mike has now served 29 years as a Seahawks vice president, managing Community Outreach and other departments. He serves on the boards of the Empower Youth Network, Camp Patriot and the Association of Washington Business. Flood has been awarded the 2019 "Person of Year" award from United Negro College Fund. He has also received the "Outstanding Service to Veterans" award

from the Washington Department of Veterans Affairs, and "I Care About Kids" award from Mentoring Works Washington. He and his wife Marty, have a son, Dan, and daughters Shannon and MyKaila, plus 4 grandchildren.

*April 8 | 9:00 AM Breakfast Keynote*

*"SEA...HAWKS!" - Authentic Voice: Leadership, Service and Storytelling" with Mark Dyce-Ryan*



### Bill Wixey

Bill Wixey has enjoyed a 35-year broadcasting career as a TV news anchor and reporter, thanks in part to the world-class education he received and skills that he honed at Washington State University.

After graduating from Murrow in 1991, Bill launched his career in Great Falls, MT as sports director at KRTV. After

stops in Arkansas (where he covered two Final Fours with the Arkansas Razorbacks), and Green Bay (where he covered a pair of Super Bowls with the Packers), Bill moved back home to Seattle in 1998, joining KIRO as a sports anchor/reporter. Bill moved on to FOX Sports in 2000, as a studio host. In 2003, Bill made the transition

to news anchor/reporter at FOX 13 Seattle, where he has co-anchored "Good Day Seattle" for over 22 years.

Bill is a 3-time Emmy award winner as an anchor, reporter and producer.

The Wixey legacy at WSU extends to his son William, who followed in his dad's footsteps

and graduated from Murrow in 2021. Will now works in the same newsroom as his dad, as a digital producer at FOX 13 Seattle.

*April 8 | 12:00 PM Closing Keynote Lunch*

*"Finding your Passion, Live with Purpose"*



50 YEARS OF MURROW SYMPOSIUM

**ACROSS**

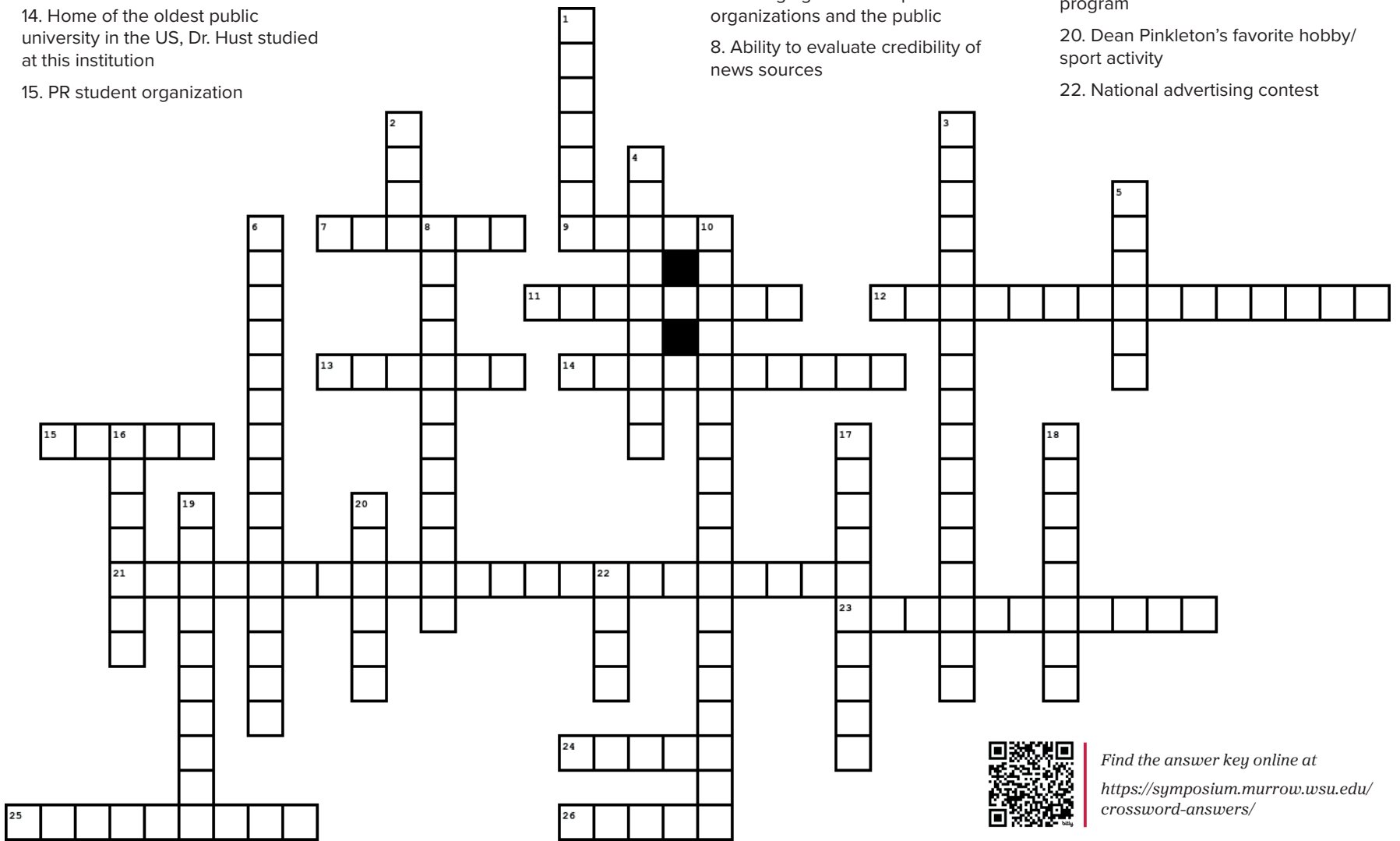
- 7. Media coverage that is not paid for
- 9. This member of Murrow College's leadership team reported for the Spokesman-Review
- 11. Edward R. Murrow's famous sign-off: "Good night and \_\_\_\_."
- 12. Student-run marketing and advertising agency
- 13. 2026 marks 40 years of this student-run organization
- 14. Home of the oldest public university in the US, Dr. Hust studied at this institution
- 15. PR student organization

- 21. Planned communication to achieve organizational goals
- 23. Paid messaging used to promote products or services
- 24. Land-grant institution where Sara Stout earned her undergrad degree
- 25. Annual event that brings media pros and students together since 1973
- 26. Credibility or trustworthiness of the speaker

**DOWN**

- 1. Washington State University school spirit phrase
- 2. Student-run radio station at the Murrow College
- 3. The student voice of WSU since 1895
- 4. Distribution of audio or video content to audiences
- 5. "R" in Edward R. Murrow
- 6. Managing relationships between organizations and the public
- 8. Ability to evaluate credibility of news sources

- 10. Murrow College representative student organization
- 16. The university that Murrow's Director of Graduate Studies graduated from before coming to the U.S.
- 17. Practice of reporting, writing, and producing news
- 18. A planned series of messages
- 19. Student-produced broadcast news program
- 20. Dean Pinkleton's favorite hobby/sport activity
- 22. National advertising contest



Find the answer key online at <https://symposium.murrow.wsu.edu/crossword-answers/>

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\*Rank out of 107 U.S. Communication programs according to Academic Analytics

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WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY  
Edward R. Murrow  
College of Communication

## Student Essay

### Truth, Integrity, and the Free Press: The Legacy of Edward R. Murrow

By Aunjelique Andersen

Murrow College Global Campus Student

In times of fear and uncertainty, a nation depends on voices that rise above the noise and speak with clarity and conscience. Edward R. Murrow is one of those rare voices in American history. His legacy isn't just rooted in pioneering broadcast journalism, but in his moral courage in which he didn't back down or buckle under pressure.

*Murrow didn't just report the news; he set the standard for what journalists should do when democracy is at risk.*

During World War II, with the rise of Senator Joseph McCarthy, Murrow showed that reporting the truth sometimes means standing up to power no matter what the consequences. His work did more than inform the public, it reshaped expectations of the press and showed how journalism itself should operate.

Murrow caught the attention of the American people with his radio broadcasts from London during the Blitz. Kendrick (1969) notes that his vivid descriptions made the horrors of war real for Americans at home, while Sperber (1986) points out that his calm and clear reporting made radio a trusted source of news.

Murrow's approach was very different from the sensational reporting that was common at the time, showing that journalists could be engaging, responsible and

bring humanity to report on global events.

A turning point in Murrow's career came in the 1950's when Murrow chose confrontation over silence when he challenged Senator Joseph McCarthy on national television. In March 1954, Murrow used his program "See It Now" to examine McCarthy's record, carefully timing and presenting archival footage and documented statements (Murrow, 1954).

Rather than attack, Murrow allowed the evidence to speak for itself. "We must not confuse dissent with disloyalty," Murrow warned, urging Americans to defend civil liberties even amid threat or coercion. Friendly (1967) noted that this broadcast was a turning point in public opinion, showing the power of responsible journalism could hold authority accountable.

In his 1958 "Wires and Lights in a Box" speech, Murrow cautioned that television could become merely a vehicle for distraction if not guided by purpose (Murrow, 1958). Friendly (1967) describes his frustration with television networks that cared more about entertainment than important news. According to Persico (1988), Murrow feared that commercial pressures might erode journalistic integrity. Murrow's warning about these pressures was ahead of his time, especially when thinking



about today's fast-moving, click driven media environment.

*Murrow built his legacy by combining courage with principle. His legacy matters because it sets a moral benchmark.*

Journalists can inform and engage audiences while holding leaders accountable even under political, social, or commercial pressure. In today's world of misinformation, online echo chambers, and viral sensationalism, Murrow's example is more relevant than ever.

Murrow showed that journalists don't just report the news, they protect democracy. Murrow's legacy continues, not because he was flawless, but because he consistently chose integrity over fear. Murrow helped define journalistic responsibility, reinforcing the principle that a free press serves as a safeguard against abuse, fear, and the misuse of power.

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Hudson Photo.

## MURROW 50th SYMPOSIUM SCHEDULE

### April 6, 2026

#### 4:45 PM

Murrow Family Reunion  
CUB 220

### April 7, 2026

#### 8:00 AM

Check-in Opens  
CUB 2nd Floor

#### 9:00 AM

Ambassador Roger Nyhus:  
Opening Keynote Breakfast  
Lessons from Barbados- And  
Rihanna  
CUB 220

#### 10:10 - 11:00 AM

Communication that Builds Brands  
& Drives Sports Forward  
CUB 212

From Message to Movement: How  
Nonprofits Inspire Action  
CUB 210

Pathways to Journalism: Insights  
from Ana Cabrera  
(By invitation Only)  
CUB L60

#### 11:10 AM - 12:00 PM

Truth, Trauma, and Narrative: The  
Craft of True Crime Podcasts  
CUB 212

The Future of News: Innovation,  
Trust, & Transformation  
CUB 210

Two Seats at the Table: A  
Conversation on Food, Media, &  
What's Next  
CUB 204

#### 12:00 - 1:30 PM

Interactive Research & Student  
Showcase Expo and Networking  
Lunch  
CUB 220

#### 1:40 - 2:30 PM

Getting Started: Ana Cabrera, Jeff  
Hite, & Sean Owsley Reunite  
CUB 212

Farms, Forks, & Food:  
Communication & the Food  
Industry  
CUB 210

Communicators in the Courtroom:  
Murrow Graduates Working in Law  
CUB 204

#### 2:40 - 3:30 PM

LA Stories  
CUB 212

From Likes to Livelihood:  
The Journey of Social Media  
Influencing  
CUB 210

Public Media: Strengths,  
Opportunities, & Threats  
CUB 204

#### 4:00 PM

Ana Cabrera: Lifetime Achievement  
Award Ceremony  
CUB 220

### April 8, 2026

#### 8:00 AM

Check-in Opens  
CUB 2nd Floor

#### 9:00 - 10:00 AM

Mike Flood w/ Mark Dyce-Ryan:  
Breakfast Keynote  
'SEA... HAWKS!' – Authentic Voice:  
Leadership, Service and Storytelling  
CUB 220

#### 10:10 - 11:00 AM

From Press Box to the Front  
Office: The Business of Sports  
Communication  
CUB 212

Communicating for Change:  
Working with & For  
Underrepresented Communities  
CUB 210

Creating Award-Winning Work  
CUB 204

#### 11:10 AM - 12:00 PM

Authenticity, Accuracy,  
& Algorithms: PR in the  
Digital Era  
CUB 212

Keeping the Human Voice in an AI-  
Driven World  
CUB 210

Personal Branding for Introverts  
with Goldie Chan  
CUB 204

#### 12:00 - 1:00 PM

Bill Wixey: Closing Keynote Lunch  
Find your Passion, Live with  
Purpose  
CUB 220

## SHUTTLE SCHEDULE

### April 6, 2026

#### 4:15 pm

Goertzen Hall to CUB  
Reunion, Welcome & HOA

#### 4:30 pm

Marriott to CUB  
Reunion, Welcome & HOA

#### 8:15 pm

CUB to Marriott  
End of Events

### April 7, 2026

#### 8:30 am

Marriott to CUB  
Symposium Start

#### 3:30 pm

Marriott to CUB  
Lifetime Achievement

#### 5:30 pm

CUB to Marriott

#### 6:00 pm

CUB to Marriott  
End of CUB Events, VIP Dinner

### April 8, 2026

#### 8:30 am

Marriott to CUB  
Symposium Start

#### 1:15 pm

CUB to Marriott  
End of CUB events

#### 2:15 pm

CUB to Marriott

#### 3:45 pm

CUB to Marriott  
End of Coaching/Networking

## WITH THANKS TO THOSE WHO BROUGHT US THE SYMPOSIUM

### Newspaper Committee

**Megan Starr-Gepford**  
Enrollment, Marketing &  
Outreach Manager

**Brett Atwood**  
Editor, Associate Professor of  
Practice

**Ryan Thomas**  
Editor, Director of Graduate  
Studies, Associate Professor

**Ben Pingel**  
Firelight Creative Co., Graphic  
Designer & Newspaper Layout

**Lori Jordan**  
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**Stacey Hust**  
Associate Dean of Faculty  
Affairs & College Operations,  
Professor, Symposium  
Committee Chair

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**Raigan Snell**  
Social Media Coordinator,  
Murrow Expeditions  
Coordinator

**Crimson Creative  
Ad Club**

### Symposium Committee

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Chair, Associate Dean of  
Faculty Affairs & College  
Operations, Professor

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Associate Professor of Practice

**Jeff Collier**  
Multimedia Engineer

**Lori Jordan**  
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**Bruce Pinkleton**  
Dean, Edward R. Murrow  
College of Communication

**Deana Penton**  
Assistant to the Dean

**Ben Shors**  
Chair, Journalism & Media  
Production, Professor of  
Practice

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Enrollment, Marketing &  
Outreach Manager

**Sara Stout**  
Assistant Dean of Student  
Affairs

**Ryan Thomas**  
Director of Graduate Studies,  
Associate Professor

### MPAB Symposium Subcommittee

**Doneen Arquines**  
**Adam HineLine**  
**Adam Peterson**  
**Albert Powell**  
**Mary Grace Roske**  
**Steve Thorpe**

### College Leadership

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Associate Dean of Faculty  
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Professor

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Chair, Journalism & Media  
Production, Professor of  
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**Sara Stout**  
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