



CENTER FOR MEDIA INNOVATION

Point Park University

For Immediate Release

May 8, 2019

Center for Media Innovation at Point Park University announces \$20,000 media fellowship to combat news deserts

PITTSBURGH, PA – With the number of underserved markets – known as news deserts – growing throughout the United States, the Center for Media Innovation at Point Park University is announcing a \$20,000 journalism fellowship designed to spotlight and take on the problem.

The annual Doris O’Donnell Innovations in Investigative Reporting Fellowship is made possible through a three-year grant from the Allegheny Foundation.

“For many communities throughout the country, newspapers are the best – and sometimes only – source for critical local news. The death of a newspaper in one of these places leaves an informational black hole that can be devastating,” said Andrew Conte, director of the Center for Media Innovation. “These gaps are expanding across America and right here in Western Pennsylvania as media outlets are closing, shrinking coverage areas and laying off or buying out experienced journalists. This fellowship offers an opportunity to shine a light on one of those communities.”



DORIS O'DONNELL
INNOVATIONS IN INVESTIGATIVE
JOURNALISM FELLOWSHIP

The fellowship winner will have six months to produce and publish or broadcast the final story or series of stories. In addition, the honoree will be required to come to Point Park University’s Downtown Pittsburgh campus three times, which includes an event to celebrate their work.

A panel of five distinguished judges with credentials in innovative and investigative journalism will evaluate applicants based on value, innovation, engagement, diversity and ability. That panel includes:

- **Penny Abernathy**, a former executive at The Wall Street Journal and New York Times who is now the Knight Chair in Journalism and Digital Media Economics at the University of North Carolina. She is the author of “The Expanding News Deserts,” a major 2018 report that documents the decline and loss of local news organizations in the U.S.
- **David Folkenflik**, a media correspondent for NPR News, and host and editor of On Point from NPR and WBUR, Boston’s NPR station. His stories and analyses are broadcast throughout NPR’s newsmagazines, including All Things Considered, Morning Edition, and Here & Now.

- **Amber Hunt**, an investigative reporter for the Cincinnati Enquirer. She is part of the Pulitzer Prize-winning team at the Enquirer, where she also hosts the podcast “Accused,” an award-winning true crime serial that reached No. 1 on iTunes and has 20 million downloads to date. She’s written six books, including the New York Times bestseller “The Kennedy Wives.”
- **Brentin Mock**, a Pittsburgh-based staff writer for CityLab, a standalone website from The Atlantic that explores trends shaping our country’s urban future, and captures the creativity and vibrancy of our increasingly urbanized world.
- **Carl Prine**, editor of the Navy Times, who covered the invasion of Iraq for the Pittsburgh Tribune-Review and was later deployed to Iraq as an Army guardsman. Prior to the Navy Times, he covered the military beat and breaking national news at the San Diego Union-Tribune. In 2012, Prine won an Investigative Reporters and Editors Award for “Rules of Engagement,” a report on a 2007 incident in which U.S. soldiers shot three unarmed deaf Iraqi boys.

“The Trustees of the Allegheny Foundation are delighted to partner with the Center for Media Innovation on what we consider a uniquely conceived fellowship,” said Matt Groll, the foundation’s chairman. “It combines impactful investigative reporting with innovative methods of disseminating the resulting product to a multitude of audiences, especially to those in underserved neighborhoods.”

Doris O’Donnell, the namesake of the award, was a pioneering journalist who began her 50-year career during World War II for the Cleveland News. She joined the Cleveland Plain Dealer in 1959, covering the Sam Sheppard murder trial that inspired “The Fugitive,” and traveling to Dallas for the aftermath of President Kennedy’s assassination and the Soviet Union during the height of the Cold War. O’Donnell was hired by Richard Scaife in 1973 to write for the Greensburg Tribune-Review. She worked there for 15 years before returning to Cleveland.

“Doris was a trailblazer for the generations of women in this business who came after her,” said Sue McFarland, Greensburg editor for the Tribune-Review, who edited O’Donnell’s work. “She fought long and hard to cover some of the biggest stories of her time, and erase the notion that some assignments were off-limits to many talented journalists based purely on their gender.”

Journalists and media outlets can apply through June 30 at www.DorisODonnellFellowship.com. Finalists and the ultimate winner will be announced in September.

Contact: Lou Corsaro

lcorsaro@pointpark.edu

412.392.6190

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The Center for Media Innovation at Point Park University is a state-of-the-art incubator and collaborative space designed to prepare students for success in a media industry intertwined with the latest technology, while also supporting professional journalists and educating the public at large. The Center features TV and radio/podcast studios, a photo studio, a multimedia newsroom, and a transformational presentation and gallery space. Visit CenterForMediaInnovation.com to learn more.

Point Park University, immersed in the heart of Downtown Pittsburgh, focuses on student success through innovative experiential learning opportunities. Point Park enrolls more than 4,000 students in over 100 undergraduate, master’s and doctoral programs offered through its Conservatory of Performing Arts, Rowland School of Business, and schools of Arts and Sciences, Communication, and Education. The University’s alumni and students represent all 50 states and 34 countries around the world. Visit PointPark.edu to learn more.