

NEWS RELEASE  
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Press Association presents awards  
during annual convention  
9 newspapers receive top honors in annual contest.

The Oklahoma Press Association presented its Better Newspaper Contest Awards during the OPA Annual Convention, June 7-8, at the Grand Casino Hotel & Resort in Shawnee.

Also announced during the two-day convention were the recipients of the OPA H. Milt Phillips Award and the Oklahoma Newspaper Foundation's Beachy Musselman Award.

Receiving the H. Milt Phillips Award was Rod Serfoss, publisher of the Clinton Daily News. The OPA Board of Directors selects the recipient of the Milt Phillips Award. Serfoss began his career at the Clinton Daily News as a paperboy. He served as general manager of the Daily News in 1983 for five years, before taking a position at the Sand Springs Leader. He returned to Clinton in 1991 as associate publisher and part owner of the daily newspaper, and was named publisher in 2003. Serfoss served as president of the Oklahoma Press Association in 2010.

Receiving the ONF Beachy Musselman Award was Rusty Ferguson, publisher of The Cleveland American.

Ferguson grew up in the newspaper business and today oversees all three family newspapers – The Cleveland American, The Hominy News-Progress and The Pawnee Chief.

After graduating from the University of Oklahoma, Ferguson returned to Cleveland to become publisher of The Cleveland American.

He served as president of the Oklahoma Press Association in 2011, and also served on the Oklahoma Newspaper Foundation board of trustees for 12 years.

In addition to running the family newspapers, Ferguson took on another role this year as a teacher of U.S. history and community leadership and advisor of the student newspaper at Cleveland Middle School.

The recipient of the Musselman Award is selected by the Oklahoma Newspaper Foundation Board of Trustees.

Winners of this year's Sequoyah Awards in the OPA Better Newspaper Contest also were announced at the OPA Convention. In the daily divisions, winners were The Norman Transcript, Stillwater News Press and McAlester News-Capital. Sequoyah winners in the weekly divisions were The Eufaula Indian Journal, Owasso Reporter, Skiatook Journal, Tri-County Herald in Meeker and the El Reno Tribune. The

Oklahoma Daily at the University of Oklahoma was the winner in the college division. The Sequoyah Award, which is the highest honor in the Better Newspaper Contest, is determined by the amount of points accumulated in eight of the contest's 20 categories: News Content, Layout & Design, Advertising, Editorial Writing, Photography, Sports Coverage, Sales Promotion and Community Leadership. The contest also included a Digital Media category in three divisions – dailies, weeklies and colleges.

Individuals were able to enter in 11 categories – News Story, Feature Story, Sports Story, In-Depth Reporting, Column Writing, Small Space Ad, Large Space Ad, News Photograph, Feature Photograph, Sports Photograph and Front Page Design.

Members of the New Mexico Press Association judged more than 1,300 entries from 75 Oklahoma newspapers.

In addition to the nine Sequoyah Award winners, more than 150 first place plaques were presented during the awards banquet. Newspapers and individuals placing second and third in the contest received certificates.

A contest honoring magazines was added this year. The Tulsa World received first place in the OPA Magazine Contest.

A complete list of winners in the 2018 OPA Better Newspaper Contest is available on the OPA website at [okpress.com/2018-contest-winners](http://okpress.com/2018-contest-winners).

The Oklahoma Press Association's Quarter Century Club inducted four new members.

This year's inductees are Judy Baker, Kent Bush, Violet Hassler and David Seeley.

Several additional awards were presented during the June 7-8 Convention including:

- Ray Lokey Memorial Award for Excellence in Reporting, presented to John A. Small, Johnston County Sentinel.
- Editorial Sweepstakes Award, sponsored by ONG, presented to Wayne Trotter, Countywide & Sun.
- Column Sweepstakes Award, sponsored by ONG, presented to Kati Gibson, Chelsea Reporter.
- Daily Photo of the Year, sponsored by OGE Energy Corp., presented to Jason Elmquist, Stillwater News Press.
- Weekly Photo of the Year, sponsored by OGE Energy Corp., presented to Jeff Harrison, Midwest City Beacon.
- ONF Joseph H. Edwards Outdoor Writer of the Year presented to John Kilgore, Muskogee Phoenix.

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