

2023-2024 Board of Directors Candidates

Arkansas Pro Chapter | Society of Professional Journalists



PRESIDENT:

Brenda Lepenski

Brenda Lepenski joined the Channel 7 News team in March of 2022 as a general assignment reporter. Prior to working at KATV, Lepenski worked as a multimedia journalist in Lubbock, Texas. She also worked for a Spanish TV station in Irving, Texas where she helped produce newscasts for Dallas, Houston, and Miami. Lepenski is fluent in Spanish. She grew up in Bossier City, La. and is originally from Juarez, Mexico. Her name is Polish, given to her by her adopted family. She's a proud member of the National Association of Hispanic Journalists and has served as vice president of the Dallas chapter where she's helped in the effort to raise scholarship funds for aspiring journalism and communication students. She's a former student at Louisiana Tech University and a graduate of University of Texas at El Paso. Lepenski is looking to explore more of the Natural State and to serve the community by telling stories that matter.

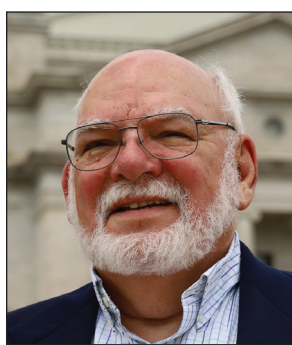


PRESIDENT:

Lance Brownfield

Lance Brownfield is a dedicated journalist who works tirelessly to perfect his craft. Working in various positions across Arkansas and beyond, he has the experience and passion to lead the Arkansas chapter of the SPJ as president. Spending the past year as secretary of the chapter, he has rarely missed a meeting and worked to be an engaging, invaluable member. He hopes to connect with more Arkansas journalists this year and expand the chapter's reach over the next year. Starting his journalism career in 2017 as a freelancer for the Malvern Daily Record, he was hired by MDR as Sports Editor shortly after. Taking a small hiatus, he explored other career options before returning to Henderson State University to finish his Bachelor of Arts in Innovative Media this year while working as Editor-in-Chief of the Oracle: Community Edition, then as Editor-in-Chief of the MDR. After leaving MDR, he picked up more freelance work for publications, domestic and international, including the Arkansas Advocate and the South China Morning Post (SCMP). Last October, he was hired as

a reporter at The Sentinel-Record in Hot Springs, where he creates full-package articles with photo and video elements. During his time at The Sentinel-Record, he hosted a popular podcast, filmed a short documentary, and wrote in-depth investigation pieces while covering the arts and entertainment beat. He hopes to one day cover international topics more regularly for a major publication such as the Jerusalem Post, the Korea Times or SCMP. He's a versatile young journalist with skills in drone videography/photography, graphic design, foreign languages and other pertinent areas. He loves what he does and can't wait to see what he can do as president of the Arkansas chapter of the SPJ.



VICE PRESIDENT:

Sonny Albarado

Lawrence "Sonny" Albarado is the editor-in-chief of the online news site Arkansas Advocate, part of the States Newsroom network. The Arkansas Advocate launched on Aug. 16, 2022. Sonny has been vice president of the Arkansas Pro Chapter of SPJ since 2020 and a chapter board member since 2007. He has been an SPJ member since 1979 and served as national SPJ president in 2012-13. Sonny is also a longtime member of the SPJ Foundation, the charitable funding source of the Society of Professional Journalists. He also serves as SPJ's representative on the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communication. Sonny retired from the Arkansas Democrat-Gazette at the end of January 2020 after 12 1/2 years as the paper's top investigative editor, supervising a team of four reporters. He holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in English and an honorary Doctor of Letters from Nicholls State University in Thibodaux, La.



TREASURER:

Rob Moritz

Rob Moritz has been on the SPJ Arkansas Chapter's board for more than 16 years, including one year as vice president. He is currently treasurer. He is also chairman of the Arkansas Freedom of Information Taskforce. Since the fall of 2014, he has been teaching journalism at the University of Central Arkansas and has organized an SPJ student chapter on the UCA campus. Prior to full-time teaching, he spent 30 years working for newspapers in Texas, Tennessee and Arkansas, including the Arkansas Gazette, Benton Courier, Arkansas Democrat-Gazette and 15 years as a state capital reporter for Stephens Media. He is married to Gwen Moritz, an editor at Arkansas Business, and they have a dog named Scully and a cat named Fox. They also have two grown sons.



BOARD MEMBER:

Jennifer Ellis

In September, Jennifer Ellis will complete her second term as SPJ's Region 12 coordinator working with members throughout Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi and Tennessee. She served as Arkansas SPJ president for three consecutive years from 2017-2019 and was the chair of the planning committee for the 2018 Region 12 Life and Death Journalism Conference, which contributed to her honor that year as the national Howard S. Dubin Outstanding Pro Member Award for the small chapter division. Ellis serves on state's Freedom of Information Act Coalition, SPJ's national membership and resolutions committees, and Arkansas SPJ's programming and marketing committees – planning events, designing flyers, assisting with the chapter's social media and website and more, all while maintaining her work as Creative Services Managing Editor at the Arkansas Democrat-Gazette. Ellis got her start with SPJ at the campus chapter at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock, where she served as president as well as executive editor of the student newspaper The Forum for two years before graduating in 2013. She joined

Arkansas SPJ's board of directors in 2015, helping revive the group, and served as vice president in 2016-2017. She is a 2011 graduate of the SPJ Ted Scripps Leadership Institute. In addition to her work on the regional level, she hopes to continue serving Arkansas SPJ by reaching out to inactive and potential members, creating diverse programming and promoting SPJ's mission.



BOARD MEMBER:

Terrance Armstard

Born in Monroe, La., Terrance Armstard studied photography and journalism at the University of Louisiana at Monroe, acquiring a bachelor's in photojournalism in 2001 and a master of arts in communication in 2006. Terrance began working as a freelance photojournalist in 2001 for newspapers such as USA Today, Newsday (New York), the Times-Picayune (New Orleans), The Advocate (Baton Rouge) as well as the Associated Press. Terrance received his first staff position at his hometown newspaper, The News-Star, a small daily owned by the Gannett Corporation. While there, he received a scholarship to the prestigious journalism center, the Poynter Institute in St. Petersburg, Fla. From there, Terrance was personally invited by Vme Edom-Smith, daughter of renowned University of Missouri-Columbia School of Journalism Professor Clifton C. Edom, to attend the Truth With A Camera (TWAC) workshop in Norfolk, Va. Holding memberships in NPPA (National Press Photographers Association), NABJ (National Association of Black Journalists), SPJ (Society of Professional Journalists), ASMP (American Society of Media Photographers), SND (Society of News Design) and the SPD (The Society of Publication Designers), Terrance furthered honed his skills by attending workshops and seminars. In 2010 Terrance began working as the marketing and public relations photographer for the University of Louisiana at Monroe. In 2014 Terrance was hired to teach photography at the Excellence Academy performing arts school. In 2015, he began work as a photojournalist at the El Dorado News-Times, eventually being

hired as news editor and serving as interim managing editor. While working as an editor, he began teaching as an adjunct at South Arkansas Community College in the Entertainment and Digital Media Arts program. Terrance continues working as a part-time freelance photojournalist and editorial photographer covering the mid-South, Arkansas, Louisiana, and Mississippi delta regions. His work has been published in magazines such as Imagine Louisiana, Louisiana Life, KoreAm, a Korean American magazine, and corporate in-house publications of such companies as Weyerhaeuser Company. Terrance currently teaches journalism, multimedia journalism, photojournalism, digital photography, desktop publishing and publication design courses in the Multimedia Journalism and Creative Media programs in the School of Media & Journalism at Arkansas State University. Terrance serves as faculty advisor for A-State SPJ student chapter, A-State Photography Club and Delta Digital News Service, SMJ's online student news service.



BOARD MEMBER:

Karen Steward

Karen Tricot Steward is the owner of Power of Pod, a Little Rock-based podcast production company. She is also co-founder of the Arkansas Podcast Collaborative, a nonprofit dedicated to providing the public with educational resources about podcasting. The organization hosts two podcast festivals yearly, one in central Arkansas and one in Northwest Arkansas. Karen is the writer, producer, and host of Burden, a podcast that explores the criminal justice system through the lens of one case every season. For more than 15 years, she worked as a reporter, anchor, website manager, and Content Development Director at the NPR affiliate station in Little Rock, KUAR 89.1. Her work has been featured on national newscasts and she has won awards from the Associated Press and Society of Professional Journalists for her investigative reporting on topics including the opioid epidemic, Arkansas executions, and the Mayflower oil spill. Karen has also worked with college students at UA Little Rock to teach audio production and scriptwriting. In 2018, she took a position as Public

Education Coordinator for the Arkansas Supreme Court, overseeing initiatives to educate Arkansans about the judicial branch of government. This included organizing events at schools, giving tours of the Justice Building, and creating videos, written materials, and podcasts for the public. In 2020, she launched the first podcast hosted by state Supreme Court justices, Lady Justice: Women of the Court, and produced its first season. The project was part of a multi-state civics education initiative featuring women justices from Arkansas, Michigan, West Virginia, and Texas. Karen is passionate about staying up-to-date on the evolving landscape of the podcast industry. She regularly attends podcast conferences and is a member of the Association of Audio Producers in Radio (AIR), a global community of audio industry professionals that provides training for podcasters, story editors, and independent producers. She attended the University of Maryland College Park and the University of Arkansas at Little Rock, graduating with a bachelor's degree in broadcast journalism.



BOARD MEMBER:

Wendy Jordan

Wendy Jordan is a marketing specialist for Crafton Tull, where she is part of a team that handles procurement proposals for the firm in addition to social media postings, blog writing, and other marketing efforts. She is also an online adjunct instructor for Arkansas State University in the undergraduate strategic communications program and an academic assistant in the graduate-level strategic communication program. Previously, Wendy was the managing editor for the Trucker Media Group, which included leading a monthly newspaper and several niche magazines. Prior to her leadership at The Trucker, she spent eight years at the Arkansas Democrat-Gazette. Five of those years were spent as the special sections manager supervising a team producing more than 75 special sections yearly. Wendy continues to be a contributing writer for the Arkansas Democrat-Gazette. She has also worked as an education and crime reporter for the Paragould Daily Press. Wendy holds a bachelor's degree in journalism and a master's degree in strategic communications from

Arkansas State University. She is also a member of Kappa Tau Alpha, a national honor society for journalism and communications. A proud member of SPJ since 2015, Wendy has previously served as Arkansas Pro Chapter's treasurer and vice president. Her regular contributions to SPJ include coordination of the Mark of Excellence Region 12 judging swap and serving as the Region 12 treasurer for several years.



BOARD MEMBER:

Andrew DeMillo

Andrew DeMillo is the Arkansas Capitol Correspondent for The Associated Press, a position he has held since 2005. Previously, he was a staff writer for the Arkansas Democrat-Gazette. DeMillo is a graduate of the University of Georgia. He has interned at the Washington Post, the Seattle Times and Lexington Herald-Leader. He is a longtime member of SPJ and a former president of the Arkansas Pro chapter. He lives in Little Rock with his wife, Hilary, and their 9-year-old son, Simon.



BOARD MEMBER:

Steve Listopad

Steven Listopad has received honors from the Hugh M. Hefner Foundation, the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, the Journalism Education Association, and the Society of Collegiate Journalists for his work in creating the national New Voices USA legislative campaign and the Society of Collegiate student journalists. He led the passage of laws in North Dakota in 2015 and 2017 and in Arkansas in 2019 as part of the campaign. He continues coordinating the New Voices USA website and the national campaign with the Student Press Law Center. Listopad has had a successful 20-year career as an educator at three universities. He served as an assistant professor of journalism and a student media director at the University of Jamestown and Valley City State University in North Dakota. His converged media center at UJ was a finalist in North Dakota's annual professional, entrepreneurial competition, InnovateND, and he was a Scripps Fellow for Entrepreneurial Journalism in 2015. Most recently, Listopad served as a lecturer, media adviser, and internship

coordinator at Henderson State University in Arkansas. At HSU his student journalists ran the only community-wide newspaper for Arkadelphia. Listopad received the APA's Educator of the Year in 2021. He is the outgoing president of the Society of Professional Journalists Arkansas Pro Chapter. Currently, he is a Mitigation Specialist on capitol murder cases for the Arkansas Public Defender Commission. He continues to teach journalism abroad in the summers and has taught in China, France, Italy, and Norway.