



A CENTURY OF MAKING WAVES

ILLINOIS PUBLIC MEDIA / 2021 ANNUAL REPORT



The ways people stay informed and how they choose to be entertained is ever changing, but one thing remains the same: the power of the public media mission.



2021 proved our community can still depend on Illinois Public Media for trusted news and information; proven educational resources; top notch arts, culture, and entertainment; and a space to hear and share ideas.

The 21st expands

Since 2017, Illinois Public Media has presented calm and compelling conversations about the people and places of Illinois on *The 21st*—a statewide talk show hosted by Brian Mackey. *The 21st* expanded its coverage to include your inbox. The program's newsletter includes links to specific segments, behind the scenes conversations with the team, and ways to help engage and shape the show coverage. Go to will.illinois.edu/signup to register.



That wasn't the only way the talk show grew in 2021. On three separate occasions, Mackey and the team presented *The 21st at the Capitol*, a television special that explores what Illinois lawmakers are doing in Springfield and how it affects you, as an Illinoisian.

Topics included the effort to switch Illinois to all clean and renewable energy sources by 2050; criminal

justice, particularly reform vs. abolition and the future of the movement; and interviews with State Senate President Don Harmon and House Republican Leader Jim Durkin. You can stream *The 21st at the Capitol* on Illinois Public Media's YouTube channel and Facebook page, or anytime on the PBS Video app.





Illinois Newsroom is powered by Illinois Public Media and provides news about Illinois as well as in-depth reporting on agriculture, education, the environment, health, and politics.

“Our mission is to inform and engage people in Illinois through high quality journalism. From lawmakers to authors to farmers to musicians, the team at *The 21st* works hard to elevate voices from the Land of Lincoln.”

— Reginald Hardwick
news and public affairs director
at Illinois Public Media



High-quality, in-depth local news reporting has been an important fixture of WILL's programming since World War II. When WILL first signed on air in 1922, campus announcements and Illini sports results constituted most of the news reporting. Over time, a need for local news gradually increased, and by the 1960s the news department was airing daily newscasts on WILL-TV. With director, TV producer, instructor, and anchorman Henry Lippold at the helm of the news department from 1959 to 1972, WILL built its reputation as a vital source for local news while also serving as a training ground for the next generation of journalists.

Risking It All

Every year thousands of people take to the fields of Illinois to plant, cultivate, and harvest the state's crops. Many farmworkers travel here from all over the country and world to do the essential work that props up Illinois' agricultural economy. Farmworkers were hit disproportionately hard by the COVID-19 pandemic due, in part, to their often-crowded living and working conditions and lack of access to health resources and a financial safety net.

Illinois Public Media reporters Dana Cronin and Christine Herman teamed up to track the pandemic's toll on this essential workforce in the reporting series "Risking It All." From uncovering one of the largest outbreaks at an Illinois migrant camp to documenting the state's vaccine rollout for this vulnerable population, together they told the story of how farmworkers in Illinois endured the deadly pandemic. These reports were heard on WILL-AM 580 and can still be explored at illinoisnewsroom.org/migrant-workers/.



WHO'S IN CHARGE OF The News?

There are more ways to receive news than ever before, but actual sources of trustworthy, independent, local journalism in Illinois are on a steady decline. Illinois Public Media spent U.S. Media Literacy Week (October 25-29, 2021) asking: "Who's in Charge of The News?" This weeklong special coverage spanned the WILL airwaves, from *Morning Edition* and *The 21st* to WILL-TV and the Illinois Newsroom website.





Tinisha Spain expanded her role at Illinois Public Media, beyond serving as the venerable host of *Mid-American Gardener*, to increase coverage of environmental issues. From a derecho sweeping across the Midwest, flattening homes and crops, to a thunderstorm dumping ten inches of rain within a few hours in Ford County, Illinois is in a state of change. Scientists say these conditions are the result of human-caused climate change—and it's only beginning.

In the fall, Spain examined how Illinois' environment is changing now and could change in the future in the first installment of *State of Change*, a new yearly look at the evolving climate crisis.

This episode was the culmination of months of conversations with meteorologists, farmers, ecologists, and people tracking plants and animals in our state. *State of Change* showed how farmers are racing to protect livestock from rising heat; how invasive animals and plants are taking over habitats; and how one community is divided on adding a natural gas pipeline. But it wasn't all doom and gloom, the program also shared how bald eagles are thriving in Illinois after once facing extinction.

Production funding for *State of Change* is provided by the Backlund Charitable Trust.

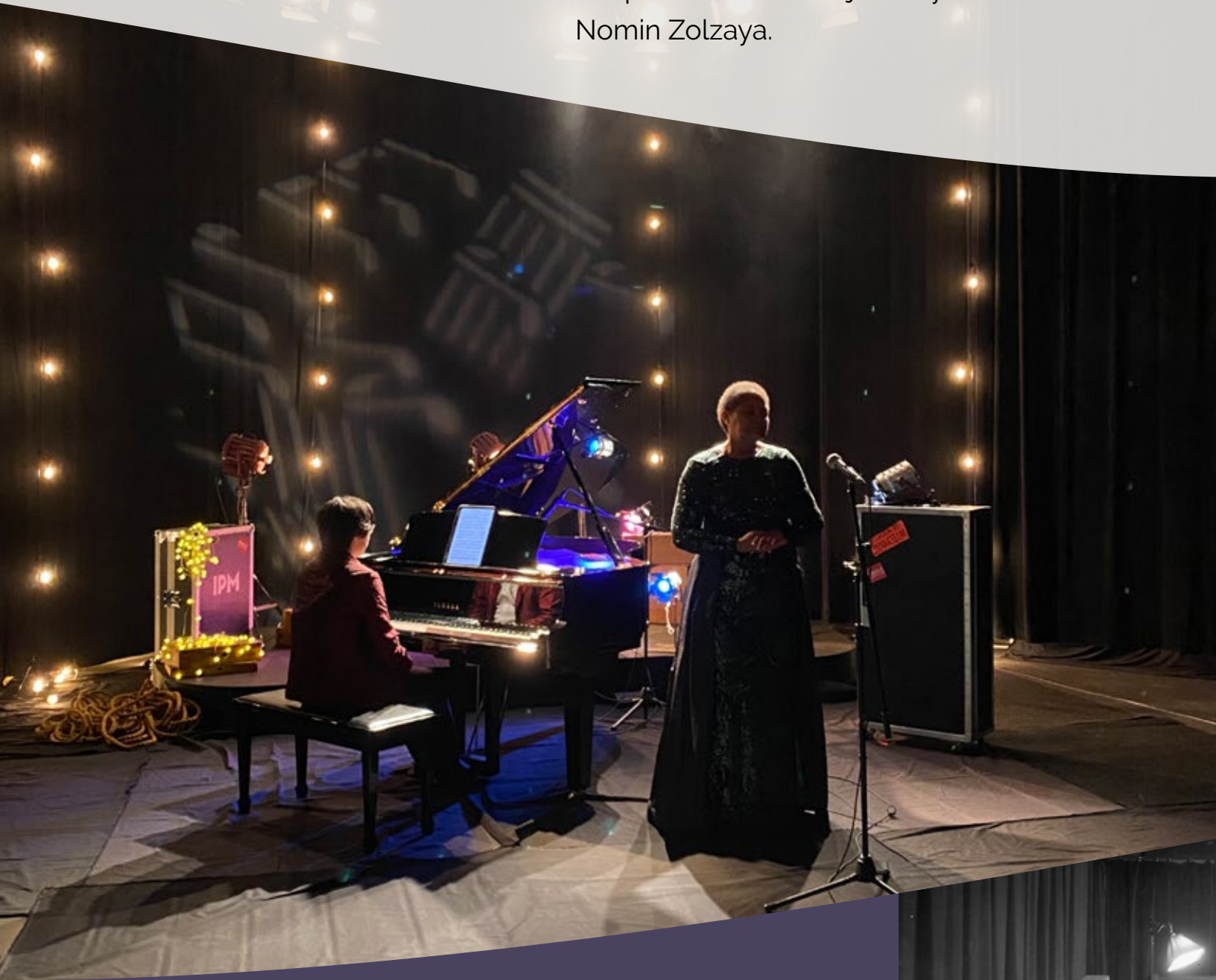
Reports covered how dying newspapers impact local communities, like in Ford County where journalists launched local news coverage after downsizing of the local newspaper. Coverage also included how new laws could save independent journalism in Illinois.

You can still explore these topics and many more when it comes to "Who's in Charge of the News?" at illinoisnewsroom.org/in-charge-of-the-news.



CLASSICAL *∫* BTS

Illinois Public Media's Emmy-nominated series devoted to revealing the lesser-known stories around classical music in central Illinois had a triumphant return at the end of 2020 as we got a look into the personal musical journey of cellist Nomin Zolzaya.



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A PLACE TO
SHARE MUSIC



The sophomore season of *Classical:BTS* continued well into 2021 with in-depth personal portraits of five other performers and classical craftspeople, focusing on each of their journeys and elevating the beauty of their music. We met bassist and vocalist Tonina, conductor William McClain, luthier Richard Brune, pipe organ builder John-Paul Buzard, and youth choral educator Charmian Bulley.

You can stream both seasons anytime with the PBS Video app and at will.illinois.edu/classicalBTS.



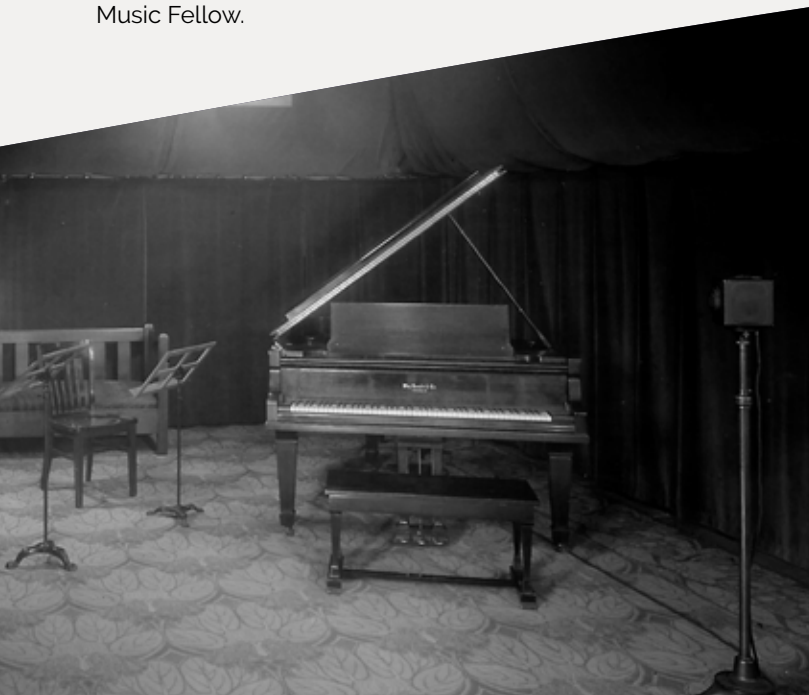
The Holiday Special

Illinois Public Media celebrated the holiday season by bringing music back into the studio thanks to a few of the artists you have come to know through *Classical:BTS* and *American Portrait* | *Central Illinois* series.

Harpist Julia Kay Jamieson, singer Ollie Watts Davis, and organist Fred Bahr each performed holiday favorites and sat down with host Sarah Edwards to discuss how the pandemic has affected their lives and careers. The special also included a performance from flutist Julia Escobar, Illinois Public Media's first-ever John Frayne Classical Music Fellow.

“We’ve wanted to get performers back in our studio space for many months. Inviting a few of the musicians we’ve featured in both our *Classical:BTS* and *American Portrait* series is the perfect way to celebrate getting back to business in the studio and the start of our 100th anniversary year.”

— Sarah Edwards
producer and director



Did you know that WILL used to have its own chamber orchestra? In the 1930s, the WILL Sinfonietta was composed of area musicians who played live in the studio. Concerts by University of Illinois School of Music faculty and students, as well as concerts and musicals from area public schools were also a frequent fixture of programming during the first decades on air. The development of high-quality tape and long-playing records made live music less necessary, but Illinois Public Media's commitment to supporting the local arts community has never waned, with segments on *The 21st* and *Morning Edition* and programs like *Classical:BTS* and *Prairie Performances* still providing a platform for local musicians today.

“I am deeply honored that this internship bears my name. It is vital that young people be invited in the strongest way to gain experience in taking part of so noble a task of sharing the great music of the past with a new generation.”

— John Frayne
longtime host on WILL-FM

Thanks to the generosity of two local couples and long-time Friends of WILL, Illinois Public Media created the John Frayne Classical Music Graduate Student Work Experience. Gifts from Terry and Barbara England and Herb and Jane Lasky fully fund special classical-first projects for a University of Illinois School of Music graduate student for years to come.

Julia Escobar joined the Illinois Public Media team as the first John Frayne Classical Music Fellow in the summer. She has a masters of music in flute performance and literature from the University of Illinois and is working toward her doctorate with the hopes of becoming a flute professor. Escobar was a natural fit for this graduate fellowship with her passion for teaching flute and experience in audio recording. In her role, she hopes to strengthen the connection between the local community and the School of Music through Illinois Public Media's classical music service.

Escobar's first project was "The Fantastic Flute," a curated two-hour special episode of *Prairie Performances*. She pulled performances by favorite local groups from Roger Cooper's extensive archive. These included Sinfonia da Camera and the University of Illinois Symphony Orchestra and featured an assortment of composers, from Bach to Stravinsky. The program showcased pieces containing orchestral flute writing at its finest. The goal of the program was to educate both musicians and non-musicians about the capacities of this instrument in a variety of musical settings. Additionally, Escobar believed flutists could gain valuable insights by listening to the full orchestral works from which famous flute solos originate.



“I have taught flute to high schoolers and really enjoy teaching. I hope to use my dissertation as an opportunity to find valuable tools for teaching my students. Reaching out on public media is just another way to educate the masses on classical music.”

— Julia Escobar
John Frayne classical music fellow

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A PLACE TO GROW

Providing informative content to the region's farmers has been a fixture of WILL programming ever since the first broadcast on April 6, 1922, which featured a piece on "Turning Cream into Gold." By 1928, specialists from the University of Illinois College of Agriculture were brought on to discuss land, crops, livestock, and other issues, and in 1935, WILL began to report market prices, becoming an essential resource for area farmers. At the time, many rural central Illinoisians did not yet have electricity, so farmers would tune in for agricultural reports on battery-powered radios. Illinois Public Media continues to be an invaluable source of agricultural information, with WILL Ag market reports and analysis available across multiple platforms and our weekly favorite among local green thumbs, *Mid-American Gardener*.



Illinois Public Media's how-to mainstay *Mid-American Gardener* continues to think outside the studio with more plant swaps, more events, and more learning from the field. For host Tinisha Spain, it was important to keep the show in production, keep people safe, and stay connected with audience members, talking about plants and gardening throughout the pandemic.

In the spring, the show visited panelists' homes to learn how to plant, weed, and label plants.



Viewers even got to visit with fellow *Mid-American Gardener* fans in their home gardens. The show was able to safely return to the studio later in the year with a hybrid format: one panelist joining on set to do a demonstration or answer questions, and a second guest joining via Skype.

Thanks to these efforts, the audience has still been able to observe the step-by-step process of starting seeds, getting the ground or outdoor containers ready, transplanting seedlings, watering, dealing with pests, and everything else someone might need to know to get that green bean from seed to your dinner table.

“I think we’ve done a really good job of bringing the garden to our viewers. Many of our viewers have taken up plants and gardening for the first time, and we’ve been able to be on that journey with them and share successes and stumble right along with them.”

— Tinisha Spain
host and producer of *Mid-American Gardener*



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A PLACE FOR FRIENDS

Established in 1974, the Friends of WILL have played an integral part in securing WILL's future. The Friends organization grew out of an American Association of University Women study group on the media, who asked then-general manager Donald P. Mullally if they could start a group to raise funds for the station. The Friends' first membership drive garnered \$12,236 in pledges from 513 people. *Patterns* was soon developed as an exclusive membership benefit, providing a program guide in a convenient, pocket-sized format. Those first volunteers helped expand WILL's outreach, creating a platform for the central Illinois community to invest in our future.

Legacy giving

Long-time Friends of WILL Barbara and Raymond Slanker enjoyed a variety of programs on both WILL-TV and radio over the years. Barbara, especially, was a fan of Illinois Public Media's classical music service. For them, it was important to leave a legacy that would impact the community they lived in and loved so much. To fulfill that vision, they created the Barbara O. and Raymond L. Slanker Illinois Public Media Fund, which provides ongoing support for programming, promotional outreach, and other operational expenses for years to come. Their incredibly generous endowment totals more than \$2 million.

To learn more about how you can leave a lasting gift for your community via the power of local public media, visit will.illinois.edu/support/giftplanning. You can also contact Erin Lippitz directly by calling 217-300-2895 or emailing her at elippitz@illinois.edu.



The next 100 years



Illinois Public Media's roots go back to the earliest days of broadcasting in America when innovators at the University of Illinois wanted to experiment with a brand-new medium. They saw the potential for a new technology and what it could mean for the area's citizenry. When we fired up our fragile vacuum tube transmitter for the first time in 1922, our AM station was among the country's first public radio stations.

WILL was founded on a progressive concept: all Illinoisans deserve an educational service that informs and inspires. That concept has endured and evolved over the past 100 years, growing into what we know it to be today: an important part of the health of our democracy; a place to share vital information about our region; a space to talk and share ideas; and a way to present the best that our culture has to offer.

The media landscape has changed dramatically over the past 100 years, it's true. But we hope this annual report demonstrates how we have been able to evolve with the times while staying true to our core values.

As always, thank you for believing in the power of public media, at all levels.

Maurice "Moss" Bresnahan
executive director



To view a complete audited financial statement, please visit will.illinois.edu/about/compliance.



Illinois Youth Media

For more than 20 years, students at University Laboratory High School have worked with Illinois Public Media professionals to create radio documentaries and short series for their Uni High Oral History Project. Topics have ranged from equality in athletics and gender, integration and disability barriers, the Holocaust, and many others. The products of their hard work are presented to the community through Illinois Public Media's longstanding Illinois Youth Media project.

“I learned about the importance of having a conversation. Everyone’s perspective has the potential to enrich your own, you just have to open the door.”

— Abraham Han
Uni High class of 2021
student producer
on *Immigrants' Journeys*

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A PLACE
TO LEARN



“We chose this topic because of its multilayered significance to the Champaign-Urbana community. People hold such divisive opinions about gun ownership, but we wanted to move past political arguments and discuss how gun violence affects neighbors and families on a human level. Hopefully, this project will inspire listeners to reconsider their own opinions and get involved to make our community a better place for all.”

— Anya Kaplan-Hartnett
Uni High class of 2020
student producer on *Changing the Narrative*

Immigrants' Journeys: Challenges and Opportunities in Champaign-Urbana

is a powerful audio documentary that explores individual immigrants' journeys to central Illinois as well as

the history and current state of immigration in the United States. Uni High students interviewed immigrants, refugees, asylum seekers, and allies in the Champaign-Urbana community.

Following the premiere of the documentary on WILL-AM 580 in the spring, Illinois Youth Media launched a podcast, taking deeper dives into each of the characters' lives and experiences as immigrants in central Illinois and bringing their stories to new audiences.

The second installment in the *Illinois Youth Media* podcast was a four-part series called *Changing the Narrative: Preventing Gun Violence in Champaign-Urbana*, which focused on giving a voice to individuals in the community who are working to prevent gun violence.

Through the perspective of the interviewees, listeners learned more about efforts to combat the rising number of shootings in Champaign-Urbana. Topics for the four episodes ranged from the balance between safety and liberty that various gun legislation seeks to achieve, to community-led programs trying to offer help, to the prevalence of gun-related suicides around the country.

The *Illinois Youth Media* podcast is available on most major podcast platforms.



Initially conceived as an educational radio station, WILL has provided high-quality educational content for listeners of all ages since its inception. A mainstay of early radio programming was the children's show *Stories 'n Stuff*, which WILL-AM produced and distributed nationally for 16 years beginning in the late 1940s. The goal of the program was to teach children in an engaging and nonpatronizing way. In the 1960s, WILL-TV produced and distributed several children's educational shows, including *Olive Lives Here*, *Mister Cane*, and *Tell Me Why*, even flying a plane over Illinois and Indiana to transmit them to schools. In the 1990s, Jeremy Hobson would get his start in broadcasting at the ripe old age of nine when he started contributing to a program called *Treehouse Radio* on WILL. Educational content still accounts for a substantial portion of programming on WILL-TV as well as community outreach from Illinois Public Media, such as online learning resources and volunteer programs.



Sewn in Memory

Illinois Public Media spent the fall semester working with students from the College of Media at Illinois to create video vignettes for an exhibit that opened at the Spurlock Museum of World Cultures in January 2022. "Sewn in Memory: AIDS Quilt Panels from Central Illinois" features 19 quilt panels originally made in the 1980s and early 1990s for the AIDS Memorial Quilt in Washington, DC. Not shown locally since they were first displayed in the Illini Union in 1993, each of these panels commemorates a person who died of AIDS, or of an AIDS-related ailment.

Under the guidance of Kimberlie Kranich, director of engagement and educational outreach at Illinois Public Media, and College of Media professor Charles "Stretch" Ledford, these students interviewed those closest to the individuals to capture who they were, what they endured, and how their legacy perseveres.

Each person's video vignette is displayed alongside their quilt and can be viewed in person through July 10, 2022. They also are available for viewing on Illinois Public Media's YouTube channel and at will.illinois.edu/sewninmemory.

"Sewn in Memory: AIDS Quilt Panels from Central Illinois" is a community-curated show created for the Spurlock Museum with the following partners: the Greater Community AIDS Project of East Central Illinois, which holds the panels and assisted in exhibit research and creation; History Harvest, a University of Illinois course that seeks to gather historical stories and documents from local communities; and the Department of Journalism at the University of Illinois whose independent study class,

As a member of the queer community, I very rarely see our history represented. I hope that this project helps to personalize and illuminate a part of our history that's rarely talked about or taught, especially for people who thought of the AIDS epidemic as something that they'd never be affected by."



— Owen Henderson,
a junior in the Department of Journalism



with the help of Illinois Public Media, interviewed people who knew the men on the quilt panels.

Illinois Student Newsroom

In the fall, Illinois Public Media and the University of Illinois department of journalism officially announced the creation of the Illinois Student Newsroom at Illinois Public Media—a collaborative place for journalism students to work side-by-side with professionals in all facets of a public media newsroom.

The program is led by Chris Evans, clinical assistant professor of journalism, whose role is to facilitate students gaining real-world experience at Illinois Public Media. The Illinois Student Newsroom at IPM offers space for students to learn how to report, write, interview, and anchor, as well as build a portfolio of work across audio, video, and multimedia platforms, right in the heart of a dynamic working newsroom.

As an inaugural member of the Illinois Student Newsroom at IPM, Farrah Anderson, a rising sophomore in journalism at the time, reported on University of Illinois athletes' response to the Black Lives Matter movement and their decision to lead a local march. This report would later earn first-place accolades in the Student Spot News category of the Public Media Journalists Association Awards (see page 22).

Not only do the students learn from professional journalists and journalism educators, but the program is also structured so they can learn from each other. Both Anderson and fellow inaugural member, Vivian La, a sophomore in journalism last year, went from student reporter to senior student producer in their first year.

You can follow the students' work at will.illinois.edu/studentnewsroom or hear their stories occasionally on WILL-AM 580 or illinoisnewsroom.org.

I've really enjoyed guiding new reporters on the complexities of audio journalism and hearing their stories on the air is so exciting! I'm very honored to be a part of the newsroom and tell stories that impact our local community. With the guidance of Professor Chris Evans and some of the full-time reporters, I've learned something new every week that solidifies my interests in the wide world of journalism."



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— Vivian La
senior producer



News, Brews & Beatz

To help fulfill the public media mission to engage with the community, Illinois Public Media created News, Brews & Beatz: a space for diverse voices to engage in breakthrough conversations on pressing community issues and allow for realistic solutions to be identified. It was important these events be engaging, informative, and entertaining while also tackling difficult topics and situations head on.

For its inaugural run, News, Brews & Beatz focused on conversations around different aspects of the gun violence crisis going on in our community—and communities across the country—and what individuals and community groups are doing to combat it. These events are co-hosted by Reginald Hardwick, news and public affairs



director at Illinois Public Media, and Tracy Parsons, facilitator of the Champaign County Community Coalition.

Hardwick and Parsons have discussed problems facing youth with mental health experts, educators,

ministers, and other community leaders. The panelists gave detailed answers on what resources are needed to end the violence.

News, Brews & Beatz also provided a platform for local artists and musicians and their work. In addition to dozens of participants in person at Pour Bros. Tap Room in downtown Champaign, many people watched and interacted with the discussions live on the Illinois Public Media Facebook page.



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A SPACE TO TALK





Calling itself 'the university of the air', WILL's earliest programs consisted of talks by prominent figures, classroom lectures, and town hall meetings, as well as student plays, concerts, and play-by-play reporting of football and basketball games. Today the University of Illinois Archives hold thousands of 16-inch discs used by WILL to record these campus happenings and in-studio productions, one very notable recording being of Langston Hughes from 1957. Other poets recorded by WILL during their appearances on campus include Carl Sandburg and T.S. Elliott. During the 1950s, 60s, and 70s, WILL recorded and broadcast public speeches and community events concerning the civil rights, women's rights, and labor movements. The digitized WILL collection can be explored via the American Archive of Public Broadcasting. This idea of WILL connecting the surrounding communities to the resources of the university would morph over time, evolving from serving as a space to air talks into a place to hold conversations. Over the last decade, Illinois Public Media has hosted community discussions around access to affordable housing, mental health issues, funding within the prison library system, legalizing recreational marijuana, and many more.



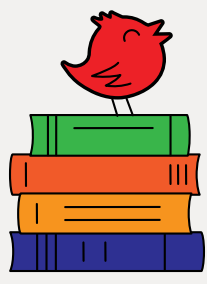
Shavonne's Year

Throughout the fall, you got a look into the life of Shavonne Cole, a media and cinema studies major in the College of Media at Illinois, as she documented her junior year (2020-2021) amid COVID lockdown. These video diaries gave a glimpse into what it was like for Shavonne, and other college students like her, trying to navigate classes, jobs, and life during a pandemic. From attending classes virtually, to working and living on campus, to celebrating holidays and birthdays, Shavonne shared a slice of her life as part of Illinois Public Media's *American Portrait | Central Illinois* series. You can now stream all ten episodes of *Shavonne's Year*, edited together in one easy to find package, on the PBS Video app.

The She Said Project Podcast

The She Said Project Podcast believes everyone has a story to share and sharing it can inspire deeper human connection while building community. Illinois Public Media has been partnering with The She Said Project since 2019 to give everyday women a space to come together and share their extraordinary stories in the podcast space. Season 4 of the podcast provided us with moments of laughter, tears, and everything in between. You can stream The She Said Project Podcast at will.illinois.edu/shesaid and on most major podcast platforms.





WILL-TV's Book Mentor Project



Children in Head Start classrooms around central Illinois enjoyed a new lineup of wonderfully engaging books throughout the 2021–2022 school year thanks to a \$25,000 grant from the PNC Foundation in support of Illinois Public Media's longstanding Book Mentor Project. From navigating the big city, to visiting a carnival, to helping kids celebrate diversity in one another and within different household dynamics, the seven book selections helped open new worlds to the children and their families.

This marked the 18th consecutive year the foundation funded this local volunteer reading program. The Book Mentor Project has served more than 10,000 Head Start children in central Illinois since 2004.



Social Justice Learning

The goal of any social justice learning exercise should be to gain a better understanding of others' experiences with the hopes of achieving a more equitable and quality society for all peoples while also meeting individuals' needs. A core part of the public media mission is lifelong learning, so Illinois Public Media's Social Justice Learning space begins with our littlest ones and continues that work through adulthood, providing resources for early childhood, adolescents, and adults. Each learning level features videos, audio, and text to facilitate a variety of learning styles. Throughout the year, this digital learning space explored the experiences of Indigenous people; Asian, Asian American, and Pacific Islanders; and those with varying degrees of mental and physical abilities. You can explore all past lessons at will.illinois.edu/socialjusticelearning.

Regional Edward R. Murrow Awards

The Radio Television Digital News Association honored Illinois Public Media with three Regional Edward R. Murrow Awards for Illinois Newsroom's coverage of the COVID-19 pandemic and overall coverage of Illinois people and issues.

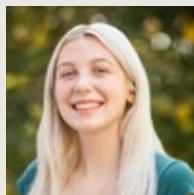
Dana Cronin reported on the growing food insecurity issues across Illinois in partnership with Harvest Public Media. "No Wiggle Room" shared the many ways a mother struggling with the slowing economy due to COVID-19 found ways to feed her family. The story aired nationally on NPR during a *Weekend All Things Considered* program focused on food insecurity issues around America.



PMJA Awards

Out of nearly 1,300 entries from across the country, Illinois Public Media was honored with four Public Media Journalists Association (formerly PRNDI) Awards for the following reporting efforts from Illinois Newsroom.

- Dana Cronin reported on the gender disparities prevalent in the Midwest agriculture industry, including the stories of female farmers who face significant challenges and health-related risks due to continual farming with tools designed for men.
- Lee V. Gaines' story on the University of Illinois' former mascot chronicled the decision to retire Chief Illiniwek and its ever-looming presence on campus today. The story also aired nationally on NPR during the weekday program *Here & Now*. Gaines' second award-winning story detailed the response of Champaign-Urbana community members to recent acts of police brutality against people of color, in particular the killing of George Floyd by police in Minneapolis.
- Farrah Anderson's story "U of I Athletes Lead Black Lives Matter March Through Champaign" reported on University of Illinois athletes' response to the Black Lives Matter movement and their decision to lead a Black Lives Matter march in August of 2020.



Also related to the newsroom's ongoing coronavirus coverage, Christine Herman and Lee V. Gaines tracked the University of Illinois COVID-19 saliva testing program, from creation to roll out to possible FDA approval for emergency use. Some of these reports were heard nationally on NPR.

IllinoisNewsroom.org was also recognized for excellence in digital news coverage.

PBS NewsHour

Reporting from Dana Cronin aired nationally on *PBS NewsHour* in October. Cronin's story detailed the struggles Illinois livestock farmers are facing in keeping their livestock cool enough amid rising temperatures and dangerous heat caused by climate change. The segment features interview footage with pig farmer Phil Borgic of Borgic Farms, goat farmer Wes Jarrell of Prairie Fruits Farm & Creamery, climate scientist and University of Illinois professor Don Wuebbles, and more.

International Documentary Awards

Illinois Public Media's curated independent film series *Reel Midwest* was nominated for Best Curated Series in the 36th Annual IDA Documentary Awards, hosted by the International Documentary Association. *Reel Midwest* was in good company with fellow nominees *30 for 30*, *American Experience*, *American Masters*, and *Reel South*.



A PLACE TO START

In addition to its numerous awards, WILL has the distinction of playing an instrumental role in the development of public broadcasting as we know it today. Discussions begun at WILL, led by Professor of Communications Wilbur Schramm, ultimately led to the formalization of the National Association of Educational Broadcasters and its establishment in Urbana. This began as an informal association of educational broadcasters and grew into a network of educational stations that produced and distributed programs. To secure federal funding for noncommercial stations, the NAEB eventually moved its Urbana headquarters in the basement of Gregory Hall to Washington, DC. Due to their efforts, the Public Broadcasting Act was passed by congress in 1967, which established the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. Out of CPB came the Public Broadcasting System in 1969 and National Public Radio in 1970.





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