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Serving Press and State Since 1873

Lynda Hollenbeck is Golden 50 Service Award recipient

Editor's Note: written by The Courier Staff honoring Arkansas Press Association's Golden 50 Service Award recipient Lynda Hollenbeck

In 1970 a little redheaded woman walked into *The Courier* office at the old Troutt House, toting a sample of her writing.

She was interviewing for a three-day-a-week society editor position.

Little did she know that she soon would be rubbing elbows with politicians, moneymakers and everyone in between. She has been sitting behind a *Courier* desk for 48 years and has earned the title of one of the longest-working people at the newspaper.

She is Lynda Hollenbeck.

Hollenbeck grew up in Cotton Plant, about halfway between Little Rock and Memphis,

Tenn. Three newspapers were delivered daily to her household: the *Arkansas Gazette*, the *Arkansas Democrat* and the *Memphis Commercial Appeal*.

"With that kind of indoctrination, I don't guess I could have gotten too far away from the printed news talk," Hollenbeck said.

She went on to study journalism at the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville and served on the journalism staff of the college newspaper "The Arkansas Traveler". She would graduate with a Bachelor of Arts degree. She had gone to college to study music but quickly learned there was more to a music degree than singing and dancing, her favorite pastimes.

"I loved my music performance courses, but I couldn't get serious about music



Lynda Hollenbeck

theory and the hard-core curriculum that musicians must embrace," Hollenbeck said. "So I stayed with the fun stuff — voice, Schola Cantorum, Opera Workshop, Uarkettes — and went head-on into the journalism department, where I found my

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John Tull, wise counsel and defender of FOI, is a newspaper person

For journalists needing help with Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) and legal requests, the answer is John E. Tull III. Since the early '90s, he has manned the FOIA Legal Hotline. Journalists can call Tull — a founding member of Quattlebaum, Grooms & Tull PLLC and legal counsel for APA — to receive FOIA and legal assistance.

"Whether you are a college student or an Arkansas newspaper publisher, whatever life stage you are in, you will get the same level of respect when John Tull answers your questions on the

Freedom of Information Act," said Ashley Wimberley, APA executive director. "John is passionate about this subject and has spent hundreds of hours giving legal advice to our members. We are most appreciative."

For his dedication and service helping to utilize and defend the Freedom of Information Act, Tull will receive the Freedom of Information Award at this month's APA convention. In 2006, he also received the APA Distinguished Service Award.

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Event registration deadline for APA convention is tomorrow

The deadline to register for events for the June 27-30 APA SuperConvention at the Inn of the Ozarks in Eureka Springs is tomorrow, June 22. If you haven't yet registered for the convention, visit this link on the APA website: www.arkansaspress.org/page/superconvention.

PRESS ON

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John Tull

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“FOIA is intended as a sunshine law to allow citizens to be informed about the actions of elected officials and public entities,” Tull said. “No law is more important in the ability to dig into stories that help the public understand the facts rather than accepting the official line. Arrest records, 911 calls and emails among staff all have been used to publish important stories by the Arkansas press.”

When Tull receives a call on the APA-sponsored hotline, he determines the situation and asks for written requests and responses when available. For instance, if an FOIA request has been denied, he wants to see the denial letter or email. He reviews the situation, about half the time does some additional research and then counsels the caller on the best steps to see that the FOIA is enforced.

Sometimes he is asked for a quote in a newspaper story regarding his opinion about an FOIA request. Other callers ask how to phrase an FOIA request or what expectation of success he thinks they will have in getting the documents they seek. He also answers questions about what specific entities are subject to the FOIA.

“Anyone who has ever availed themselves of the APA legal hotline knows that the service goes well beyond what might be expected,” said Bill Hager (2007-2008 APA president) at Tull’s 2006 APA Distinguished Service Award presentation. “Our honoree and his colleagues have gone above and beyond in so many cases to offer sound legal advice on issues our members encounter.”

Tull views his work with APA as a

service to a profession he admires. “I believe journalists are among the least appreciated professionals. But they serve one of the most vital functions in a democratic society,” he said.

He has always been a “newspaper guy.” He is a voracious reader of newspapers, following in the footsteps of his parents and grandparents.

“Any city I’m in, I’m reading the newspaper every day,” he said. “Growing up in Lonoke, the world opened to me through newspapers. News attracted me and intrigued me.”

After graduating from Vanderbilt University, Tull worked for U.S. Sen. David Pryor in Washington, D.C. He graduated from the University of Arkansas School of Law in 1984. Formerly an attorney at Wright Lindsey Jennings and Williams Anderson law firms in Little Rock, he founded his current practice in 2000.

With 36 attorneys, Quattlebaum, Grooms & Tull is a business law firm where Tull specializes in business litigation involving product liability, securities fraud, construction and media. He has served as lead counsel in more than 100 jury trials.

“I have tried a good number of defamation cases and they have been among the most fascinating,” Tull said. “Because of the size of the awards, they can be scary; but I’ve been fortunate to be successful. I use them as an opportunity to explain the importance of journalism to the jurors.”

When not trying cases or answering hotline calls, Tull likes to duck hunt on the back side of his farm in Lonoke. A long-time



John E. Tull III

runner, he has completed six marathons. He’s an avid sports fan, rooting these days for the Arkansas Razorbacks baseball team and the St. Louis Cardinals.

Tull and his wife Martha live in Little Rock with their 13-year-old daughter, an eighth grader at Episcopal Collegiate School. His 28-year-old daughter works for the Clarke Tucker congressional campaign.

This past winter, Tull celebrated his 60th birthday by climbing to the 19,341-foot summit of Mount Kilimanjaro. Eight friends and family members enjoyed that trek, and they’ve become hooked on hiking. Their upcoming adventure is a planned trip to Patagonia.

“It has been an honor and a privilege to represent the Arkansas Press Association, a favorite client of mine,” Tull said. “I’ve long admired everyone at APA who works hard to keep the FOIA strong. I’m excited to be in Eureka Springs next week to accept this award.”

Special thanks to APA Convention sponsors

Each year the APA solicits several partner sponsors to help stage the association’s annual convention. The 2018 SuperConvention set for June 27-30 at the Inn of the Ozark in Eureka Springs is no exception.

Among the sponsors signing on for the 2018 convention are:

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