

2025  
**COMMUNITY  
REPORT**

Friends,

**Unprecedented** seems fitting to describe this year in public media. While we always anticipate dynamic shifts in our industry, nothing could have prepared us for the reality of witnessing a full attack on our mission, validity and the federal support and infrastructure to serve you.

Public media's mission is timeless. From empowering families and educators with proven educational resources, to addressing the most pressing needs of our local communities and shining a light on the history and culture that makes this community rich. That's our story, one that I'm proud and humbled to share.

What you'll see in these pages is our (collective) story with YOU at the center. Your support and trust made this a year of firsts for us. Because of you, we launched our first multi-platform and series project **INSIDE: Caregiving**, and our first digital docuseries exclusively for YouTube, **Hopewell Earthworks – Stories Written on The Land**. We increased our digital footprint, launching new channels on platforms to meet the growing need for on-demand content and resources.

With you, we entered hard conversations around issues affecting Central Ohio, celebrated the vibrant diversity of this community and made new friends that can now see themselves reflected in the work we do. This impact reflects our mission: to enrich lives through content and experiences that educate, engage, inform and inspire.

Our promise to you is to remain steadfast in this mission. We are charting a new future; one defined by connection, grounded in trust and powered by you, our community.

We are WOSU because of you. YOU make the difference.

Thank you,



**Anthony Padgett**  
Rieland Endowed General Manager,  
WOSU Public Media



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# JANUARY

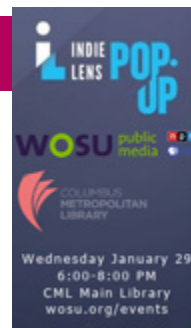


## Columbus MLK Breakfast

◀ Jared Brown, Debbie Holmes, Anthony Padgett, and George Davis attended the 40<sup>th</sup> Annual MLK Birthday Breakfast. WOSU served as a media sponsor.

## Indie Lens: Free for All

On January 29<sup>th</sup>, WOSU hosted an advanced screening of “Free for All: The Public Library,” in collaboration with Columbus Metropolitan Library. The documentary details the creation of the public library and the role it has played in American civic life.



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# FEBRUARY



## INSIDE: Caregiving

WOSU Public Media launched a new multi-platform project, INSIDE: Caregiving. The project **dove deep into health disparities and inequities, costs for care, caring for caregivers and infrastructure to support aging populations.** Spearheaded by the award winning WOSU News Department and Emmy® winning WOSU TV producers, the multi-platform project featured content across all platforms. “The systems of caregiving are complex and can be confusing to seniors, their families, and friends. We hope this demystified the process by offering advice, connecting people to resources, and examining what works in our current system and identify improvements,” said Mike Thompson, Chief Content Director of Radio for WOSU.

▲ Panelists: Ann Fisher(host)  
Chanda Wingo, Director,  
Franklin County Office on  
Aging; Tanya Gure, MD,  
Section Chief of Geriatrics,  
The Ohio State University  
Wexner Medical Center;  
Michelle Messer, Caregiver.



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# MARCH

## Indie Lens: Bike Vessel

On March 6<sup>th</sup>, WOSU Public Media hosted an advanced screening of “Bike Vessel” at Maroon Arts Group. The film follows a Black father and son duo as they spend four days biking across 350 miles from St. Louis, MO to Chicago, IL.



◀ George Davis moderates panel discussion with member of the Major Taylor Cycling Club.

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# APRIL

## IMMERSE spring concert

▼ IMMERSE guest explores the instrument of cello, assisted by concert musician.



▲ At the conclusion of the performance during the spring IMMERSE program, attendees took to the stage to get up close with the instruments and musicians.



Indie Lens: Homecourt

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MAY

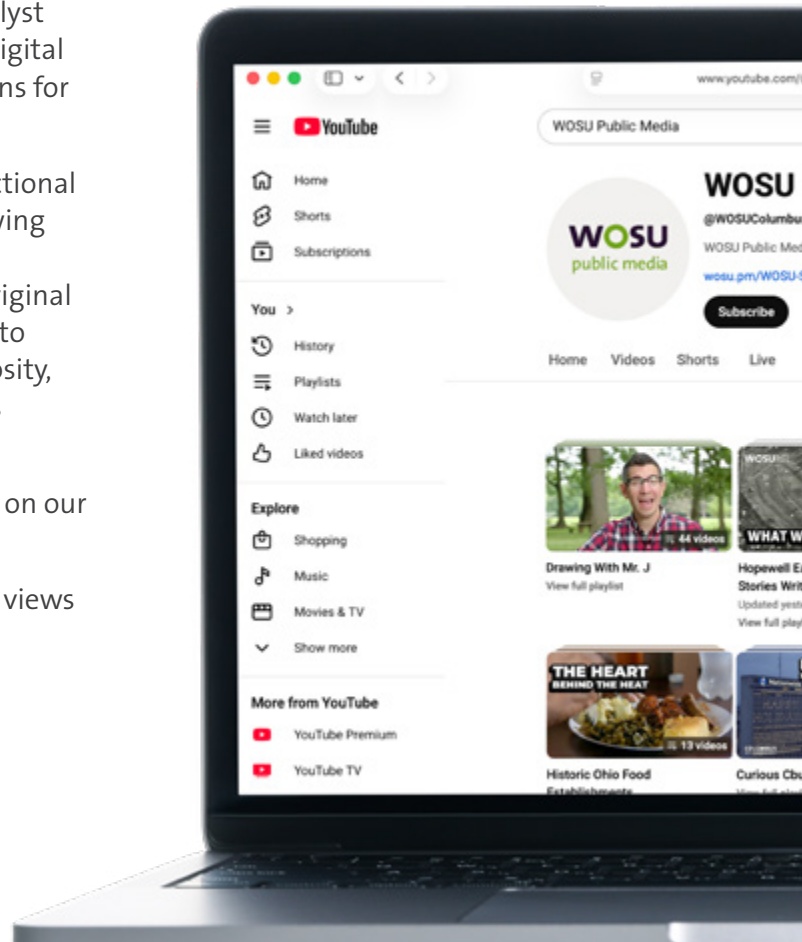
## Digital Transformation Project

WOSU was selected as one of 25 public media organizations to take part in the last cohort of the Digital Transformation Project offered by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting and Poynter Institute. In response to continued changing audience consumption habits, The Digital Transformation Project served as a catalyst for WOSU to help grow audience and revenue on digital platforms and look forward to implementing lessons for the program across the entire organization.

As a part of the eight-month program, a cross-functional team of six WOSU staff members, focused on growing audience (25-44 year olds), creating loyalty, and generating revenue on YouTube by creating bold original content and positioning our channel as a gateway to understanding life in Central Ohio by igniting curiosity, celebrating local culture and connecting neighbors through stories that matter.

As a part of the project, we saw significant growth on our YouTube channel including:

- The WOSU channel recorded over 1 million views for the second straight year
- Watch time increased by 8%
- Subscribers grew by 13%
- Started to generate revenue from videos





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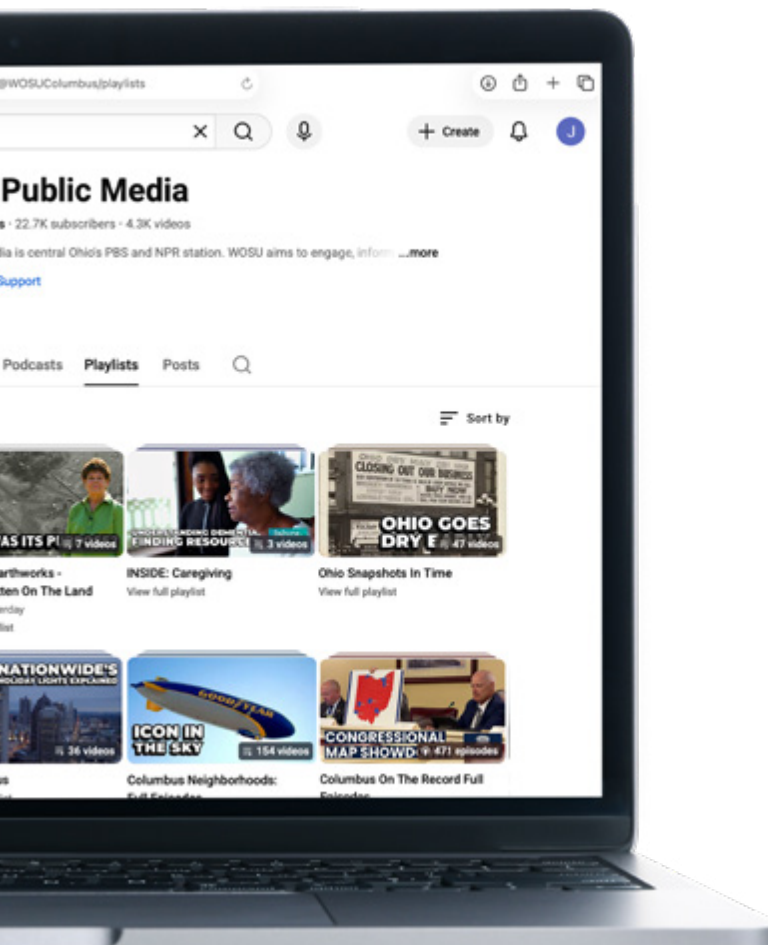
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▲ Digital Transformation Team: Anthony Padgett(General Manager), Nick Houser(Digital Director), Stacia Hentz (TV Director), George Davis III(Marketing Director), Christine Albert (Business Development), Michael De Bonis (Digital Producer)



## Meeting the Moment Roundtables

Standing at a pivotal moment, leadership worked along with longtime supporters to begin to develop visionary investment to WOSU's endowment through a series of community conversations. In growing this funding, donors have helped to lay the foundation for a more resilient future so that our commitment to truthful reporting, educational programming, and cultural enrichment may endure, no matter the challenges ahead.

***Your investment helps secure a future where independent journalism thrives, lifelong learning flourishes, a innovative storytelling reaches every corner of our community.***

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# JUNE

## An Evening of Gratitude



◀ Panel discussion of the value of student experiences at WOSU in June of 2025, during An Evening of Gratitude donor appreciation event. L to R: Renee McKnight, Chris Corcoran, David Stein, Max Nelson, and moderator, WOSU staff member Caleb McDonald

Chris Corcoran, an avid NPR listener since childhood, moved from Maryland to study Political Science at Ohio State. When it came time for him to secure an internship, he found the perfect fit at WOSU Public Media.

“I have loved my experience as a WOSU student intern, specifically as a student producer for All Sides. I’m proud of everything I’ve learned about effective communication, and I have had the opportunity to become really integrated into the production process...This has been more beneficial than any other job I’ve ever worked as it relates to how I will approach work in the future...It’s 100% worthwhile.”



▲ Chris Corcoran graduated from The Ohio State University in May 2025 as a Political Science major with minors in international studies and religion studies.

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## Bach to Biggie

New Perspectives: From Bach to Biggie premiered its 4<sup>th</sup> season. A collaboration between WOSU's Christopher Purdy and violinist Stephen Spottswood, the program blends classical music with rap, gospel, and hip-hop, creating a unique listening experience which mixes tradition with innovation.

"Four years ago, I approached violinist/teacher/polymath Stephen Spottswood. I had him as a guest on All Sides Weekend at the suggestion of his mentor, the sublime Catherine Willis... I was very taken with Stephen, I wanted to find a vehicle for him to be on Classical 101. He develops the playlists mixing classical with hip hop and sounds not always associated with our dead white guys. Stephen is the host. I do all the edits."

- Christopher Purdy,  
Classical 101 host.

## Columbus Arts Festival





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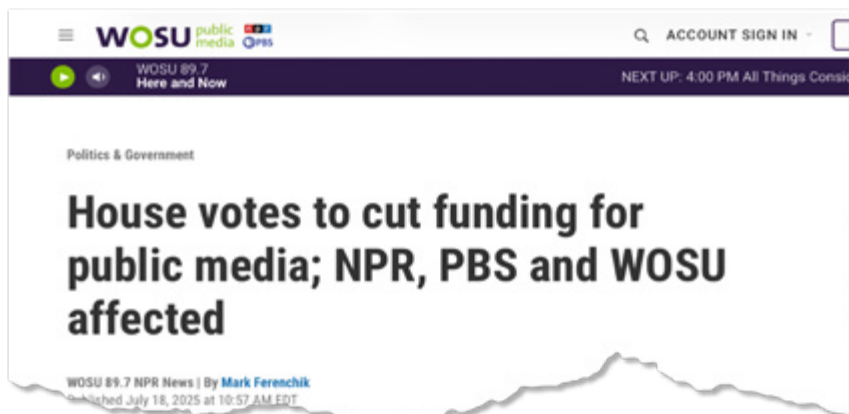
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# JULY

Recission of “Ready to Learn” Funding

Columbus Book Festival

Ohio State Fair





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▲ “The Queen of Bluegrass”, Rhonda Vincent performs with her band The Rage.

# AUGUST

## Bluegrass at the Barn

In the event’s 3rd year, we surpassed our ticket sales goal and enjoyed a wonderful event which included a pre-concert parking lot jam session as well as children’s programming hosted by the WOSU Classroom team.



## Politics and a Pint

WOSU Public Media continued hosting “Politics and a Pint,” an initiative aimed at engaging the community in casual discussion about current events, news, and pressing political issues. In 2025, WOSU hosted two sold-out Politics and a Pint events, each of which were led by a panel of journalists and WOSU producers.



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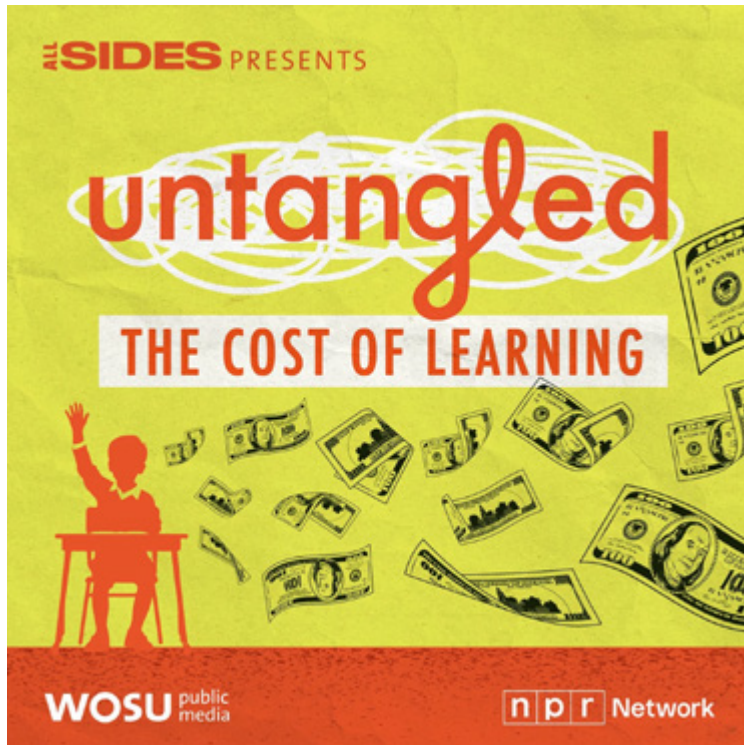
# SEPTEMBER

## Ross Rentals/Community Engagement

Lights, Camera...and all the technology and support needed to produce one-of-a-kind experiences!

WOSU hosted another year of dynamic live events in our rentable spaces. Theater productions, fireside chats, film premieres, leadership summits, expert panels, networking events, live podcasts and more brought thousands of guests into our headquarters and closer to our mission. Our signature rental space, the Ross Community Studio was specifically designed for flexibility and with built-in features to provide the community a space to imagine the full range of events that a live broadcast studio can offer. Find out more about how you can book your upcoming special occasions at [wosu.org/rentals](https://wosu.org/rentals).





## Untangled: The Cost of Learning

On September 15th, WOSU Public Media premiered season 5 of the “Untangled” podcast series. “Untangled: The Cost of Learning” is a deep dive into Ohio schools, including how they have historically been funded, the current state of public schools in different areas, and the future reforms being proposed.

“I listen to NPR every morning. I cannot imagine my mornings without NPR/WOSU, always informative, solid information. I wished more people would listen to your station.”

-Carmen Gertz

“Just keep doing what you are doing, I really appreciate this source of news! Thank you WOSU!”

-Todd Allen



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# OCTOBER

## Broad & High, Season 13 launch

October marked the launch of Season 13 of Broad & High, the Emmy-winning TV series highlighting local artists. Season 13 uniquely highlighted artists who broke barriers in the art world by experimenting with different mediums or techniques.



## The Big Table at WOSU

WOSU joined the city-wide initiative by the Columbus Foundation, hosting three different conversations throughout the day on varied topics which brought together community members from different neighborhoods to engage in rich, intimate discussions.

## The Art of the Pair

As part of fundraising initiatives for regional repeater tower in Marion, WOSU General Manager and staff attended the annual *Art of the Pair* event with residents and supporters in the region.



▲ Anthony Padgett, WOSU General Manager and Jennifer Schlueter, OSU Marion Dean.



## IMMERSE, Dedication to Cheryl Dring



Throughout the course of 2025, we served families of 31 children between the April and October concerts, with others still on the waitlist. It means everything to connect this particular community of families with children on the spectrum to meaningful and inspiring experiences with music. And in the spirit of Cheryl, it happens in partnership.

Cheryl Dring, former Program Director for Classical 101 who passed away last year, was instrumental in forming partnerships with Ohio State's School of Music and the Nisonger Center. The vision was formed and realized that we would host small-audience concerts, supported by a handful of students from the Leadership Education for Neurodevelopmental and related Disabilities (LEND) Program at Nisonger and their faculty. There would be a variety of seating options, space to move, soft pillows and stuffies to provide comfort and, of course, music performed by School of Music musicians.

We have offered concerts twice a year since 2021, and this community now looks to WOSU for the offering. I always receive incredible feedback from parents – “I’ve never seen my child this engaged; when are you going to do this again?” It is in large part to Cheryl’s credit that so many facets came together, that the seed of an idea blossomed the way it has. Naturally, October’s concerts were dedicated to Cheryl’s memory. We were honored to have the kind friends who were Cheryl’s caregivers at the end of her life present for the concert to witness the fruit of her legacy.

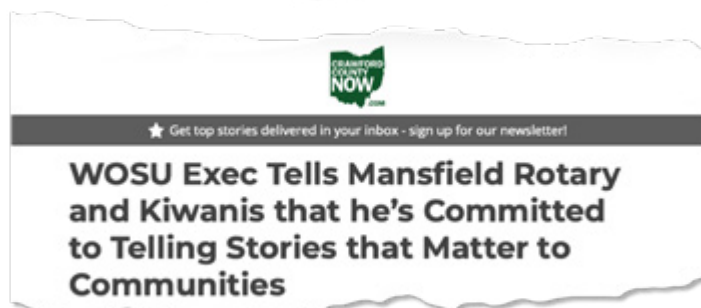


▲ A young concert attendee and caregiver explore the acoustic guitar, following the concert at October's IMMERSE program

# NOVEMBER

## Mansfield Rotary/Coffee with Anthony

Anthony Padgett was invited to contribute to the annual Kiwanis and Rotary meeting in Mansfield as keynote speaker. He was able to share a vision for the region's public media in the current social and political context, while meeting with and receiving questions from the audience.



## WOSU New YT Channel Launched

One of the biggest realizations throughout the Digital Transformation Project was that WOSU's YouTube channel needed to focus on a specific niche, specifically local culture and history. To make this happen, we created two new channels, WOSU News for news and information content, and Drawing with Mr. J for the bite-sized drawing videos aimed at kids. Now that each channel has a specific focus, we are aiming to grow each of them.





## Hopewell Launch

*Hopewell Earthworks: Stories Written on the Land* — a six-part digital docuseries that was years in the making premiered on Thursday, November 6, before an audience of supporters, community partners and project collaborators at the Ohio History Connection.

This project is a collaboration between WOSU Public Media, the Ohio History Connection, the National Park Service, and a Tribal Advisory Council whose guidance was essential in helping tell this story with care and authenticity.

The series explores the Hopewell Ceremonial Earthworks — sites built over 2,000 years ago by Indigenous peoples in what is now Ohio. For many Native descendants, these are not just archaeological sites but living places of memory and meaning.

Hosted by Logan York of the Miami Tribe of Oklahoma, the series brings together voices from Tribal communities, historians, and archaeologists to uncover the stories these earthworks still carry.

“It’s a privilege to share the stories of Ohioans past, present, and future,” said York. “Storytelling connects everything we do.”

This marks WOSU’s first docuseries produced exclusively for digital distribution on YouTube. Production support for *Hopewell Earthworks: Stories Written on the Land* was provided by the America 250-Ohio Commission and The Storytellers Trust.



# DECEMBER

## America's Test Kitchen

On December 8<sup>th</sup>, WOSU Public Media hosted “America’s Test Kitchen Live!” with hosts Bridget Lancaster and Julia Collin Davison. Lancaster and Davidson shared the details of what goes into the test kitchen, including recipe development, techniques they’ve learned, and tips for better cooking. As part of the experience, WOSU supporters were treated to a VIP meet-and-greet and book signing with the hosts.



▲ Bill Mooney facilitating a seminar with area teachers.

## Higgy-Tyler Award Winner

The Higgy-Tyler Award has been presented by the Friends of WOSU Board to recognize an outstanding WOSU staff member who enhances the quality of work-life within WOSU. In his role as Education and Technology Consultant, Bill Mooney designs engaging professional development for K–12 educators, manages the Teacher Campus Online Courses platform, produces training videos, and leads tours for WOSU Classroom. Beyond his outstanding professional contributions Bill is described by colleagues as “uplifting” noting, “Bill’s sense of care fosters teamwork and strengthens morale. His professionalism and warmth extend beyond WOSU’s walls, leaving a lasting impression on community partners and reinforcing WOSU’s reputation for integrity and collaboration” as he represents WOSU at

conferences and Ed Tech meetings, facilitates collaboration among educators, and support family learning initiatives. Congratulations to Bill Mooney — a truly deserving honoree whose dedication, leadership, and positive spirit make a lasting impact on WOSU and the community.



## Commissioning Artists

The WOSU Advancement team worked with prior Broad & High featured artist, Karen Albanese Campbell, to commission her new original print, *Winter Walkers Crossing The Main Street Bridge*, 2025. “We have such a wonderful community of artists here. When we were looking to create a piece that reflected the spirit of connection that would be a delight for our supporters to receive as a holiday card, drawing from that community was a no-brainer,” said Hattie Assan, Advancement team member.

## INSIDE: RESHAPING WORK

### INSIDE: Reshaping Work

Work is evolving. Artificial intelligence is reshaping industries, the immigrant workforce is becoming an increasingly important part of our local economy, and more people are reconsidering whether college is the only path to a good job. These shifts bring new opportunities alongside real questions for workers, families, and employers across Central Ohio.

INSIDE: Reshaping Work, a multi-series project from WOSU Public Media, uses its full range of platforms, (television, radio, podcasts, digital, and social media) to explore what these changes mean for our community, sharing stories that explain how the job market is changing, elevating the most affected voices, and examining what’s working and what’s not. The project connects audiences to ideas, resources, and real-life experiences that bring clarity to a complex moment and help people feel informed and prepared as they navigate the future of work, whether they’re entering the workforce, changing direction, or adapting to ongoing change.



**WOSU Kids Club launching in 2026!**

# AWARDS



## WOSU SPJ winners:

1. **George Shillcock**, first place, best business/consumer reporting.
2. **Renee Fox**, second place, best business/consumer reporting.
3. **George Shillcock, Debbie Holmes, Anna Staver, Mark Ferencik, Jared Clayton Brown, Katie Geniusz and Allie Vugrincic**, first place, best continuing coverage, Palestinian protests at Ohio State University.
4. **Matthew Rand**, second place, best feature reporting.
5. **George Shillcock, Mark Ferencik**, first place, best government/political reporting.
6. **Renee Fox**, second place, best government/political reporting.
7. **Renee Fox**, second place, best minority issues reporting.
8. **Nick Houser, Jared Clayton Brown, Michael De Bonis**, second place, best website.
9. **Matthew Rand**, second place, best newscast.
10. **George Shillcock**, first place, best reporter.



WOSU Public Media's 89.7 NPR News team has been honored with a prestigious **Regional Edward R. Murrow Award** in the **Radio - Large Market** category for its original news series, "State of Religion".

The four-part series—reported and hosted by **Renee Fox, Debbie Holmes, Matthew Rand, and Allie Vugrincic**—offers an in-depth exploration of Ohio's religious landscape. Through compelling storytelling and rigorous journalism, State of Religion examines the intersections of faith traditions, legislation, and cultural transformation across the state.

## Most Viewed WOSU News Stories in 2025

1. Columbus City Council votes to strip power from German Village, other historic districts
2. Upper Arlington teen hopes speaking out about waterpark dress code will lead to change
3. Massive \$250 million, three-mile Columbus sewer tunnel project reaches destination with a bang
4. Unconfirmed rumors about ICE operations in Columbus spread as agency starts raids elsewhere
5. Person charged after speaking out against Ohio State international student visa revocations
6. Bill would require schools to teach Ohio students 'success sequence' as life path
7. An Ohio public school district is out of money. Others worry their funds will run dry too
8. Les Wexner contribution to Jeffrey Epstein's birthday book released
9. All that and a bag of chips: Ohio's long history of potato chip production
10. Voter guide for the 2025 general election in Columbus, Central Ohio

## Most Viewed WOSU YouTube Videos in 2025

1. G & R Tavern's Fried Bologna: Historic Ohio Food Establishments
2. Rush Creek Village - Columbus Neighborhoods
3. Trying Wendy's AI Drive-Thru Technology
4. The Ohio Penitentiary: Stories from a Forgotten Landmark
5. Vivek Ramaswamy Enters Ohio Governor Race
6. A Growing Columbus – Are We Ready?
7. Ohio's Anti-Trump Protests Expand
8. What Jeffrey Epstein's victims said about Les Wexner?
9. John Glenn: Gold Star Mothers Speech
10. DeWine Sends Ohio National Guard to DC

# FORWARD Together

## ENDOWED POSITIONS

### Talent, Innovation & Leadership Pipeline

Journalistic excellence and innovation begin with creating networks of talent today, to tell the stories of tomorrow.

## STORYTELLERS TRUST

### Community Identity and Authentic Local Voices

WOSU brings Central Ohio to life with stories that spark curiosity, celebrate our culture, and deepen the connections that make our community stronger.

## WOSU IMPACT FUND

### Public Good, Education & Civic Engagement

Everyone deserves access to education, reliable information, and resources to be the best citizen they can be.

## Friends of WOSU Board Members

Marshall Shorts

Nia McBride

Jennifer Monnin

Carlos Casablanca

Christine Mortine

Nora Gerber

Julie Keckstein

Courtnee Carrigan

Erin Davis Shedd

Chris Page McGinnis

Currecia Gamble

Erik Farley

James Ferguson

Craig Friedman

Betsy Pandora

Jason Fraley



## Staff Listing

|                   |                     |                 |                   |                  |
|-------------------|---------------------|-----------------|-------------------|------------------|
| Christine Albert  | Michael De Bonis    | Katie Main      | Paul Peloquin     | Sarah Sykes      |
| Hattie Assan      | Matthew Denis       | Darrin McDonald | Kevin Petrilla    | Patrick Testa    |
| Ben Bays          | Mark Ferenchik      | Caleb McDonald  | Jan Pollard       | Steven Thompson  |
| Diana Bergemann   | Mandy Gettman       | Michael Meadows | John Prosek       | Michael Thompson |
| Carrie Beyer      | Alysia Gobert-Smith | Victoria Miller | Christopher Purdy | Alexa Thrush     |
| Jared Brown       | Jennifer Hambrick   | William Mooney  | Erin Rabinowitz   | Allie Vugrincic  |
| Albert Brown      | Debbie Holmes       | Hailley Moore   | Holly Raduege     | Rob Walker       |
| Marcus Charleston | Nicholas Houser     | Laurie Neer     | Tamara Rost       | Jessica Wallace  |
| Casey Cheatham    | Dalton Jones        | Charles Oney    | George Shillcock  | George Welling   |
| Greg Coulson      | Amy Juravich        | Stu Osborne     | Karen Simms       | Erika Wilson     |
| Robert Dall       | Timothy Kelly       | Anthony Padgett | Ryan Staples      | Emily Woody      |
| George Davis, III | Bram Layman         | Amy Palermo     | Susan Stonick     |                  |



### George Levert

Longtime WOSU TV producer George Levert retired in December. George is beloved and well known around Central Ohio for his food adventures segment on Columbus Neighborhoods.



### Stacia Hentz

WOSU Director of Television, Stacia Hentz retired in December. Stacia initially began her career at WOSU in master control but her love for television programming established her as the leader for WOSU TV. Stacia is treasured in the PBS system.









“Keep up the good work. PBS played a huge part of my childhood, feeding my curiosity.”

- Thomas Robinson II

“Keep making a positive impact in our community!”

- Lori Honner

“The music on this station has essentially become the soundtrack to my days. And all the radio personalities my friends. Thank you.”

- Zachary Olah

“Grew up on WOSU and hoping many others can for years and years to come.”

- Arman Ramnath

“You are the only station I listen to in the car and at home; thank-you. I appreciate you WOSU 89.7 NPR News, for being there, and I trust you.”

- Bonnie Lafleur

**WOSU** public  
media