

RANDY ESSEX

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PROFILE

- Accomplished editor and leader whose staffs have produced distinguished print and digital content, including coverage of presidential politics in Iowa and Ohio; immigration and housing in Colorado; and the 2008-10 auto industry crisis and 2019 GM strike in Detroit.
- Winner of the American Society of News Editors' 2016 Burl Osborne Award for Editorial Leadership. Teams have won three National Headliner and two UCLA Gerald Loeb Awards.
- History of elevating work, growing digital audience, strong recruiting and leading change.
- Track record of creating projects and partnerships that build community engagement.

NEWS EXPERIENCE

DETROIT FREE PRESS

July 2022-current; 2017-19; and 2006-11

Team editor, current. Lead senior reporters covering justice, health, environment and climate issues.

Senior content director, 2017-19. Oversaw business and autos coverage and education reporting, and coordinated content planning for the full newsroom. Dramatically increased autos pageviews, led national projects via USA TODAY network. This was my second stint at the Free Press.

Deputy managing editor, 2010-11. Oversaw business news department, Washington bureau, politics, state and core local coverage.

- Michigan Green Leaders: Creator and director of program honoring environmental best practices, working with external and internal partners, including our marketing department, volunteer judges, winners and others. Recruited Bill Ford Jr. and Michigan Gov. Rick Snyder as keynote speakers for awards event. Started in 2010; program ran six years.

Assistant managing editor/business and politics, 2008-10; **Business editor**, 2006-08.

OMAHA WORLD-HERALD

January 2020-February 2022

Executive editor. Led entire news operation through ownership change and COVID, earning Great Plains Journalism Contest Newspaper of the Year for both years of my leadership. Laid off with two other Omaha newsroom leaders and 400 employees nationwide in cost-cutting by Lee Enterprises.

GLENWOOD SPRINGS POST INDEPENDENT

2014-17

Publisher/Editor. Led seven-day, 9,000-circulation paper and website in summer resort market between Aspen and Vail. Increased digital traffic by a third and deepened community connections.

- **Panelist**, "Valley Roundup," an Aspen Public Radio journalist roundtable.

CINCINNATI ENQUIRER

2012-14

Senior Editor/News. Oversaw local, political and business content for all platforms. Worked with digital staff and Enquirer leaders on culture change to a digital-first company. Quickly improved planning, story choices, competitiveness and execution.

Initiated and executed program to place prescription drug drop boxes in area police stations to keep opiates off the street as public service follow-up to heroin/opiate reporting projects.

DES MOINES REGISTER

1988-2006

- **Assistant managing editor**, 2002-2006. Led Register's core news staff. Oversaw local and state news, including Iowa caucus coverage.
- **Metro editor**, 2000-2002. **Iowa editor**, 1997-2000. **Deputy Iowa editor**, 1995-96. **Political editor**, 1990-95. **Assistant metro/Iowa editor**, 1989. **Nation/world copy editor**, 1988-1989.

OTHER NEWSPAPERS

- USA Today (2022); Idaho Statesman, Boise (1983-88); Abilene (Texas) Reporter-News (1980-82)

EDUCATION, TRAINING

- Bachelor of Journalism, University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Political science/journalism majors.
- William Randolph Hearst visiting fellow, University of Texas at Austin, fall 2002. Studied minority affairs, particularly Latino issues; spoke in journalism classes, recruited talent.
- IRE/NICAR data boot camp, January 2016.

AWARDS

- American Society of News Editors' Burl Osborne Award for Editorial Leadership, 2016, for editorials standing up for immigrants.
- Editor for 2020 National Headliner Awards best business reporting winner by the Detroit Free Press, Out of Gear, a report on Ford's decade-long coverup of defective transmissions. Out of Gear also was a UCLA Gerald Loeb investigative finalist, with The New York Times and a USA Today/Milwaukee Journal Sentinel project.
- Editor for 2013 National Headliner Awards feature writing winner by the Cincinnati Enquirer's Krista Ramsey, about a middle-class grandmother's bank-robbery spree. Enquirer's first Headliner win.
- Editor for Detroit's "Living with Murder" series, whose video won the 2012 Headliner Grand Award.
- Gannett 2014 Public Service award for work on prescription painkiller and heroin addiction and drug drop box placement referenced above.
- My Free Press staff won 2012 Gerald Loeb award for breaking news for coverage of General Motors-UAW talks in 2011. Other finalists: New York Times, Wall Street Journal and Washington Post.
- On my watch, the Free Press won 15 honors from the Society of American Business Editors and Writers, including Overall Excellence among large circulation newspapers for 2008 and 2009. Only the Free Press and New York Times won large-circulation General Excellence both of those years.

PERSONAL, CIVIC

- Member, Comprehensive Campaign Committee, University of Nebraska-Lincoln College of Journalism and Mass Communications.
- Professional in residence, University of Nebraska-Lincoln College of Journalism Experience Lab.
- Have endowed a scholarship fund at the UNL College of Journalism and Mass Communications.
- Completed 27 full marathons and have coached or mentored about 70 people to complete marathons, many through marathon101.com, which sold customized marathon and beginning runner training plans worldwide, 2000-02. Coached Joints in Motion arthritis fundraising team in Des Moines.
- Through running, have raised more than \$10,000 for diabetes and ALS education and research.