



National Newspaper Association
309 S Providence Rd
Columbia, MO 65203
573.777.4980 Fax: 573.777.4985

**Emma C. McKinney Memorial Award
2014
NNA Checklist**

Nominee Name: Dr. Charlyne Berens

Newspaper Name & Location: Former co-publisher, Seward (NE) County Independent, Lincoln, NE

Nominated by: Russell Pankonin

NNA Membership Information: Member through 4/30/2016 5/1/2015
~~12/31/2014~~; verified ~~4/24/2014~~

Year Nominated/Last Year Eligible for Award: 2011/2016 - (Renominated in 2014)

Completed Nomination Form?: Yes

Completed Nomination Letter?: Yes

Documentation Supporting Nomination Criteria to Support the Areas Below? - Yes

- Professional Achievement
- Community Leadership and Service
- NNA/National Involvement

Biographical Sketch of Nominee?: Yes

Three Letters of Reference?: Yes: 4: Will Norton, Jr.; Kent Warneke; Alfred A. Pagel; Roger E. Glawatz

Photo Included?: Yes

The Imperial Republican

622 Broadway
P.O. Box 727
Imperial, NE 69033

OFFICIAL COUNTY NEWSPAPER

COMMERCIAL PRINTING

Phone 308-882-4453
FAX 308-882-5167
www.imperialrepublican.com

April 30, 2014

National Newspaper Association
Emma C. McKinney Memorial Award

Re: renomination of Dr. Charlene Berens

I would like to keep the name of Dr. Charlene Berens in the nomination pool for consideration of the Emma C. McKinney Memorial Award.

I would also like to add the information below to the application as well as the fact that Dr. Berens received the Kappa Tau Alpha Outstanding Service Award on Friday, April 25 during the University of Nebraska-Lincoln College of Journalism/Mass Communications alumni honors ceremony.

Dr. Charlyne Berens is associate dean and professor in the UNL College of Journalism and Mass Communications where she teaches an honors course about the First Amendment and freedom of expression. She has also taught courses in writing, reporting and editing as well as a media survey course for majors and non-majors.

A former editor and co-publisher of the Seward County Independent, she joined the faculty in 1995. She is the director of UNL's Dow Jones Newspaper Fund editing internship "boot camp" each summer.

In addition to teaching she has published two books about the Nebraska Unicameral Legislature, two political biographies, and a number of journal articles about Nebraska history and politics.

Her most recent book is a biography of Nebraska's former U.S. Senator, now U.S. Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel. She received one of the Freedom Forum Journalism Teacher of the Year awards in 2002 and was honored with UNL's College Award for Distinguished Teaching that same year. The Association of Students of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln named her the Outstanding Educator of the Year in 2005-06. She was named to the Nebraska Press Association Hall of Fame in 2011 and received an honorary doctorate from Concordia University Nebraska in 2012.

She and her husband Denny live in Lincoln. They have two daughters and sons-in-law and three grandchildren.

Respectfully,



Russ Pankonin



Emma C. McKinney Award

2011 Nomination Form

Nominee Name: Dr. Charlyne Berens
Position: Professor, University of Nebraska Journalism College
Newspaper: Former co-publisher, Seward Co. Independent,
Seward, NE
Address: 132 Anderson Hall
City, State Zip: Lincoln, NE 68588-0443
Phone : 402-472-8241 Fax _____
E-mail : cberens@unl.edu

Nominator's Name : Russell Pankonin
Position : Co-Publisher, The Imperial (Neb.) Republican
Affiliation: Member, Past President Nebraska Press Association;
Nebraska State Chair, National Newspaper Association
Address: PO Box 741
City, State Zip: Imperial, NE 69033
Phone : 308-882-4453 Fax : 308-882-5167
E-mail: pank@chase3000.com

Professional Achievement: Describe the nominee's professional background, achievements, awards, and activities, which illustrate how the nominee exemplifies the best in journalism and serves as an inspiration to others.

Charlyne began her career as a junior high English teacher, followed by 14 years as the editor and co-publisher of the Seward County Independent, Seward, Neb. She was an active member of the Nebraska Press Association and was the first woman to ever serve as President of Nebraska Press. In 1990, she began teaching at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln College of Journalism, completing her Masters Degree and a Ph.D. in political. In 2002, She received UNL's College Award for Distinguished Teaching and was named Outstanding Educator of the Year for 2005-06 by the Association of Students of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Berens served as interim dean of the UNL College of Journalism and Mass Communications from July 2009 through June 2010.

Community Leadership and Service: Describe how the nominee is an advocate for his/her community; how he/she serves the community on a local, state and/or regional level. Provide specific examples of projects in areas of community service, and outcome.

As co-publisher at the Seward Co. Independent, the paper rose above many in its class, winning numerous awards in the Nebraska Better Newspaper Contest. Seward is nationally recognized for its annual 4th of July festivities and as the local publisher, worked hard to promote and grow the event. As an educator, Berens has proven herself as a recognized leader within the J College and is well liked by students, as evidenced of her awards. She was one of the faculty members who helped produce "Renovating the Republic," the depth reporting magazine about Germany that was published in August 2007, and "Fabric as Narrative," a magazine about international quilting that was published in 2008. She has written several books on the Nebraska Unicameral and biographies of former Nebraska U.S. Senator Chuck Hagel and long-time Nebraska state senator, the late Jerome Warner.

NNA/National Involvement: Recognizing that a nominee may have moved beyond local or state involvement to a broader level, include service to NNA and other regional/national/international service organizations or causes in which the nominee has been involved. (Evidence of NNA service required.)

In addition of service to NNA during her state presidency, Charlyne has twice been a presenter at National Newspaper Association conventions. Due to her success as a journalism educator, she is well-known across the country and plays a big role in the advancement of the UNL College of Journalism. By preparing young minds for the newspaper industry, she helps fulfill the need for bringing new journalists into the trade. For more information, see <http://journalism.unl.edu/cojmc/about/bios/berens.shtml>.

Please return (1) this form and (2) letter of nomination by **May 2, 2011** to:

McKinney Award
National Newspaper Association
PO Box 7540
Columbia, MO 65205-7540



NOTE: If your nominee is among the top five candidates selected by the judges, you will be contacted and asked to submit the following documents: (1) Three [3] letters to support the nomination from community leaders and/or professional peers; (2) Documentation to support nomination criteria; (3) Biographical sketch of nominee; (4) Photo (if available).

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April 30, 2013

National Newspaper Association
PO Box 7540
Columbia, MO 65205-7540

Re: Emma C. McKinney Award

Dear Selection Committee:

I would like to nominate Dr. Charlyne Berens, former co-publisher of the Seward County (Neb.) Independent, as a worthy recipient for this year's Emma C. McKinney Award.

Starting her career as a junior high English teacher, Berens followed that up with a 14-year stint as editor and co-publisher of The Independent, with her husband, Dennis. They built The Independent into a well-respected, prize-winning newspaper devoted to its community.

The Independent played a key role in the development and promotion of Seward's famed 4th of July celebration, which has been featured nationally.

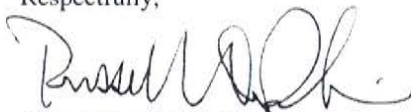
As co-publisher, she rose through the ranks of the Nebraska Press Association and became the first woman president of the association in 1989. In 2011, Charlyne was inducted to the Nebraska Journalism Hall of Fame.

After the couple sold the paper, Charlyne's love of journalism could not be dampened as she became a teacher in the College of Journalism at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. She received her doctorate degree and as a professor continues to play a key role in perpetuating the stature of Nebraska's program as among America's finest.

With her English background, Berens has become a sought-after speaker for state and national newspaper conventions, concentrating on proper English usage in the newsroom. She also authored several books on the Nebraska Legislature and biographies of U.S. Senator Chuck Hagel, who now serves as Secretary of Defense, and long-time Nebraska state senator, the late Jerome Warner.

Charlyne Berens' achievements and contributions to the newspaper industry, as outlined in her biographical information and letters of recommendation, speak loudly for her consideration as this year's Emma C. McKinney Award winner.

Respectfully,



Russell D. Pankonin
Co-Publisher



The Imperial Republican

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May 2, 2011

National Newspaper Association
PO Box 7540
Columbia, MO 65205-7540

Re: Emma C. McKinney Award

Dear Selection Committee:

I would like to nominate Dr. Charlyne Berens, former co-publisher of the Seward County (Neb.) Independent, as a worthy recipient of the Emma C. McKinney Award.

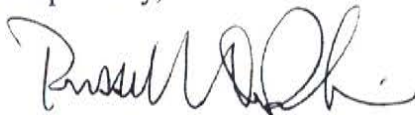
Starting her career as a junior high English, Berens followed that up with a 14-year stint as editor and co-publisher of The Independent, with her husband, Dennis.

After they sold the paper, Charlyne's love of journalism could not be dampened as she became a teacher in the College of Journalism at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. As a valued educator, she has played a key role in building the stature of the program to be among America's finest.

As co-publisher, she rose through the ranks of the Nebraska Press Association and became the first woman president of the association in 1989. Just this year, Charlyne has been named to the Nebraska Journalism Hall of Fame and will be inducted in October, 2011.

I could go on and on about her achievements and contributions to our trade but I will let the attached letters of recommendation and bio information speak for itself.

Respectfully,



Russell D. Pankonin
Co-Publisher



Charlyne Berens is the associate dean of the College of Journalism and Mass Communications at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. She teaches two honors seminars involving First Amendment issues. She also has taught courses in writing, editing and reporting as well as a media survey course for majors and non-majors. She is the winner of several distinguished teaching awards.

She has published two books about the Nebraska Unicameral Legislature: *Power to the People*, which specifically examines the Unicameral's historical roots in populism and progressivism, and *One House*, which looks at whether the one-house body has lived up to the promises of its founders. Her most recent book, *Chuck Hagel: Moving Forward*, is a biography of Nebraska's former U.S. Senator.

Berens served as interim dean of the UNL College of Journalism and Mass Communications from July 2009 through June 2010. She was co-publisher and editor of the Seward County Independent, a community newspaper, for 14 years before joining UNL in 1990. She holds a Ph.D. in political science.

Berens and her husband, Dennis, have two married daughters and three grandchildren.



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Meek School of Journalism and New Media

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University, MS 38677-1848
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Fax: (662) 915-7765

May 18, 2011

National Newspaper Association
P.O. Box 7540
Columbia, MO 65205-7540

Re: Emma C. McKinney Award

Dear Selection Committee:

It is my privilege to write in support of the nomination of Professor Charlyne Berens for the Emma McKinney award. I believe Russ Pankonin has submitted his nomination letter.

Dr. Berens was interim dean of the College of Journalism and Mass Communication at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and currently is the associate dean for Gary Kebble, the recently hired dean. Dr. Berens is a nationally known and effective teacher I hired because she had been editor and co-publisher of a community newspaper and was a leader in the Nebraska Press Association. I am a co-owner of several community newspapers, and I wanted to have an emphasis on local journalism in the CoJMC at UNL.

Her classroom presentations are organized and clear despite complex content, and she spends long hours teaching students in labs and in her office. Moreover, she eagerly has embraced new ways to deliver content to students. In brief, she is a demanding teacher who is student-oriented and welcomes new technology in the classroom. In addition, her publishing record demonstrates that she is keeping up with her area of expertise. Among her publications, four books have focused on politics, particularly the politics of Nebraska. She holds a Ph.D. in political science, and on the University of Nebraska-Lincoln campus she is a leading specialist on the Unicameral, the Nebraska legislature.

Dr. Berens has been a catalyst for change in the College of Journalism and Mass Communications, winning the respect of her colleagues and persuading them to implement innovations that have propelled the college into the forefront of journalism education. A few years ago she led discussions for the first curricular revision since the 1950s. She also led discussions on how to restructure the college and the curriculum to better reflect convergence issues. She had been an outstanding classroom teacher, and her record of scholarship is without peer in the college.

Technology is one example of how Dr. Berens has championed change. As one of the college's early users of new technology in regular classroom instruction, she has been a guiding force in helping the college adapt to the ever-changing technological landscape. When she led the curricular revision, she made sure technology was incorporated in a variety of ways so the faculty could better prepare students. As a leader on the college's convergence committee, she helped decide how best to mesh the news-editorial, broadcasting and advertising sequences so the college mirrors media convergence and can give students a broader and more comprehensive learning environment in both technology and coursework.

Dr. Berens was the first hire of this administration of the college, joining the staff in December 1990 as assistant to the dean. For 14 years she and her husband had been co-publishers, and she had served as editor of the weekly newspaper in Seward. During that time, she was elected president of the Nebraska Press Association, the second woman president in the history of the organization and the first in modern times. She and her husband sold their

interest in the newspaper in 1990, and she joined the staff of Gov. Kay Orr as a speechwriter, a few months later, Gov. Orr was defeated by Ben Nelson.

The college hired her with the understanding that she would pursue an M.A. degree in political science and be considered for faculty status. The year she completed her degree, the university suffered budget cuts, and the college took the cut by not replacing a retiring faculty person. However, I told the faculty I would give up the college's administrative assistant if they wished to have Dr. Berens as an assistant professor. They did, and she immediately began work on her Ph.D. By the time she was awarded tenure, she had completed the doctorate and had completed two book manuscripts.

In fact, before she was awarded tenure, her colleagues recognized that she was the most organized, the best public representative of the Department of News-Editorial and the most able at working with others. They selected her to be department head.

She worked with a few intransigent senior faculty who did not want to have curricular reform, did not want to move to Andersen Hall and did not want to implement student-centered innovations.

Her teaching load has included a variety of courses: a freshman honors seminar on freedom of expression, which she developed; The Art of Writing, a course for first-year students; Principles of Mass Media; and a number of reporting and editing courses, including depth reports on Germany and on international quilting. Arts, Politics and Media is an Honors course that explores the complex interactions among arts, media and politics and examines the implications for those interactions in a democracy.

Dr. Berens was the 2002 recipient of probably the most prestigious teaching honor in this field: the Freedom Forum Journalism Teacher of the Year. It carried an award of \$10,000. She also received a College Distinguished Teaching Award that same year at UNL.

Her writing has added to the literature on Nebraska and its public officials. *Leaving Your Mark* covered the political career of Sen. Jerome Warner of Waverly. *Power to the People* described the populist ideals of the Nebraska state legislature, the Unicameral. *One House: The Unicameral's Progressive Vision for Nebraska* deals with the question of whether the system has been what its founders envisioned. *Chuck Hagel: Moving Forward* is her biography of the former U.S. senator from Nebraska.

In addition, as chair of the department and then the sequence, she has led in the development of a world-class News-Editorial sequence. She has hired exceptional professionals with intellectual depth. She does administrative work so easily that a casual observer will not realize how much she is doing. She is incredibly productive. It was her concepts that coordinated the revision of the undergraduate curriculum after almost a half-century without significant change. She also is the director of UNL's annual two-week residency for Dow Jones Newspaper Fund copy editors.

This would be more than enough service for one person, but she also has done what would be a full-time job for most folk. She is the editor of an alumni magazine that is published twice a year. Deans of other colleges throughout the nation describe it as the best. Many consider it to be a rival to such publications as *Columbia Journalism Review* and the *American Journalism Review*. Moreover, Dr., Berens does myriad chores for media in the region and for journalism educators throughout the nation.

Douglass Anderson, professor and dean of the College of Communications at Penn State University, described Dr. Berens' diligence: "I know first hand the work that goes into directing the Dow Jones Newspaper Fund Editing Program. It is clear also that she has been active in the Nebraska Press Association, student recruitment at the university, extension and the usual assortment of committees."

William A. Tillinghast, professor of journalism and mass communications and graduate coordinator at San Jose State University, commented on Dr. Berens' books: "As I read through the books I found particularly noteworthy the amount of detail in the writing and also the amount of research, both archival and personal interviews. The latter is extremely important because without Charlyne Berens' persistence in examining this aspect of state government, the information and opinion from these people would one day be lost forever."

Similarly, Edward J. Trayes, a professor at Temple University for more than 30 years, described Charlyne Berens as "...a former elementary and junior high school English teacher who becomes editor and co-publisher of a weekly newspaper before spending five years as assistant to the dean of the College of Journalism and earning a master's degree before moving on to teaching journalism at the University of Nebraska. And once there, she does not figure

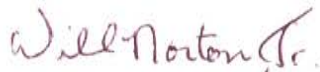
that her prior experiences will carry her well enough. No, not Charlyne. She enters a Ph.D. program in political science, continues to teach and earns the degree while handling all the other aspects of her personal and professional life. It does not happen all that often....”

Dean Anderson offered an uncommon summation: “Dr. Berens has made significant contributions to the instructional, research, service and administrative missions of your college. She is an experienced media professional; a dedicated and versatile teacher who has earned national recognition; an active scholar with a strong record and clear signs pointing toward continued productivity; a willing provider of quality service to the unit, discipline and field; and — if I read the record clearly — a rock-solid citizen and colleague.”

Brian S. Brooks, professor and associate dean in the School of Journalism at the University of Missouri, called her one of the best faculty members at “one of the best journalism programs in the country.”

This is an uncommon letter of support for the nomination of Charlyne Berens because she is an uncommon faculty member. She has made a significant difference in the college in teaching, service and in scholarly productivity directly related to her teaching. Clearly, the students at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln have benefited from her stewardship.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Will Norton, Jr.".

Will Norton, Jr., Professor and Dean
Meek School of Journalism and New Media

NORFOLK DAILY NEWS

Selection committee
McKinney Award
National Newspaper Association

Dear committee members

It is my pleasure to add my voice of support to the nomination of Charlyne Berens for the 2011 McKinney Award.

Her career – which has successfully bridged from being a weekly newspaper publisher to journalism educator at the university level – has been remarkable. She was a tireless advocate of the newspaper industry while serving with her husband as publishers of the Seward County Independent. During that time, she was the first woman to serve as president of the Nebraska Press Association.

In more recent years, in her work with the University of Nebraska-Lincoln's College of Journalism and Mass Communications, she is committed to ensuring that students there are ready for work in the newspaper field upon graduation. She recognizes the value of work in community journalism and encourages students to pursue that option.

But she also is steadfast in working to make the resources of the university available to the Nebraska newspaper industry, creating a partnership that has resulted in many training opportunities that otherwise would not have been possible.

She is a true national leader in her field.

Thank you for considering her nomination.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Kent Wankel". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the word "Sincerely".

Editor and vice president
Norfolk Daily News

5-20-11

Selection Committee
McKinney Award
National Newspaper Association
Columbia, Mo.

Dear Committee Members,

Here's a sure-fire way to check your local editor's dedication to community service.

Tell the poor hapless soul that you'd like to bring eight partially trained reporters and six equally inexperienced copy editors into her already crowded shop for two weeks. The students would help cover the regular news, in addition to turning out a special section on some worthy topic. Oh, and by the way, they'll be bringing along their own computer system that differs "only slightly" from your system. Did I mention two somewhat pompous University of Nebraska-Lincoln professors would "help" supervise this untried crew?

That's exactly the deal I offered Charlyne Berens, editor of the Seward County Independent, back in the spring of 1984. She hesitated a bit, asked a few questions, shook her head knowingly and then, with only a hint of concern, agreed to journalism's version of Survivor.

It was worse than any of us had anticipated. Temperatures hovered above 100 degrees during the entire two weeks, turning the students' newsroom on the second story (which lacked air conditioning) into an absolute sauna. The two computer systems wouldn't mesh, and it took days to cobble together something that worked. The students had some basic journalism skills, of course, but knew little about small towns and even less about agriculture.

Through it all, Charlyne never blinked. She directed reporters to sources, suggested story themes, worked their copy carefully and with great patience. She got the computers fixed. She rounded up a bevy of fans to cool the upstairs. She taught the students the difference between winter wheat and soybeans. She jollied the professors. And all of this while directing her regular crew and outlining coverage of Seward's annual July Fourth celebration, the state's largest.

Suffice to say Charlyne's dedication turned this somewhat shaky adventure into a huge success. The students thought so. The regular staffers thought so. The citizens of Seward thought so. The professors thought so. Even the North American Association of Summer Sessions thought so, naming it the Most Creative and Innovative Community Journalism Program of the Year.

There is an epilogue. The Seward Adventure is now in its 23rd year, thanks mainly to Charlyne's initial hard work and dedication.

Charlyne left the Independent some years back. Since then, she completed both her master's and doctorate and became a colleague on the University of Nebraska-Lincoln College of Journalism and Mass Communications faculty. She currently directs the news-editorial sequence, after a stint as interim dean.

Obviously, Charlyne's community service is much broader than this single example. I'll let others tell of those exploits. And some may be showier than this one. None will be tougher.

Sincerely,

Alfred A Pagel,
Professor Emeritus

May 20, 2011

RE: MCKINNEY Award – Charlyne Berens

To Whom It May Concern:

The purpose of this letter is to strongly support the nomination of Charlyne Berens for the MCKINNEY Award. I have known Charlyne for nearly 48 years as a college student, teacher, newspaper editor and journalist, community activist, college professor, friend, and author. Much of our interaction was during my 36 years of state and community political involvement including my 11 years as Council President and 15 years as Mayor of Seward.

I came to greatly respect her work in Seward at the Independent for her well written, pointed, editorials to stop teen drinking and motivate citizens to become more involved in the civic responsibilities. She made many excellent presentations in Seward and other communities about journalism as well as her work in the area of the 1st Amendment. She and her husband Dennis worked hard to bring journalism students from UNL to Seward each summer to learn firsthand the work of a community newspaper and to contribute in telling the stories of Seward to its citizens. I can say without reservation that her work during her tenure at the Independent was in many ways responsible for developing Seward's reputation for being a comfortable, family friendly community.

For 28 years I had an active involvement with the activities of the League of Nebraska Municipalities, including 20 years as the chair of the Larger Cities Legislative Committee. I therefore read with interest Charlyne's two books on the Nebraska Unicameral. Her vast knowledge of this historic body and her excellent presentation skills has caused her to be asked every other year to speak with the newly elected state senators about their role in this very unique institution.

In summary, Charlyne is very deserving for consideration of this prestigious community service award for her efforts and successes in improving the lives of Nebraska citizens through her conscientious and effective use of her journalism skills.

Sincerely,

Roger E. Glawatz
1504 N. 2nd Street
Seward, NE 68434

