



HONORING  
**GRIFF SINGER**

THE FRIEND OF THE DAILY TEXAN

October 17, 2014 • UT Visual Arts Center  
Austin, Texas



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Friends of THE DAILY TEXAN, INC.  
WELCOMES YOU TO A BENEFIT LUNCHEON TO HONOR

## **S. GRIFFIN SINGER**

WITH THE INAUGURAL  
**GRIFF SINGER AWARD**  
FOR DISTINGUISHED SERVICE  
TO THE DAILY TEXAN

### **OUR PRESENTERS**

**Jane Chesnutt**

*BJ, 1973; Daily Texan 1972-1973*

**Cliff Avery**

*BJ, 1973; Daily Texan Managing Editor 1972*

**R.B. Brenner**

*Director, University of Texas School of Journalism*

**David Powell**

*BJ, 1973; Daily Texan Editor 1972-1973*

**Roderick P. Hart**

*Dean, University of Texas  
Moody College of Communication*

**Beth Frerking**

*BJ, 1980; Daily Texan Editor 1979-1980*

**Karen Tumulty**

*BJ, 1977; Daily Texan 1974-1977  
Daily Texan Hall of Fame*

**Karen Elliott House**

*BJ, 1970; Daily Texan Managing Editor 1969  
Daily Texan Hall of Fame*

**Ben Sargent**

*BJ, 1970; Daily Texan 1968-1970;  
Daily Texan Hall of Fame*

**S. Griffin Singer**

*BJ, 1955; MA Communications, 1972;  
Daily Texan 1953-1955*

**Joe Phillips**

*BJ, 1972; Daily Texan 1970-1972*

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Griff Singer as an undergraduate working in *The Daily Texan* composing room (1953).



## GRIFF SINGER: FROM INK TO PIXELS, A GUIDING STAR

Over the past 60-plus years, Griff Singer has participated in virtually all areas related to newspapers and, now, their digital counterparts. He's been a printer, reporter, editor, teacher and newspaper consultant. And even though he technically retired in 2003 after 34 years of teaching, he's stayed quite busy in journalism.

In his teaching career, all at UT Austin, Singer taught courses in reporting, copy editing, newspaper layout and design. He organized and team-taught the first offering of computer-assisted reporting and, later, sports writing.

Singer holds both a bachelor of journalism (1955) and a master of arts in communication (1972) from UT Austin.

While an undergraduate student, he was a reporter and day editor for *The Daily Texan* for two years. At 6:30 p.m., five nights a week, he changed from clean shirt and pants to dingy jeans, T-shirt and a printer's apron and walked downstairs from the newsroom to work as a printer in the composing room of *The Daily Texan*.

At the time, the Korean Conflict was winding down, but students of his day still were draft bait, so he joined the Army ROTC, aiming to get a reserve commission after graduating. When released from the Army as a Military Police second lieutenant, his first journalism job was news editor (that means you do everything but sweep the floors) at the *Arlington (Texas) Citizen-Journal* (1956-59). He could have made more money as a journeyman printer than an editor-reporter, but his calling was to the news side. On the Arlington paper he

got to do everything, literally.

By 1959, he was ready to spread his wings. A long-time goal was to work for his favorite hometown paper, *The Dallas Morning News*. He dropped by the personnel office, filled out an application and a week later was asked to meet the city editor. After an interview lasting maybe 15 minutes, Singer was offered a job as a general assignments reporter. That grew into covering county government and civil and criminal courts. In early 1961 he was named an assistant city editor, and

he helped direct coverage of the assassination of President John Kennedy, the murder of Lee Harvey Oswald and the later trial of Jack Ruby.

Singer stayed with *The News* until 1967, when a then-UT graduate student who had taken a job at *The News* passed on a note from his favorite UT professor, Olin Ethmer Hinkle. As Prof. Hinkle put it, "We are in need of some new teaching blood at UT. We need younger people with news experience to help our stu-

dents." Singer could not resist the opportunity to return to UT and Austin.

In 1979, after teaching for 12 years and feeling a need to recharge the newsroom batteries, Singer accepted the job of city editor and assistant managing editor at the *San Antonio Light*, the Hearst newspaper later rolled into the *San Antonio Express-News*. After two-plus "interesting years," and with his first wife in failing health, he resigned and returned to teaching at UT Austin.

He has participated in countless seminars and workshops conducted for state, regional and national journalism

'[H]is calling was to the news side.'

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## Guiding star

*From the preceding page*

organizations — the National and Texas Associated Press Managing Editors Association, the Texas Press Association and the Society of Professional Journalists. He has been a judge in many state and national journalism competitions and in 1993 was one of 13 jurors selected for the international competition of the Society of News Design.

He also has consulted with firms and state agencies on how to improve their written communications with the public.



*Griff in The Texan newsroom 1973*

For 17 summers, beginning in 1987, he was an assistant metro editor and newsroom consultant at the *Houston Chronicle*.

He, along with the late Martin L. (Red) Gibson, also consulted with Freedom Communications, Inc., a California-based corporation that at the time had 26 daily newspapers. Of late, Singer has developed and taught online courses in headline writing and sports writing for the UT School of Journalism and the Texas Press Association.

In 1996, he was a copy editor on the *Olympics Daily* published by the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* during the 1996 Summer Olympics — his boss was



*Griff (back row, second from left) served on the 1977 Texas Student Publications Board.*

former student and UT graduate John Reetz — and in 1994 was on the first team of Western journalists to go to the former Soviet state of Krygyzstan to help Russian-trained journalists adapt to a free press.

The Texas Associated Press Managing Editors Association in 1998 cited Singer for his service to journalism in Texas by presenting him with the Jack Douglas Award, which honors a former *Fort Worth Star-Telegram* editor. In 2003, he was awarded the title of “Wirehandler for Life,” for his many years of participating in the annual Texas Associated Press Workshops for editors and copy editors.

In 2010, the South Texas Press Association, the largest regional press group in the United States, renamed its top honor The S. Griffin Singer General Excellence

Award, noting his continued call for improvement in community journalism.

This past summer, he completed his 17th year as director of the Dow Jones News Fund’s Center for Editing Excellence at UT. This highly competitive internship program is designed to encourage top students from the nation’s universities to commit to becoming copy editors on newspapers, wire services and online news organizations.

His first wife, Patricia McGuire Singer, died in 1985 from complications caused by breast cancer. For 28 years, Griff’s soulmate has been Evelyn Singer, a retired teacher.

Griff has two children, Cathy Becker and husband Clay Becker of San Antonio and Mark Singer and wife Tricia Singer of Houston; a stepson, Michael Selby and wife Kathryn Selby of University Park and three granddaughters, Paige Selby, Brynn Selby and Siena Maria Singer.



*Griff (center) is joined by Andy Yemma (Texan Editor 1970-71), Mike Quinn, Vaughn Aldredge and Jim Hicks for a 2003 reunion of faculty and students who made the 1969 trek to the Texas-Arkansas shootout.*

# PRESENTERS

## **Cliff Avery** BJ 1973, **Daily Texan Managing Editor** 1972, **President of the Friends of the Daily Texan**

One of the founders of the Friends of the Daily Texan, Cliff wrote for *The Daily Texan* before he registered for a course at UT. He worked at *The Texan* throughout his college career and served as managing editor in the fall of 1972 before being elected to the board of Texas Student Publications (now Texas Student Media). After graduation and several flirtations with law school, he worked for newspapers—daily and weekly—and as a television news director. Long before most of us had entered the digital age, he was involved with early electronic publishing ventures at a subsidiary of Time, Inc. in New York, where he rose to assistant managing editor for technology, and with a consortium in Chicago, where he was vice president and editor. For the past 24 years, Cliff has owned a small business in the Austin area (aka Pflugerville) that provides services to statewide associations and local governments.

## **Riley Brands**, **Daily Texan Editor** 2014-2015

A linguistics student from Austin, Riley will graduate from UT in May 2015. He's worked on the *Daily Texan* since the summer of 2012, serving in a variety of positions: copy desk chief, Life&Arts staff writer and, for the 2013-14 academic year, associate editor. Among the stories covered or editorialized by Riley during his time at *The Texan* are a College of Liberal Arts task force quietly convened to consider—or as Riley argued in an editorial, rubber-stamp—a reduction in TA and assistant professor positions; consulting work done by a UT sociology professor for a conservative think tank that also funded the professor's controversial study on the children of gay and lesbian parents, and the University's denial of tenure primarily to ethnic and racial minorities. Riley is taking the GRE the day after this lunch, with plans to earn a graduate degree in an as-yet-to-be-determined field. He's assured us he's not skipping class to be with us today.

## **R.B. Brenner**, **Director, School of Journalism**

R.B. is a former top editor of *The Washington Post* who became the director of UT's School of Journalism this past August; he also holds the title of the G.B. Dealey Regents Professor in Journalism. He came to UT from Stanford University, where he had been deputy director of the journalism program since leaving *The Post* in 2010. His journalism career began at the *Winston-Salem Journal*, included stints at newspapers in California and Florida, and is long and deep. At *The Post*, his roles included metropolitan editor, Sunday editor and deputy universal news editor. He was one of the primary editors of the newspaper's coverage of the Virginia Tech shootings, which was awarded a Pulitzer Prize, and he played a leadership role in merging the digital and print newsrooms. If you think you've seen him on TV, you have, and not just as a talking head; he had a cameo role in the film *State of Play*, for which he served as the journalism consultant. R.B. is a graduate of Oberlin College.

## **Jane Chesnutt** BJ 1973, **Daily Texan** 1972-73

Jane is the former longtime editor-in-chief of *Woman's Day* magazine, having served in that position from 1991 to 2009. She was hired for her first journalism job on the basis of her work on

*The Daily Texan* and also credits the *Texan* with giving her the skills and confidence she needed to fashion a magazine career in New York. Throughout her career, she had a special interest in health; her first position at *Woman's Day* was as health editor and later, as editor-in-chief, she helped lead efforts to raise national awareness of heart disease as a woman's top health risk. That the College is establishing a new Center for Health Communication is consequently especially exciting to her. In 2011 she was named a Distinguished Alumnus of UT by the Texas Exes; after living for 40 years in a place where orange is just another color, the experience was not just an honor but a life experience, and she's never managed to look at anything orange in quite the same way again.

## **Beth Frerking**, **BJ** 1980, **Daily Texan Editor** 1979-1980

Editor-in-Chief of *The National Law Journal & Legal Times*, Beth has both a strong background in traditional news reporting and editing and a keen instinct for digital journalism. Before joining NLJ in September 2013, she was assistant managing editor of *Politico*, having joined a week before its launch in January 2007. During her almost seven years at *Politico*, she did everything from hiring top correspondents to reporting from the campaign trail (about then-Sen. Hillary Clinton's presidential run), from launching a content-sharing network to appearing on several network and cable news outlets. She launched her reporting career in East Texas before quickly joining *The Dallas Times Herald*, which she left in 1986 to become Washington correspondent and, later, bureau chief for the *Denver Post*. She spent nearly a decade as a national correspondent for Newhouse News Service in Washington. In 2000, she took a slight journalistic turn and became executive director of the prestigious Casey Journalism Center on Children and Families for six years. Beth has Texas journalism in her blood: her great-grandfather, John Moore, was owner and editor of *The Seguin Enterprise* in the late 1890s.

## **Roderick P. Hart**, **Dean, Moody College of Communication**

Dean since 2004, Dean Hart also holds several other distinguished titles at UT, including Shivers Chair in Communication, Professor of Government and Founding Director of the Annette Strauss Institute for Civic Life. Under his leadership, the newly named Moody College has grown by all measures. Most notably, Dean Hart secured funding for, and then supervised, several major construction initiatives, including the Belo Center for New Media. Dean Hart's area of special interest is politics and the mass media, and he is the author of 12 books, the most recent of which is *Political Tone: How Leaders Talk and Why*. He's also the author of DICTION 7.0, a computer program designed to analyze language patterns. He received his B.A. degree from the University of Massachusetts and his M.A. and Ph.D. degrees from Pennsylvania State University, but he's been at UT almost long enough to be a native, having joined the faculty in 1979 as professor of speech communication. He's been honored with just about every teaching award that exists, supervised more than 50 graduate theses and dissertations and delivered public lectures at more than 80 colleges and universities. He's also proud to be the grandfather of five genuinely perfect children.

*Continued on the following page*

## Presenters

*From the preceding page*

### **Karen Elliott House**, BJ 1970, Daily Texan Managing Editor 1970, inaugural member of the Daily Texan Hall of Fame, Moody College of Communication Advisory Council

A Pulitzer Prize-winning writer, editor and business executive, as well as a Distinguished Alumnus of the University of Texas, Karen is one of the most respected and honored journalists of our age. Coming out of Matador, Texas, Karen rose to the top of our field on not only the editorial but business sides during her 32-year career at the *Wall Street Journal*, retiring in 2006 as publisher of the *Journal*. During her four years as publisher, she was responsible for all news, editorial, sales and other business functions of both the *Journal* and its editions around the world. Throughout her career, she's traveled widely and has developed a deep expertise in international affairs; she's both met and interviewed most of the world's top leaders, including Saddam Hussein, Vladimir Putin, Margaret Thatcher, Richard Nixon and Yasser Arafat. Since leaving the *Journal*, she's served as an Adjunct Senior Fellow at the Belfer Center at Harvard and written her first book, the eye-opening *On Saudi Arabia: Its People, Past, Religion, Fault Lines—and Future* (go straight from this lunch to a bookstore if you haven't yet read it, especially if you think all Saudis are rich). She's also chairman of the board of the RAND Corporation. If you see her running out of today's lunch dragging a suitcase, it's because she's got a 4 o'clock flight to Abu Dhabi; she specifically arranged her travel schedule to be here to honor Griff.

### **Joe Phillips** BJ 1972, Daily Texan 1970-72, Moody College of Communication Advisory Council

A Daily Texan staff member for three years, Joe later co-founded *The San Jose News* in Costa Rica in 1973 and the *Guatemala News* in 1976. In 1980 he returned to Texas to join his family's fuel business and, over the next 20 years, helped increase sales from \$8 million a year to more than \$100 million. Operations he supervised included real estate development, convenience stores and Burger Kings. He retired from day-to-day retail operations in 2009 and currently oversees investments. Under Governor Ann Richards he served as chair of two state agencies; he's also been involved in several community organizations, including the Boy Scouts of America, in his native Rio Grande Valley. Joe says that his best stories about Griff are, like the best ledes and heads, unprintable.

### **David Powell** BJ 1973, Daily Texan Editor 1972-1973, Moody College of Communication Advisory Council

A shareholder in the 52-lawyer Tallahassee firm of Hopping Green & Sams and a member of its Management Committee, David represents clients in the real estate industry throughout Florida. His current work includes serving as land use counsel for a master plan for eventual urban development of a 250,000-acre cattle ranch between Orlando and Cape Canaveral. After graduating from UT, David earned a master's degree in journalism from Columbia University and worked as a reporter for the Associated Press (in New York, Miami and Tallahassee) and the *St. Petersburg Times* before entering law school at Florida State University. One of the government officials he covered at the time actually called to congratulate him on finding the only line of work more

disreputable than the one he was already in. He has been practicing law since 1987 and is also an adjunct law professor at FSU. He is married and has one daughter. A strong supporter of both the Daily Texan and the Moody College of Communication, David is a member of the Moody College's Advisory Council.

### **Ben Sargent** BJ 1970, Daily Texan 1968-1970, inaugural member of the Daily Texan Hall of Fame

Born in Amarillo into a newspaper family, Ben learned the printing trade at age 12 and starting working for the local newspaper as a proof runner at 14. While at UT, he was not the editorial cartoonist for The Daily Texan (it ran Herblock in those days) but was a reporter, copy editor and editorial-page editor. From The Texan, he went on to work as a reporter, mostly covering the Capitol, for Long News Service, UPI and the *Austin American-Statesman*, where he'd often do illustrations for his and other stories. In 1974, the *Statesman* asked him to draw for them fulltime; he started out doing everything—graphs, charts, etc—but asked if he could do cartoons. He came cheap, they took a chance, and so began his long, interesting and much-honored career as editorial cartoonist for the Austin American-Statesman, winning the Pulitzer Prize for his work in 1982. His subjects were as varied as life itself, but he most often covered—or skewered, depending on your viewpoint—the colorful world of Texas politics. He officially retired in 2009 but continues to contribute a weekly cartoon to the *Statesman* along with a monthly cartoon to *The Texas Observer*. His original cartoons are collected in the Ben Sargent Papers at UT's Briscoe Center for American History.

### **Karen Tumulty** BJ 1977, Daily Texan 1974-77, inaugural member of the Daily Texan Hall of Fame

One of the country's leading political reporters, Karen is a national political correspondent at *The Washington Post*, having joined the newspaper in 2010 after 15 years in the same position at TIME Magazine. During her years at TIME, she wrote or co-wrote more than three dozen cover stories, often about people with names like Bill, Hillary and Barack. At the *Post*, in addition to her reporting duties, she's currently deeply involved in helping reshape journalism for a new era. She began her career at the now-defunct *San Antonio Light*, where Griff, who had been her favorite professor at UT, was her city editor; his influence extended to encouraging her to develop a specialty, which led to her earning an M.B.A. from the Harvard University School of Business. She later spent 14 years at the *Los Angeles Times*, covering a variety of political, business, economic and other beats. Throughout her career, she's been honored many times, most recently in 2013 with the prestigious Toner Prize for Excellence in Political Reporting. She grew up in San Antonio; in fifth grade one of her classmates was a boy who grew up to be Admiral (and Chancellor) William H. McRaven and to be her guest at the White House Correspondents' Dinner.



## **INNOVATION FUND**

*Supporting quality, sustainability and new revenue on all platforms*

All proceeds from today's luncheon go to The Friends of The Daily Texan Innovation Fund. The Innovation Fund is designed to support development of new, innovative projects that will create new revenue streams, enhance the experience of student staff and create valuable, sustainable products for the benefit of the UT Austin community.

These projects may be in print or in new technologies; they may be one-shots or they may be as permanent as anything connected to a publication that began in the 19th Century. They shall reflect the creativity of "a University of the first class," and they shall contribute to a secure financial future for the The Texan.

The Friends of The Daily Texan initially hoped to raise a minimum of \$50,000 for the Innovation Fund by Dec. 31, 2015. The Friends appear to have reached that goal early with the Griff Singer Luncheon during the UT School of Journalism's Centennial, honoring the beloved mentor of three generations of Texan staffers. The Friends will work with Daily Texan staff, Texas Student Media leadership and officials of the Moody College of Communication to develop written procedures for the use of the fund with one underlying goal – the preservation and sustenance of The Daily Texan as a robust, independent voice of the students of the University of Texas.

The Friends of The Daily Texan, Inc. has applied to the Internal Revenue Service for tax-exempt status under Section 501(c)(3) as an educational organization and fully expects that contributions to the entity will be tax-deductible.

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