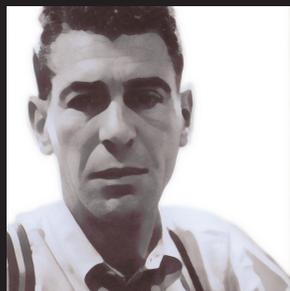
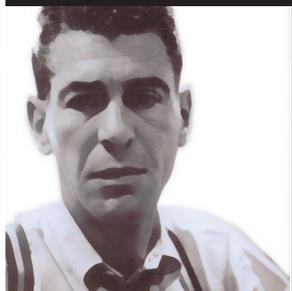
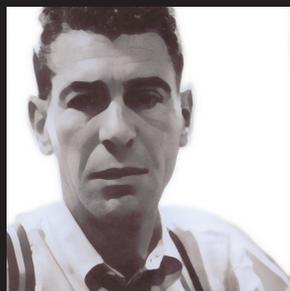
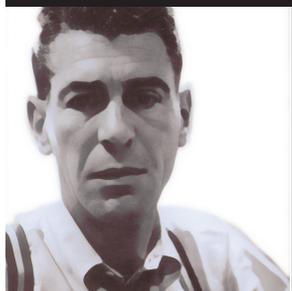


Tragic Hero >>



McCarthyism pushed Nebraska native Don Hollenbeck over the edge

By Carson Vaughan

The assistant medical examiner called it “illuminating gas poisoning.”

Suicide.

“And then you begin to feel, ‘Why weren’t we around him more?’” said Shirley Wershba, a friend and former CBS co-worker. “Why weren’t we there to bolster him? Why didn’t he ever tell us he was feeling that way? I guess people who talk about suicide are sending out a cry for help, but I don’t think Don ever talked about it. That he was despondent there’s no question about it.”

She knew the boy from Lincoln as well as anybody. She and her husband, both of whom were portrayed in the 2005 film “Good Night, and Good Luck,” worked with the internationally renowned broadcast journalist and eventually named their first son “Don” in his honor. They knew him as both the professional radio host, honest and independent, and the casual party host, spontaneous and welcoming. So when she got the call on June 22, 1954, that 49-year-old Don Hollenbeck had killed himself, she was devastated.

“All I could do was hold my little baby Don and cry,” Wershba said recently.

Although the coroner called Hollenbeck’s suicide gas poisoning, many suspect McCarthyism may have been the real cause.

A Lincoln native, Hollenbeck reported with candor, humor and integrity throughout his colorful career, which began in 1926 as a cub reporter for the *Lincoln Journal*. Listeners said he was refreshing, brilliant. Researchers deemed him an iconoclast. Friends called him independ-

ent, a nonconformist. From the *Lincoln Journal* to CBS News, Hollenbeck raised public expectations for media professionals.

“He was courageously candid about the press,” said Loren Ghiglione, former dean of Northwestern University’s Medill School of Journalism and author of CBS’s *Don Hollenbeck: An Honest Reporter in the Age of McCarthyism* and editor of *Radio’s Revolution: Don Hollenbeck’s CBS Views the Press*, both published in 2008. Ghiglione visited the J school last fall to talk about his books and free expression.

“As (Edward R.) Murrow said, ‘He [Hollenbeck] had a spine of steel.’ He was unusual that way. He believed all that stuff about the First Amendment,” Ghiglione said.

But the candor came with a cost.

Like his fellow CBS newscaster Murrow, Hollenbeck was an outspoken critic of Wisconsin Sen. Joseph McCarthy and his Communist witch-hunt of the early 1950s. But for every jab at McCarthyism, Hollenbeck got a punch back from conservative press critics, most notably columnist Jack O’Brian at the *New York Journal-American*.

The columnist initially linked Hollenbeck to the “violently leftist” news media and accused him “of baiting Dixiecrats and conservatives with blandly phrased ‘loaded’ questions.”

“All the news that fits Hollenbeck’s view. Meaning, all the news that’s left,” O’Brian caustically observed in May 1954, just a month before Hollenbeck’s suicide.

“We worried about him and how he was going to be reacting,” said Wershba, now retired and living in >> 3

THE ISSUE

From the dean: Keeping the best of the old, adding the best of the new
TV, radio, books: Add teaching to David Dary's credentials

American presidential election: CoJMC hosts Egyptian bloggers

Mike Farrell: Photographer, filmmaker focuses on Nebraska

Coming full circle: Gutenberg portrait returns to J school

The future of newspapers: Not all is doom and gloom

Election Night '08: Journalism students put on full-court press

Meet new faculty: Sue Burzynski Bullard, Ruth Brown and Carla Kimbrough

Revisiting the past: Vance Payne travels to his childhood home

COLLEGE NEWS

Professor Mary Garbacz's latest project is Strategic Discussions for Nebraska; professor Larry Walklin works on cameras in the courtroom; professor Amy Struthers works with UNL unit on virus education grant project; J school pitches in at the Nebraska Book Festival; and the college's distance education program celebrates its 15th anniversary



Book Notes

Professor Joe Starita promotes his new book at book signings, readings

JNews & NOTES

Faculty Notes

Alumni Notes

Student programs

Student honors

Student spotlight

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NOTEBOOK

Why accreditation matters:

Susanne Shaw says students are the ultimate beneficiaries

The Launch Into Cyberspace

By Dean Will Norton Jr.



The publication in your hands is the forward patrol in our campaign to move the *Journalism Alumni News* into cyberspace.

Beginning now, the entire magazine – full of news about our alumni, our students and faculty, our college and its programs – will be available in a “flip book” at www.unl.edu/journalism/cojmc/alumni/jnews.shtml. This new delivery method will enable us to continue to provide you with comprehensive news about your college and save some serious money in tight financial times.

Over the years, our alumni database has grown, and our magazines have gotten bigger. The result has been bigger printing bills and bigger mailing bills. The financial strain has been building, and today, with budget cuts looming, we are taking the leap into cyberspace.

Twice a year, you will receive a “mini magazine” like this one. It will feature one complete story from the main magazine along with summaries of several others, a calendar

of college events and information about what you'll find in the online magazine.

Once you receive the mini magazine, you will be able to go to the Web site and read the full magazine in pdf format. It will have all the features of a print publication – except for the paper.

Our goal is to continue to provide you with news about your college and your fellow graduates, thought-provoking pieces about media issues and a way to stay in touch. The mini magazines will be mailed to give you a preview of the online edition and to remind you to go to the Web site and read what we have to offer.

We know it's not the same as holding that 72- or 84-page magazine in your hands. But we also know our alumni are among the most Internet savvy Americans, and we are confident you will make the change to a new medium without missing out on any of the news about the J school.

Welcome to the new format! And welcome back to your *J Alumni News!*

Read the complete magazine at
<http://www.unl.edu/journalism/cojmc/alumni/jnews.shtml>

Hollenbeck continued

>> New Hyde Park, N.Y. “People were getting fired right and left just because some idiot pointed a finger and said, ‘If you’re a liberal, you’re a Communist.’”

Don Hollenbeck lived a “turbulent, tantalizing life,” according to biographer Ghiglione. Born in Lincoln in 1905, Hollenbeck attended Lincoln High School and completed three years at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln before quitting academia. According to Ghiglione, women at UNL appealed to Hollenbeck far more than his classes.

“He didn’t have any social life in high school, and he discovered women at the University of Nebraska,” Ghiglione said.

One of those women was Jessie Seacrest, daughter of J.C. Seacrest, publisher of the *Lincoln Journal* newspaper. Not long after leaving the university, Hollenbeck took an entry-level job at the *Journal* and married the boss’s daughter in April 1926. But the good times didn’t last long.

In 1927, just weeks after the birth of their daughter, Jettie, the parents separated and later divorced, and Hollenbeck’s life began to unravel. People viewed Jessie as “sexually liberated,” according to Ghiglione, and many close friends and family began to question if the child was truly Hollenbeck’s. Ashamed and disillusioned by her son’s failed marriage and the circulating paternity rumors, Clara Hollenbeck took her own life by slitting her throat. It wasn’t long before Hollenbeck decided to cut his ties to Lincoln.

“It’s ironic,” said Ghiglione, who now teaches at the Medill School. “He said ‘I’m from Lincoln,’ as in ‘I’m out of here.’ But his cremated remains are at Wyuka Cemetery in Lincoln.

“But despite that, I think a lot of Lincoln was in his values, more than he was willing to recognize. He was shaped by his community. I don’t think he liked what he saw as the sort of self-righteous quality of Lincoln, and yet there was a little bit of the pious in him.”

Attempting to put the bad memories aside, Hollenbeck moved to Omaha and quickly landed a job in 1929 with William Randolph Hearst’s *Omaha Bee-News*, later purchased by *The Omaha World-Herald*. Soon fired from the *World-Herald* for telling a publisher-in-training who questioned the way he was writing a story to “write it yourself,” Hollenbeck began climbing the news ladder one impulsive step after another.

From Omaha, he took a job with the Associated Press’s photo department in New York, which later stationed him in San Francisco. But a failing second marriage and “the perfect AP rut,” as Hollenbeck later described it, sent him back to New York — jobless and without many prospects.

Rejected by the *New York Herald Tribune*, the *New York World-Telegram*, *Time* and *Life*, Hollenbeck finally landed a position with a new daily newspaper *PM* in 1940. When World War II broke out, he left the publication, as did many *PM* editors, to work for the Office of War

Information in London. Soon he moved to his first broadcasting job as a war correspondent with NBC, one of the big three broadcast corporations.

“He’s very reassuring,” Ghiglione said of Hollenbeck’s on-air demeanor. “He keeps his cool, and however emotional other people are, he’s calm, cool, collected and sounding like *The New York Times*.”

Hollenbeck’s stock soared as an NBC-based war correspondent, his voice carrying across the globe. But Hollenbeck, “fed up with the death and destruction,” as he described it, handed his uniform to another correspondent and flew home to New York City. NBC fired him.

One major network down, two to go.

Following his stint at NBC, Hollenbeck accepted a newscasting position at ABC, which fired the brash reporter in 1946 for disparaging a network advertiser’s jingle.

“The atrocity you have just heard is no part of this show,” Hollenbeck quipped on air.

Two networks down, one to go.

Hollenbeck’s third wife, Anne, with whom he adopted his daughter Zoe, was well aware of his diminishing job prospects.

Wershba recalled, “When we got to know him better, his wife admonished him, ‘Don, please, we’re running out of networks.’”

CBS was Hollenbeck’s last chance, and he took full advantage of it. Hired by the renowned Murrow, Hollenbeck started in 1946 and began the job that would define

his career. He began broadcasting the Sunday morning news roundup and before long was appearing on programs with Murrow himself. Hollenbeck deeply admired Murrow, and the two “clearly hit it off in a way that I don’t think either did with anyone else,” Ghiglione said.

In 1947, Murrow chose Hollenbeck to take charge of the network’s revolutionary new show, “CBS Views the Press,” aimed at critiquing the New York newspaper indus-

Hollenbeck had a spine of steel. He believed all that stuff about the First Amendment.

try. The show won prestigious journalism awards and accolades from many media outlets, from the *New Republic* to *Variety*. Still, conservative critics viewed Hollenbeck’s reports, each a “critical analysis of the press,” as Murrow described it, as left-leaning. O’Brien counterpunched with accusations of communism.

Conservative commentators “went after the most visible people, because that’s how you got headlines,” Wershba said. “They went after big names and made accusations that were completely >> 4

Hollenbeck continued

>> invalid.”

Murrow was a god at CBS, nearly out of reach of the conservative critics, according to Ghiglione. But Hollenbeck, although enjoying ample recognition, was all too human — and a much more inviting and psychologically vulnerable target.

“I think bullies are very good at sensing the vulnerabilities of people,” Ghiglione said.

By 1954, Hollenbeck had endured a lot: three failed marriages, his mother’s suicide, the relentless pressure of McCarthyism. He was vulnerable. He was depressed and drinking too much. According to Ghiglione, columnist O’Brian’s published attacks on Hollenbeck were just the “tipping point.”

“He just pushed Hollenbeck over the edge, but Hollenbeck was teetering on the edge and might have gone there anyway,” Ghiglione said.

And so his daughter from his third marriage is left to wonder, left to fill in the blanks on what might have been.

“I would like to think that he was a hero,” Zoe Barr, now 64, said of the father who adopted her, the father who would mention her name on air just to get her to listen. “He was a smart man, and it’s unfortunate he didn’t live long enough to prove it to people. I think he could have been another Cronkite if he’d lived longer.”

Think Positive

By Lindsey Weeks

Barney McCoy leans back in his chair and crosses his legs, letting out tension with a deep breath. He relaxes as he settles into his chair and holds the phone to his ear. “Don, this is Barney McCoy,” he says. A smile spreads across his face. “I’m doing good. How are you?” he asks.

“Every time he talks, he lifts people up around him,” McCoy said. “Don Meier is a truly special person.”

Meier, a broadcasting pioneer and former producer of “Mutual of Omaha’s Wild Kingdom,” admits he is an optimist.

“My philosophy of life is I like to think on the positive side,” Meier said. “It doesn’t help you to think on the negative side or associate with people who do.”

Meier is special, not only because of his infectious attitude but because he is a pioneer in broadcasting. And a new documentary about his life recognizes that.

In July, McCoy and other J school faculty members debuted a documentary about Meier’s life called, “Exploring the Wild Kingdom.” The premiere took place the same day as the unveiling of the Don and Lorena Meier Commons and Plaza in the green space north of the Nebraska Union. ...

At 95, Meier lives in Chicago with his wife, Lorena. Lorena worked on “Mutual of Omaha’s Wild Kingdom” with Meier from the beginning. She stayed behind in Chicago while he went out to locations where the show was filming, but she is considered the logistics expert for the show.

Their lives are a partnership, said Kevin Meyer, senior vice president at the University of Nebraska Foundation.

“One thing Don is adamant about is to include his wife. His accomplishments are hers. All the shows they worked on, it

was always a team effort. They were a team in their careers and their marriage,” Meyer said. Meyer has worked with the Meiers for a number of years, acting as a liaison for charitable giving between them and the university.

Over the years, the Meiers have generously contributed to the university in many ways.

“They put the emphasis on the individual student,” Meyer said. “They want to give to things that have a direct impact on students in a way that having their name on a building might not.”

Education has always been a priority for the Meiers. They want to help students succeed.

“It is the only way you can get ahead in life, with a good education,” Lorena Meier said.

Their newest contribution was the commons area, and they flew in to see the dedication. ...

“They are like that favorite aunt and uncle,” Meyer said. “They are both great storytellers. Don is so engaging. Lorena is intelligent and intriguing. They are very humble for the success they’ve had. You would never have any idea how much they have accomplished just meeting them on the street.”

McCoy agreed. ...

“It is amazing that two people who work so closely together are still so in love,” McCoy said. ...

“They enjoy living today as much as any other time in their lives. I hope when I am 95 I can be like that,” McCoy said.



DON MEIER

Photo Co/JMC archives

Read the entire story about Don and Lorena Meier at <http://www.unl.edu/journalism/cojmc/alumni/jnews.shtml>



Photo by Troy Feddersen/University Communications

TRINA CREIGHTON

Taking It To The Streets

Trina Creighton's documentary focuses on the crisis in North Omaha.

By Seanica Reineke

Read the entire story about Creighton's documentary at <http://www.unl.edu/journalism/cojmc/alumni/jnews.shtml>

Rap music plays in the background as the documentary “We Do Better When We Know Better” begins. Young black men and women walk the streets of North Omaha, living their lives.

The scene opens Trina Creighton's master's thesis film, a documentary about the lives of young black men in North Omaha. ... She chose to feature 10 youth from North Omaha: five still living there and five who now attend the University of Nebraska–Lincoln.

“The main question was to find out what was different between the two different sets of young men,” Creighton said. ...

The film begins with the young men who are still in Omaha. Marcus, Marcellus, Ray, Jerrid and Herbert allowed Creighton to follow them around in order to see what their lives are like and talk to them about it. She learned that they all were fearful of how they were living and of what would happen each day. Most of the young men had witnessed the deaths of friends from gang violence.

Marcus told Creighton, “It’s a risk just walking down the streets of North Omaha.”

Creighton found statistics showing how difficult it is for the youth growing up there: Gangs grew by 16 percent in Omaha during 2006, Omaha has the third highest poverty rate in the nation, and 17 percent of the black population is unemployed.

“I’m kind of embarrassed. I had no idea about this one segment of the community,” Creighton said. “I’m black, so I thought I understood what they were going through, but how could I? I lived in a different part of the community. I didn’t have a clue.” ...

Creighton said she faced a few setbacks along the way, such as doing most of the filming herself, having technical difficulties and also worrying about funding. The work has been stressful, but Creighton said it has paid off.

“The response to my documentary has been overwhelming and more than I expected. It has changed me like no other thing has — other than having my children and two grandchildren,” Creighton said. “After doing this documentary ... now I know what I want to do the rest of my life.”



◀◀ Orphans live in the Johannesburg sewers

Thorson said.

The report, funded by the Howard Buffet Foundation, was designed to give students a grasp of world issues. It involved a partnership among students from UNL, Arizona State and Witwatersrand (“Wits”) University in Johannesburg. ...

At first, many of the South Africans were reluctant to talk to the student reporters, but they slowly began to realize the journalists could offer them a voice to the outside world.

DeVries and Meier did their best to cover both sides of the xenophobic violence equally and captured each moment on film and paper.

“We had to see everything we could in two weeks,” DeVries said.

But improved interview and photo-journalism skills were not the only thing the students took away from the experience. As the team observed the hope and faith of the displaced South Africans, they also came to find inner strengths in themselves. ...

“I’ve shared so many stories with so many people,” Meier said. “I hope that I’ve opened some eyes.”

DeVries said her hope is that people will become better global citizens and know not only what’s going on around them but also what’s going on internationally.

“You can’t force people to do this, and not everyone is going to have an experience like I had,” DeVries said “but my duty was to write well to show people what’s out there.”

Picture This

South African photo depth report ‘shows people what’s out there.’

By Amanda Hinrichs

Read the entire story about the South Africa project at <http://www.unl.edu/journalism/cojmc/alumni/jnews.shtml>

Harmonizing voices break the early morning silence. A group of Congolese men and women stand together, worshipping in the cool June breeze, clutching their Bibles and blankets tightly. One woman plays along with a referee whistle.

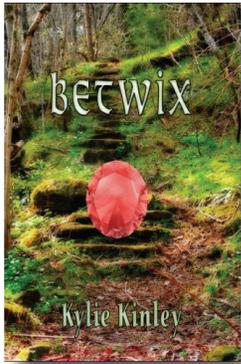
Leaving their homes and belongings, these Congolese have fled here, to the Rifle Range Camp that was set up by the United Nations northeast of Johannesburg, South Africa, for thousands of displaced migrants. Each family has only one tent, sleeping mats and the clothes on their backs.

Yet every morning they praise God for their minimal possessions. They pray for those who have forced them from their homes and hurt them.

In the midst of the activity, two young Americans watch with wide eyes, snapping pictures and taking notes. ...

Junior Christina DeVries and senior Logan Meier were two of 10 J school students covering stories like the Congolese worship service last summer for a photo depth report on Johannesburg, South Africa. The team, led by professor Bruce Thorson, spent two fast-paced weeks covering stories of poverty and violence.

Unlike past J school depth reports, which focused on print and documentary products, the South Africa report allowed students to cover stories “driven from a photographic and video perspective rather than a reporter or word standpoint,”



Published At Age 19

J school sophomore started her fantasy novel when she was 14. Now she's working on the second in the series.

Suddenly, there was a noise like glass tinkling and shiny gold letters appeared on the rock face in front of her. She yelped and scooted back. Her hand hit something wet, and her trembling fingers closed around the fetch ball.

By Tori Grdina

Read the entire story about Kylie Kinley's books at <http://www.unl.edu/journalism/cojmc/alumni/jnews.shtml>

This scene is from a story by a 14-year-old girl. That's how old Kylie Kinley was when she began work on her first novel.

Kinley, a sophomore journalism major and honors student, made her dream of someday becoming an author come true when her novel, *Betwix*, was published in 2008.

"My goal was to be published by the time I was 25," Kinley said. "It felt really good to be published by my 19th birthday."

Her mother, a former English teacher, encouraged Kinley's love for literature at an early age.

"My mom read to me constantly, so I've always been exposed to it," Kinley said.

...

After Kinley finished her first draft of the full manuscript of *Betwix*, she gave it to a long-time friend, Kristin Eckhardt, to read and offer advice. Eckhardt, an award-winning author who has written more than 30 romance novels, encouraged Kinley.

"I recognized her talent right away as a writer," Eckhardt said. "I liked her plot; I liked her writing. I just gave her some basic tips."

With Eckhardt's pointers in mind, Kinley tweaked her manuscript and mailed it off to publishers. ...

"From the time I started writing to

the time I was published was almost five years to the day," Kinley said. While that may seem like an eternity to any aspiring author, Kinley remained optimistic.

"What's impressive to me is to not only write a full manuscript but also to have the tenacity she does," Eckhardt said. "Everyone says, 'I want to write a book,' but very few people have the confidence that she does, especially at her age, to do that and then send it out." ...

The second book will be called

Combined, and it is already completed. Kinley said that, while the first book is geared toward middle school readers, the second book is written for high school readers, since her characters make a similar jump in age. She has also begun a third, yet-to-be-named addition to the series. ...

"I really do see Kylie being successful as a fiction writer," Eckhardt said. "She just has a love for the written word. She has a real enthusiasm that makes others excited about her work."



Kylie Kinley signs books for her fans at the Blue Hill Floral Shop on March 19, 2008

Photo courtesy Blue Hill Leader

COMING TO CoJMC

A full listing of events at the CoJMC can be found at <http://events.unl.edu/journalism/>

APRIL 1-3

Ad Hudler, a 1986 graduate, stay-at-home dad, author of comic novels and small-space landscaper from Fort Myers, Fla.

APRIL 13-17

J DAYS, a weeklong celebration that includes an honors convocation for students on April 16 and a luncheon to honor alumni award recipients on April 17.

APRIL 16

Salim Amin, Nairobi-based photojournalist and entrepreneur who started A24, a continent-wide 24-hour news and information channel in Africa.

APRIL 16-17

Jane Hirt, managing editor of the *Chicago Tribune* and J DAYS news-editorial honoree.
Kevin Kugler, play-by-play voice for Westwood One's coverage of college football and basketball, J DAYS broadcast honoree.
Ed O'Boyle, executive vice president of Five Points Bank in Grand Island, J DAYS advertising honoree.
Rod Bates, general manager of NET and J DAYS Service to the Profession honoree.

APRIL 17

Andersen Hall open house from 2 to 5 p.m. for alumni visiting campus as part of Husker SpiritFest Alumni Weekend, April 16-18. During the CoJMC open house, alumni will have the opportunity to visit with faculty and have tours of the building. For information about other Alumni Weekend events, go to www.HuskersSpiritFest.com.

MAY 8

CoJMC Alumni Advisory Board reception for May graduates.

MAY 11

Nebraska State High School Press Journalism Championships, hosted by CoJMC and the Nebraska High School Press Association.

About J Notes

J Notes is published twice a year by the College of Journalism and Mass Communications, 147 Andersen Hall, University of Nebraska, Lincoln, NE 68588-0443. We encourage news submissions from alumni and friends via our online form at www.unl.edu/journalism/cojmc/alumni/alumniupdate.shtml, or mail to the college. Share your e-mail address with us to receive periodic e-newsletters from CoJMC, the journalism alumni association.

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