Choosing what makes it into our annual report is often the most challenging part of the creative process. While the next 10 pages showcase some of the highlights from 2017 at Illinois Public Media, they’re only part of the story. In our case, the whole is definitely greater than the sum of its parts.

For me, one of the most powerful aspects of Illinois Public Media’s role within the central Illinois community is our ability to provide a sense of place within a larger narrative. A great example of this was the localized content created around The Vietnam War—Ken Burns and Lynn Novick’s documentary—as well as local conversations surrounding the topic. There’s no denying the war had a profound effect on the nation as a whole, but each individual community experienced that time in history in a unique way, often having enduring effects on its citizens.

That’s just one example of how I believe our content has had a significant impact within our local community.

My promise to you for 2018: Illinois Public Media will continue to stimulate minds as well as conversations; provide a public forum for a healthy exchange of diverse voices and opinions; explore issues of importance to those in our community; be a trusted news organization; ensure classical music, along with arts and cultural programming, has a place in our daily lives; and inspire lifelong learning through our work. I hope you will join us!

As always, a sincere thank you to the Friends of WILL for making it all possible.

Moss Bresnahan  
President and CEO
Regional reach

The 21st—Illinois Public Media’s daily talk show covering news, culture, and stories that matter to Illinois—celebrated its first anniversary with the addition of a fifth station, Northern Public Radio/WNIJ, and a partnership with Northwestern University’s Medill School of Journalism.

Throughout the year, Niala Boodhoo hosted live broadcasts of The 21st from Medill’s downtown Chicago newsroom.

The unveiling of illinoisnewsroom.org and widespread release of an Affordable Care Act Open Enrollment explainer video signified the long-awaited launch of Illinois Newsroom. This regional journalism collaborative aims to integrate citizens into the editorial process, ensuring more relevant, impactful, and empowering news coverage across three topics: education, politics, and health/environment. With new reporters in place across the state, Illinois Newsroom’s first in-depth reports were released by the end of the year.

Future generations

The Endres Internship was established with a generous gift from Robert Endres, a 1962 College of Media graduate who worked in WILL-TV Master Control during his time at the University of Illinois. Endres credits his success to the real-world experience and hands-on education he received as a student and wishes to pay it forward through this internship.

The Endres Internship joins the Donald P. Mullally Internship and the Dave Benton Internship on the growing list of ongoing opportunities for students to work and learn in the WILL Newsroom.
We joined forces with Chambana Weather to bring you daily forecasts from local meteorologist Andrew Pritchard.

**Award-winning programming**

The 21st received two national awards from Public Radio News Directors Incorporated (PRNDI) for “Illinois Reacts to Election 2016: Recap of State House Races” and “Combatting Suicide Stigma.”

*Barns: An Illinois Story* received two regional Mid-America EMMY Awards for Best Program Promo and Documentary Photography.

*Barns: An Illinois Story* and *Ebertfest 2016: Center of the Universe* received a total of five national Telly Awards, including silver awards for General Documentary and Craft Videography/ Cinematography, and bronze awards for Craft Editing, Craft Videography/ Cinematography, and General Documentary.

**Collegiate connections**

Students from the College of Media traveled with Illinois Public Media to *Sunny Side of the Doc*—one of the premier documentary conferences in the world. They participated in thought-provoking discussions, pitch competitions, presentations by broadcasters from around the world, and screenings.

Illinois Public Media now oversees the day-to-day operations of the local cable channel UI-7 by providing technical support, leadership on programming decisions, and management of a student intern curating the content. In partnership with the College of Media, UI-7 continues to serve as a local resource, spotlighting the activities and accomplishments of the campus community, while also providing an educational opportunity for students at the University of Illinois.
Notable partnerships

In a joint production with Krannert Center for the Performing Arts, *From the Stage at Krannert Center: Poetry and Song with Nathan and Julie Gunn and the Jupiter String Quartet* brought works from several 20th-century composers to WILL-FM listeners. This unique broadcast included interviews with performers intertwined with pieces based on works of poetry performed live in Foellinger Great Hall at Krannert Center.

As an historic fiscal battle waged on inside Illinois’ Capitol, *Stranded by the State* explored the long-term effects of the Illinois budget crisis on everyday people. This two-part documentary special on WILL-TV was born out of a creative partnership with Kartemquin Films. It took an intimate and empathetic look at how homeless people, at-risk youth, and seniors—as well as adult literacy, early childhood development, and higher education programs—were affected by the budget impasse.
Power of Team WILL

Thanks to 600 Friends of WILL, we raised more than $132,000 in just 26.2 hours during the WILL Marathon. This idea was part of a continued effort to be more efficient with our fund drives.

We increased the number of new members by 20 percent thanks to a $35,000 challenge grant from the Newman’s Own Foundation that centered on attracting new donors. This grant supports the foundation’s ongoing commitment to encourage open dialogue and promote civic engagement.

The Barbara E. Barnes Fund was established to support new local classical music programs.
Future fanfare

Continuing in the tradition of ART/BTS—our web series that went behind the scenes and into the creative minds of an eclectic mix of local artists—Classical/BTS will explore less-traditional ways people are creating, using, and engaging with classical music.

A conductor who includes yoga as part of his preparation for performance? An app developer creating tools to help string players at every level be better musicians? Yes! Illinois Public Media is thrilled to bring you these stories, and others, from central Illinoisans innovating new ways to interact with and enjoy classical music.

WILL producer Isaac Musgrave films composer and pianist Charles Joseph Smith working in a rehearsal space in Chicago, IL (top left) and conductor Joseph Baldwin as he warms up with a yoga pose in Urbana, IL (above).

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