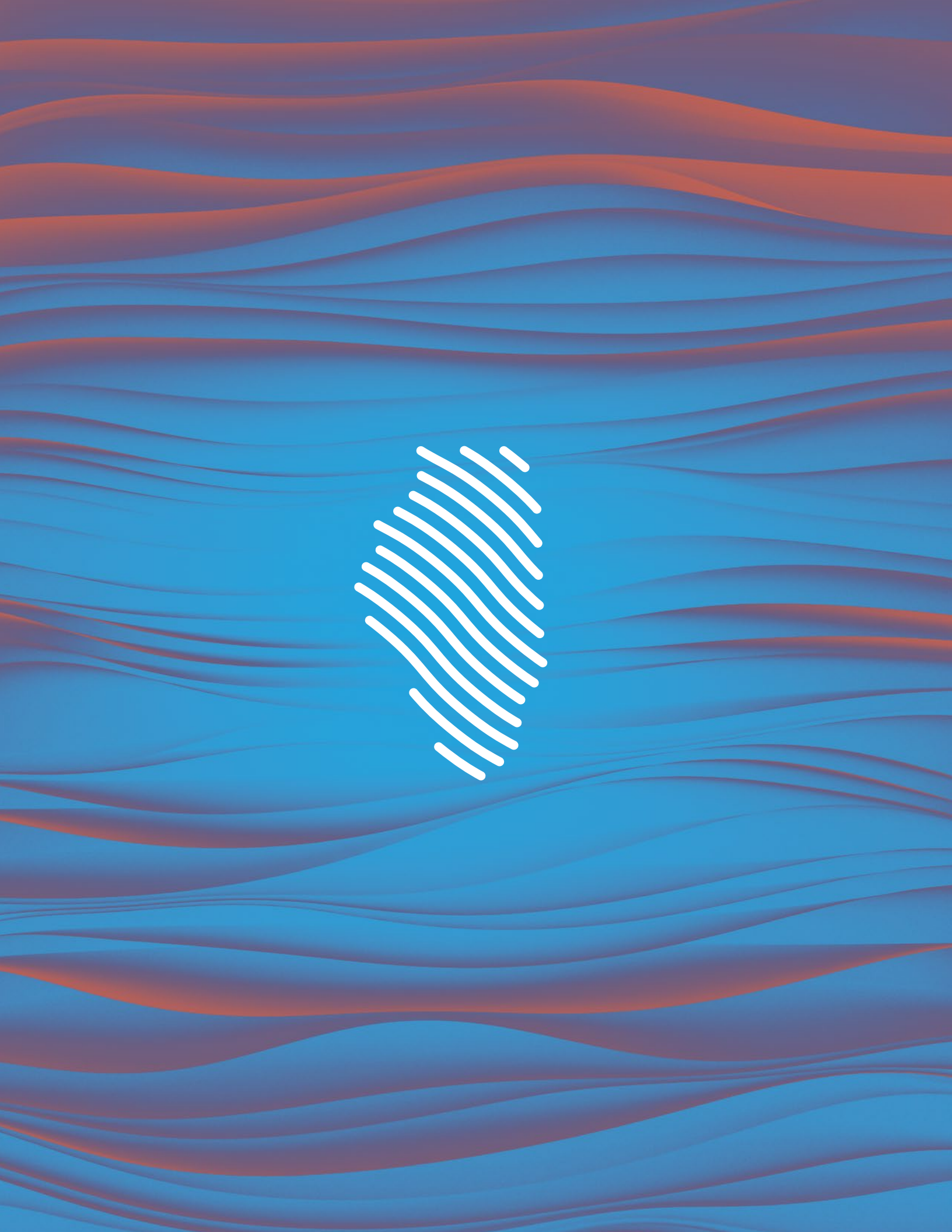




ILLINOIS PUBLIC MEDIA
**OUR NEXT
CENTURY**

2022 ANNUAL REPORT





Last year marked the 100th anniversary of WILL-AM, the oldest component of Illinois Public Media. Throughout our centenary celebrations, we have acknowledged the visionaries from the University of Illinois, who in 1922 saw the potential of the brand-new technology of radio, as well as the dedicated staff and generous supporters who have ensured WILL's success and growth ever since.

Predating the BBC by six months, WILL was founded on a progressive concept: all citizens should have access to an educational service that informs, involves, and inspires. That mission has endured and evolved — and it is more important today than ever. Public media is a vital part of the health of our democracy, a place to share information about our region and economy, a way to celebrate the best in arts and culture, and an educational safe haven for our kids.

One hundred years later, the road ahead is just as exciting as the day we signed on. Digital technology gives us new ways to connect with people. Our local newsroom continues to grow, and we have award-winning local programs in production with more on the horizon.

Those innovators from 1922 would be amazed — and, I believe, incredibly pleased — to see what IPM has become and all the ways we now serve this community. We look forward to the next century of making waves, thanks to you.

Maurice "Moss" Bresnahan
Executive Director

WILL100

LOOKING BACK ONE MINUTE AT A TIME

ILLINOIS HISTORY MINUTES

As part of Illinois Public Media's centennial celebration, WILL-AM launched a yearlong series devoted to Illinois history. *Illinois History Minutes* provided listeners with a daily 60-second almanac highlighting the people and events of our prairie state. Subjects ranged from the iconic and familiar, like the Lincoln-Douglas debates and the triumphs of Chicago's sports teams, to the more obscure and quirky, like the Illinois origins of Popeye the Sailor Man and the 19th-century earthquake that seemingly reversed the flow of the Mississippi River.

Our *Illinois History Minutes* were researched and hosted by reporter and longtime member of the IPM newsroom Jim Meadows. In addition to these 60-second dives into our state's history, Meadows also worked on features about the life and times of America during our inaugural year of 1922, as well as features and interviews examining WILL's own history, drawing from the station's archive of documents and recorded broadcasts.

Those materials, now part of the University of Illinois archives, extend over the radio station's years as the "university of the air," broadcasting lectures by Illinois faculty and guest speakers, but also Illini football and basketball games. More recent materials document WILL's transition from educational broadcasting to the public broadcasting model and the development of its local news department, including talk shows such as *Focus 580*, *The Afternoon Magazine*, and more recently, *The 21st*.

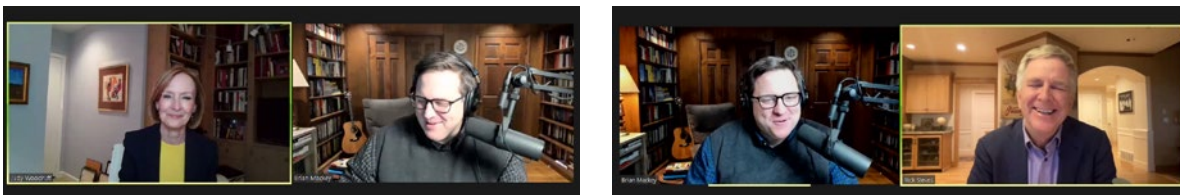


Jim Meadows



Follow the QR Code
to explore all our
Illinois History Minutes.

MEETING SOME PUBLIC MEDIA 'GREATS'



We were honored to share our 100th anniversary with those nearest and dearest to us, from former colleagues to longtime Friends of WILL, to leaders across campus and from around our listening and viewing area. We were also grateful that two icons in the public media sphere helped us celebrate this milestone with two special events.

In January, a group of donors got to enjoy a virtual evening with Rick Steves, hosted by Brian Mackey of *The 21st*, where he shared practical tips for traveling in the pandemic, the best European destinations when traveling with children, and much more. He was a delight and such a warm presence to kick off our festivities.

In March, Judy Woodruff joined us for a virtual visit, hosted again by Mackey, but this time open to the public. Woodruff shared insights, experiences, and anecdotes from her career in journalism and how she believes news has changed in our digital world. It was inspiring to hear students from the College of Media at Illinois ask questions and interact with an icon in the business.

CELEBRATING A CENTURY OF MAKING WAVES



April 6, 2022, marked 100 years of WILL-AM, the oldest component of Illinois Public Media and one of the first radio stations in the country. We commemorated the occasion with a special ceremony at Campbell Hall with some longtime Friends of WILL, partners from across campus, and current and former staff members. The day's events included remarks from University of Illinois Chancellor Robert J. Jones and a special performance by the Marching Illini.

“We are very proud to be the home of WILL for its first century,” said Jones. “Offering our community, our state, and our world a trusted, honest, and sustained voice is a hallmark of our land-grant mission, and WILL continues to define what that looks like for the 21st century.”



Urbana Mayor Diane Marlin and Champaign Mayor Deborah Frank Feinen also joined in our day of centennial celebrations by issuing a joint proclamation declaring April 6, 2022, “Illinois Public Media Day” in honor of WILL’s 100-year history and its profound impact on this community.

“WILL-AM has provided a very important voice in our community for 100 years. It brings national perspective with in-depth programming as well as a focus on local issues. As an elected official, I appreciate that WILL takes the time to understand and explain complex topics. And, as a longtime resident of Urbana, I know that when I tune in to WILL-AM, I will be educated, entertained, and challenged,” said Marlin. “I am grateful and proud that WILL-AM is at home on the campus of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.”



“Over the last 100 years, WILL has established its stations as a trusted source for news, as well as a spot for entertainment and education. We are lucky to have this gem within our community that among other things provides opportunities for youth to produce documentaries, adult reading mentors in the classroom, and important agricultural information and news,” said Feinen. “WILL is a part of the vibrancy of C-U and part of what makes our community special.”



In addition, Gov. JB Pritzker declared it “Illinois Public Media Day” with a statewide proclamation; State Representative Carol Ammons sponsored resolution HR0788 in the Illinois House of Representatives, which would declare April 6, 2022, “Illinois Public Media Day” in the State of Illinois; and the late State Senator Scott Bennett sponsored official recognition from the Illinois Senate.



Dean Tracy Sulkin

“We are celebrating a long legacy of innovation brought about by collaborations among College of Media faculty and students and our WILL colleagues — most notably a conference that led to the establishment of NPR and PBS. As we continue our tradition of training the next generation of media leaders, we are launching new initiatives together, most recently the Illinois Student Newsroom at Illinois Public Media, which gives our students hands-on training alongside media professionals.”

WILL 100

MARKING THE OCCASION WITH A BIT OF FANFARE



From this station's earliest days, a core part of the mission has been to share beautiful music and art with our community, starting with our very own chamber orchestra back in the 1930s, extending to what listeners know and love about our

classical service today. A fanfare felt like a fitting addition to the commemoration of our 100th, and Illinois Public Media was thrilled to work with local composer Randall Reyman on the piece. He is Millikin University's director of jazz and has an impressive resume of classical music and jazz performances.

In March, we welcomed Reyman and a group of brass musicians — all of whom are University of Illinois and Eastern Illinois University faculty members — into the Collins Studio to record the premiere of the WILL 100 anniversary fanfare. We were delighted to be joined by a small group of some of our nearest and dearest friends to mark the occasion and bask in the beauty of a live performance together.



Follow the QR Code to watch the making of WILL's Centennial Fanfare.

UNCOVERING WILL'S HISTORY

Throughout the centenary year, Katie Buzard, WILL 100th history curator, researched and composed monthly articles focused on different aspects of our story. Not only did these articles provide historical insight into our past, present, and future, they provided a sense of pride for our local public media station and its rich history.

We learned more about that storied night on April 6, 1922, when WRM (which would become WILL in 1928) signed on the air for the first time. We also explored WILL's roots in educational and music-based programming, traced public broadcasting's roots to right here in central Illinois, and confirmed our longtime commitment to serving rural communities through things like agriculture programming and reporting.



Katie Buzard



Follow the QR Code to read all Buzard's WILL 100 articles.



WALKING DOWN EQUIPMENT LANE

In the spring, we unveiled our WILL 100 artifacts exhibit in the lobby of Campbell Hall, displaying a collection of broadcast equipment from the last century. Visitors enjoyed a trip down memory lane as we revisited some of the technological advances, both here at WILL and within the world of broadcasting, and electrical engineering at large.



ELEVATING VOICES FROM *THE MIDDLE*

In October, Illinois Public Media was honored to serve as the distribution partner and host of the inaugural episode of *The Middle*, a new national call-in series. This special four-part series was created by award-winning journalist and Champaign-Urbana native Jeremy Hobson and focused on the midterm elections.

For Hobson, a decadeslong career in journalism showed him that the media often overlooks the stories and perspectives of people living in the middle of the country. But it is those Americans who determine the balance of power in Washington and the direction of our country each election season — at least for the last generation. *The Middle* focused on hearing from everyday Americans and elevating the voices of those who live between the coasts.



The program aired in four live parts over four weeks leading up to and through the midterm election, with each episode broadcasting from a different location. Illinois Public Media had the honor of hosting the first episode on Oct. 19, with Hobson returning to Campbell Hall and the WILL radio studios where it all began. Hobson got his broadcasting start at 9 years old contributing to WILL's *Treehouse Radio* and later as a University of Illinois Laboratory High School (Uni High) student working on WILL radio documentaries through Illinois Public Media's Illinois Youth Project..

"I couldn't be more excited to launch *The Middle* from Urbana and to partner with the great team at Illinois Public Media on the distribution of all four live specials. This is where I got my start in radio; it's where I learned how powerful this medium can be. It's the perfect place to start a show aimed at raising up the voices of everyday Americans," Hobson said.

Following *The Middle*'s launch in Urbana, the program broadcast live shows from Fort Myers, Florida, and Kansas City, Missouri, before wrapping up the series with a show in Phoenix, Arizona, on Nov. 9.

Illinois Public Media served as the distribution partner, providing the technical support to deliver *The Middle* to more than 350 stations across the country, including media markets both large and small from coast to coast. This event marked Illinois Public Media's first national distribution effort in modern history.

PASSION. PREPARATION. PRIDE.

It's all part of the ride!

COUNTY FAIR

MEETING THE PEOPLE BEHIND AN AMERICAN PASTIME



County fairs have been a staple of central Illinois summers since 1841 with the creation of the Coles County Fair, the oldest continuous county fair in the state. Over the summer, Illinois Public Media Productions premiered a new documentary tracing the history, culture, and importance of this summer tradition.

County Fair took an intimate look at a treasured American pastime through the lives of six people whose passion, preparation, and pride came together at the 2021 Champaign County Fair in Urbana, Illinois. The stories of a seamstress, a demolition derby driver, a circus performer, a French fry vendor, and twin sisters who show cows have us looking at this summer tradition in a brand-new light.

Weaving original music with beautiful cinematography, *County Fair* illustrates the lives of these people painting their own versions of the American dream as they prepare for and participate in the fair. The film also offers footage of fairs from yesteryear and highlights funny ads and stories from fairs in the 1900s.

"The people who visit the fair rarely think about the people who put so much of themselves into this kind of event. So, *County Fair* is really meant to shine a light on their lives," said Sarah Edwards, producer and director. "The film also highlights the importance of fairs and a bit of their history, but the focus really is on the people and their love for what they do and its importance in their lives."



Follow the QR code to stream *County Fair*.



GROWING TOGETHER FOR 30 YEARS

2022 marked another milestone for a WILL-TV fan favorite: *Mid American Gardener*, which first premiered back in 1992 as *Illinois Gardener*. In its first couple decades, *Mid American Gardener* was a studio format with a panel of gardeners answering questions from a call-in audience. The show has evolved since Tinisha Spain took over as host in 2018 and after the pandemic hit in 2020.

In particular, the pandemic forced the production team to get creative, using Facebook and YouTube to broadcast live as well as getting out into the community for more outdoor events like farmer's markets, plant swaps, and demonstrations in the gardens and homes of both panelists and viewers alike. Spain, her rotation of panelists, and the whole *Mid American Gardener* team kept that creative energy going throughout 2022, experimenting with new ways to bring the best in gardening how-to into living rooms each week.



Right along with Spain, viewers have walked through the step-by-step process of starting seeds, getting the ground or outdoor containers ready, transplanting seedlings, watering, pest control, and everything else you need to know to get that green bean from seed to your dinner table.



TAKING CENTER STAGE WITH CLEF NOTES

In October, Illinois Public Media launched a new monthly classical music newsletter, Clef Notes. Each issue plugs into the local classical music scene with interviews with local music makers; provides a calendar of upcoming concerts and events; and sets out to share something new about the music we love. Katie Buzard, writer and editor of Clef Notes, also helps expand musical horizons and challenge conceptions about classical music through features such as the social media spotlight. These spotlights present a classical music organization or artist that is pushing the boundaries of the genre, bringing classical music to more people, and creating impactful work. Readers follow along as Buzard highlights their accomplishments and hopes to diversify playlists (and social media feeds) along the way.

In the first few issues, Clef Notes presented an interview with the music director of the Baroque Artists of Champaign-Urbana, Sarah Riskind; provided a companion playlist for the third season of *All Creatures Great and Small*; included composer spotlights and program notes for upcoming concerts; shared

articles on national classical music headlines; and checked in with Julia Escobar, our John Frayne Classical Music Fellow. Future issues promise even more exciting content as we work to further connect WILL-FM to the community.

In addition to locally focused content, another way Illinois Public Media works to connect with the listening area is by providing a thorough list of the classical music concerts and events happening throughout central Illinois. This includes the musical offerings from Krannert Center for the Performing Arts, the Illinois School of Music, local groups, and ensembles outside of Champaign-Urbana can all be found in one convenient place: Clef Notes. Subscribers have gotten in touch to thank us for filling this void, as no other local publication provides this service in central Illinois.

Clef Notes offers something for everyone — from the occasional classical music listener to the die-hard fan — because classical music is for all of us.



Follow the QRCode to visit the Clef Notes blog and sign up.

FINE-TUNING WITH THE CLASSICS



Also in October, John Frayne invited flutist Julia Escobar to join him in the studio for a special edition of *Classics of the Phonograph* on WILL-FM. Escobar shared some of her favorite flute records, including a recording by her former teacher, Dr. Adah Jones. In tune with the series, her selected recordings were from the 20th century, although the music spanned the 18th to 20th centuries.

“I was honored to join John Frayne for this special edition of *Classics of the Phonograph*, which features the flute in a variety of settings. My selections focused on chamber music for the flute,” said Escobar. “My goal was to bring new repertoire to the audience and to get some airtime for my favorite instrument.”

In addition to sampling some of her favorites, Escobar and Frayne discussed famous flutists such as Jean Pierre Rampal, James Galway, Julius Baker, and William Bennett. Escobar, a second-year doctoral student at the University of Illinois, is the first John Frayne Classical Music Graduate Student Work Experience Fellow at Illinois Public Media.



Follow the QR Code to hear this special episode of *Classics of the Phonograph*.



TOASTING TO THE GOLDEN AGE OF HI-FI

Illinois Public Media rang in the new year with a new show. Created and hosted by Jason Croft — longtime digital media production manager and local host of NPR's *Here & Now*. *Atomic Age Cocktail Party* premiered on WILL-FM on Jan. 1 and has been celebrating the golden age of the hi-fi and beyond each weekend since.

The series gives Illinois Public Media the opportunity to reach out to fans of another classic genre. "We already have had such huge success with our in-house produced *Classic Mornings*, *Classics of the Phonograph*, and *Classically Black* radio shows. *Atomic Age Cocktail Party* expands our definition of 'classic' to the crooners: Frank Sinatra, Julie London, Dean Martin, Peggy Lee, Mel Tormé, Jack Jones, Anita O'Day, Eartha Kitt, and so many more," said Moss Bresnahan, executive director of Illinois Public Media.

Each week, the show's theme brings together music from the Great American Songbook, Broadway musicals, classic movies, and other familiar standards, while also providing listeners information and context about the songs and the people who performed them. In 2022, *Atomic Age Cocktail Party* aired 50 original shows, including fan favorites such as "Big Band Hi-Fi" and "Over the Moon" to Croft's picks like "Bongo Madness" and "Blue Plate Special."

More recently, *Atomic Age Cocktail Party* has been picked up by other stations across the country. The show can be heard weekly in Pittsburg, Kansas and Homer, Alaska, with stations in California, North

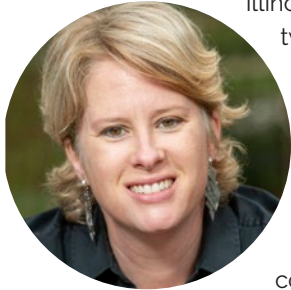
Dakota, Wyoming, and Virginia occasionally airing the program, as well.



Follow the QR Code to view and stream *Atomic Age Cocktail Party* episodes.

AWARD-WINNING

PUBLIC MEDIA AWARDS



Sarah Edwards

Illinois Public Media was honored with two national Public Media Awards by the National Educational Telecommunications Association (NETA).

"Lift Every Voice," part of our *American Portrait | Central Illinois* series, was honored for excellence in COVID-19 content. Featuring several area choirs, it's a timely look at the staying power

of music and the arts in strange and uncertain times. Illinois Public Media was also recognized for best annual report. Our 2020 report took stock of the power of public media and the impact it had on all our lives at the start of such a challenging and unprecedented time. The "Lift Every Voice" production team included Sarah Edwards, producer/director; DJ Roach, producer; and Lillie Duncanson, executive producer.



DJ Roach



Lillie Duncanson

REGIONAL EDWARD R. MURROW AWARD

Illinois Public Media won a Regional Edward R. Murrow Award for the newsroom's live coverage of severe weather across central Illinois. On Dec. 10, 2021, a historic tornado outbreak across the Midwest generated at least four cyclones within the WILL listening area. The rain-wrapped tornadoes occurred hours after sunset in rural areas that lack high-speed broadband. Local meteorologist Andrew Pritchard and News and Public Affairs Director Reginald Hardwick provided over two hours of live, continuous coverage on WILL-AM and -FM. This coverage included storm locations and safety information until all tornado warnings in the area ceased.

"We received emails from people who listened to our coverage in their basements or safe rooms as the storms passed over. This is why public media is an important public service."



Reginald Hardwick

BIG AWARDS FOR 'BIG AG U'

Illinois Public Media agricultural reporter Dana Cronin collaborated on a news series that received multiple honors. "Big Ag U" earned third place in the Special Projects category of the North American Agricultural Journalists Writing Awards and first place in the Small Newsroom category in the Richard H. Driehaus Foundation Awards for Investigative Reporting: Follow the Money.

"Big Ag U" was created with journalists at Harvest Public Media and Investigate Midwest, and it focused on corporate influence at public universities across the Midwest and the outcomes of those investments.

Judges from the North American Agricultural Journalists Writing Awards noted: "Shrinking public funding of ag (and other) higher education is a given ... but the reasonable outcome of its replacement by corporate sources raises questions that I haven't seen examined on more than a local or regional basis. By pulling together their analyses of what's happening on a group of first-tier research institutions, the writer(s) paint a picture that should concern policy makers in both education and the ag industry."



Dana Cronin

PUBLIC MEDIA JOURNALISTS ASSOCIATION AWARDS

The Public Media Journalists Association (PMJA) Awards are designed to honor the very best reporting in a wide variety of categories, and multiple Illinois Public Media productions were recognized.

The first installment of our annual series *State of Change* won first place in the Multi-Media Presentation category. Hosted by



Tinisha Spain

Tinisha Spain and produced by both Spain and News and Public Affairs Director Reginald Hardwick, *State of Change* looks at the impact of climate change and adverse weather in Illinois now and in the future. The special (which aired in 2021)



Brian Mackey

showed farmers racing to protect livestock from rising heat, invasive species on the rise, a Black Illinois farming community's debate over adding natural gas service,

and the growing bald eagle population of in Illinois.

The 21st, hosted by Brian Mackey, took home second place in the Audience Engagement category for their September show on bias in attention deficit disorder diagnosis, which looked at how symptoms of the disorder are often misdiagnosed in women and Black children.

STUDENT WORK

PMJA AWARDS

A product of a long-standing partnership between Illinois Public Media and the University of Illinois Laboratory High School, "Immigrants' Journeys: Challenges and Opportunities in Champaign-Urbana" won second place in the Student Multi-Media Presentation category of the Public Media Journalists Association Awards. Students from Uni High produced and hosted the podcast and on-air special. It explored individual immigrants' journeys to central Illinois as well as those who have become advocates for immigrants' rights. "The best part of my job is working in collaboration with young people and their teachers to help tell stories about our community. This award is one symbol of the success of that work. I am so proud of these students," said Kimberlie Kranich, director of engagement and educational outreach at Illinois Public Media.

HEARST AWARDS

Two student journalists from the Illinois Student Newsroom at Illinois Public Media were honored in the national 2021-2022 Hearst Journalism Awards Program in the audio news category. The students submitted two stories for the competition: one spot news story and one four-minute feature.

Carolina Garibay, senior producer at the time, placed sixth in the competition. Her longer multimedia feature focused on challenges dual-language teachers and their students face in online learning, and her spot news story focused on a local march for women's rights. Garibay also placed second in the Hearst National Audio Championship, an on-site competition for the title of top audio journalist in the country. She received a \$7,500 award. The competition was hosted by the William Randolph Hearst Foundation's Journalism Awards Program. The audio finalists were assigned a story about inflation and the cost of living in the San Francisco Bay area.

Vivian La, also a senior producer at the time, tied for 17th place. Her longer feature focused on the local Asian American community speaking out about racism. Her spot news story was about a campaign to help formerly incarcerated people.



Follow the QR Code to listen to Garibay's winning report.

CONNECTIONS TO THE COMMUNITY

EXAMINING THE ROLE OF INDEPENDENT FILMMAKING

Reel Midwest—Illinois Public Media's independent film series showcasing the best feature, documentary, and short films from Illinois and across the Midwest—took on a new form in 2022. The Reel Midwest Film Festival series focuses on bringing these powerful films out into the community to provide a space to examine the role of independent film and its connection to movements for social justice.

The inaugural installment featured a screening of '63 *Boycott* by Kartemquin Films at the Spurlock Museum of World Cultures. The fight for access to quality public education in the United States is as old as public education itself. Organized movements to address the teaching-and-learning gap in public schools here in Champaign-Urbana as well as Chicago are active and ongoing. On Oct. 22, 1963, more than 250,000 students boycotted the Chicago Public Schools to protest racial segregation. The film '63 *Boycott* connects this forgotten story of one of the largest northern civil rights demonstrations to contemporary issues around race, education, and youth activism.

The Reel Midwest Film Festival brought together Illinois students, filmmakers, community organizers, and the broader local public for a discussion around this historic and current struggle.



"We have chosen films that raise historical as well as contemporary issues followed by a discussion to connect audiences to the filmmaker, local activists who are engaged with the issues, and local resources," said Kimberlie Kranich, director of engagement and educational outreach at Illinois Public Media.

WATCHING FILMS ON THE BIG SCREEN

Illinois Public Media partnered with the Champaign Park District to present the 2022-2023 Arthouse Experience Film Series, featuring a specially curated selection of monthly art film screenings along with regionally produced documentaries, special guest speakers, and more.

The Virginia Theatre's Arthouse Experience Film Series is programmed each season by special guest curator Sanford Hess, who pulls together a slate of limited-release, high-quality titles that have captured the imagination of movie lovers. The movies that Mr. Hess selects — a mix of award-winners, Ebertfest favorites, and recent classics — are presented one Wednesday each month on the Virginia's 52-foot-wide movie screen with state-of-the-art surround sound.

As part of Illinois Public Media's exclusive sponsorship, an additional film is screened at the Virginia Theatre each quarter as part of the Reel Midwest Film Festival series.



News Brews & Beatz

In November 2021, Illinois Public Media launched News, Brews & Beatz. These quarterly community conversations are focused on serving the Black community here in central Illinois and are the brainchild of Assistant Corporate Support Director Jill Clements and Director of News and Public Affairs Director Reginald Hardwick. From the beginning, the mission has been to make News, Brews & Beatz engaging, informative, and entertaining while also tackling different aspects of the gun violence crisis in our community — and communities across the country — and what individuals and community groups are doing to combat it.



February's event kicked off the second year of News, Brews & Beatz by talking with dynamic educators from Champaign Unit 4 Schools and

Urbana School District #116 about the school system's role in breaking the cycle of gun violence. It was one of our most well-attended events to date, filling Pour Bros. Taproom in downtown Champaign.

May's conversation brought together local and university professionals to discuss what they are doing to combat gun violence in our community.

Guest panelists included Sam Smith, director of civic engagement and social practice at the Krannert Center for the Performing Arts; Joe Stovall, a Champaign State Farm agent; and Lamont Holden, a clinical assistant professor in the University of Illinois School of Music.



In September, we hosted a very special in-studio edition of News, Brews & Beatz featuring local school superintendents from Champaign, Urbana, and Danville. This installment covered a wide range of topics, including questions about leadership, safety, and the challenges and triumphs in local schools.

We wrapped up the year with an event in December where we looked at the impact of housing and economics on community gun violence. Panelists included people from the housing authority and City of Champaign, as well as professors and researchers from the University of Illinois and Parkland College.

These events are co-hosted by Hardwick and Tracy Parsons, facilitator of the Champaign County Community Coalition. Produced by Clements, News, Brews & Beatz also works to highlight the diverse and impactful work of Black artists throughout the region. Events have featured spoken word performances from Missy Richland, speed painting with Ralph Roether, musical performances by Ryan Byfield & Nuclei Trio Band, and music from Dj-I.c.Dre'.



"The News, Brews, & Beatz gatherings have been enlightening. The panelists have informed us about how a lack of mental health services, support for schools, and places for young people in Champaign-Urbana all play a role in the deadly violence we're seeing. I'm honored that Illinois Public Media is playing a role in these important discussions."

— Reginald Hardwick



Follow the QR Code to watch past News, Brews & Beatz events.

GAINING A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF OTHERS' EXPERIENCES

Illinois Public Media's digital Social Justice Learning space continued to grow, creating three new lessons throughout the year. First, we looked at Socioeconomic Status in America (SES). Measured by several factors, but most often it focuses on income, occupation, and education, it can have either a positive or negative impact on a person's life. But SES and its effects are more than just access to education or opportunities. Research has also found the lower the SES, the more likely someone is to experience physiological and psychological health issues.

Next up, we explored homelessness in America. Estimates indicated that more than half a million Americans experienced homelessness in 2022. Most of these are individuals, but a still staggering portion are families with children. These people live in every state and territory and represent the diversity of this country. However, certain members of our society are more likely than others to find themselves without a place to live. Risk is tied to race, gender and gender identity, sexual orientation, and mental health.

Finally, we tackled voting and voting rights in America. Voting is the key to a healthy democracy and is one of our cherished freedoms. But who has the right to vote has evolved during our country's history. Looking back on America's first century, voting rights were very limited, mostly to white, land-owning, Christian men. Over time, access opened up to more groups of people, but even today, the right to vote isn't guaranteed. Voting rights in America, specifically the enfranchisement of some and disenfranchisement of others,



continue to be a moral and political issue, and efforts to suppress the vote are alive and well.

The goal of our social justice learning space is to gain a better understanding of others' experiences with the hopes of achieving a more equitable and quality society for all peoples.



Follow the QR Code to explore all past lessons.



LEARNING TO BE BETTER NEIGHBORS

In August, Illinois Public Media brought Daniel Tiger to town for a special Be My Neighbor event during Champaign-Urbana Days at Douglass Park. We distributed 300 back-to-school bags filled with socks, dental hygiene kits, books, and fun at-home activities. Plus, Daniel Tiger had a blast meeting with fans big and small. The highlight for us, though, was the opportunity to come together and practice being a caring neighbor with our littlest friends, by making cards for local senior citizens, teachers, and nurses.

This event was made possible through a grant from PNC Grow Up Great® and the hard work of collaborators at the Champaign Park District and Champaign County Head Start.

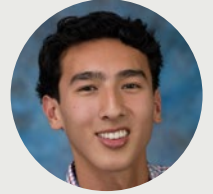
CONNECTIONS TO THE UNIVERSITY

WELCOMING THE CLASS OF 2022

Aniyha Jones received the Donald P. Mullaly Internship Scholarship for 2022-2023 and served as an associate producer on *The 21st*. During her time at Illinois Public Media, Jones pitched segment ideas, researched topics, booked guests, and wrote scripts for the statewide show. Jones came to us from the Gies College of Business and applied for the Mullaly Internship after creating and marketing her own podcast platform while learning from home during the first months of the COVID-19 pandemic.



James Perkovich received the Humanities Gateway Internship in Public Media and Civic Engagement to work with Illinois Public Media's Education and Outreach department as a co-producer of community engagement. Perkovich helped produce community listening sessions for journalists in our newsroom and conducted outreach for the Reel Midwest Film Festival series, which is offered as a part of Illinois Public Media's collaboration on the Arthouse Experience at the Virginia Theatre.



Arianna Williams received the Robert O. Endres Endowed Internship for 2022-2023 and served as a multiplatform student journalist in the Illinois Public Media newsroom. During her time with the organization, she put together our weekly News Around Illinois newsletter, helped write stories, and scheduled web posts on social media. In the fall, she helped launch our presence on TikTok.



Williams is a student in the College of Media and serves as the president of the National Association of Black Journalists chapter at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign.

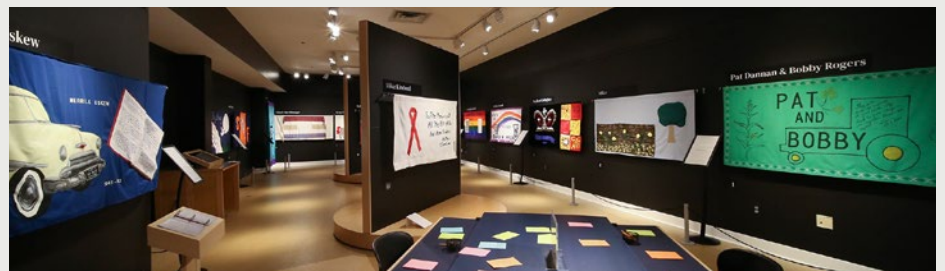
Celeste Acosta served as a Student Bilingual Spanish Translator in the Education and Outreach department at Illinois Public Media. Acosta provided bilingual translation services for the Book Mentor Project, which included written translation services and interpretation services for Spanish-speaking families at our family night events.

Niyah Edmond also worked with the Education and Outreach department, handling the day-to-day clerical and administrative support tasks for the Book Mentor Project. Edmond worked out in the field, visiting our partner locations for various tasks and actively participating in the program family nights.

LIVING LEGACIES

The "Sewn in Memory: AIDS Quilt Panels from Central Illinois" exhibit at the Spurlock Museum of World Cultures debuted in January and featured over a dozen quilt panels originally made in the 1980s and early 1990s for the AIDS Memorial Quilt in Washington, DC. Each of these panels commemorated a person who died of AIDS, or of an AIDS-related ailment. This exhibit marked their first showing since 1993, when they were displayed in the Illini Union.

Under the guidance of Kimberlie Kranich, director of engagement and educational outreach at Illinois Public Media, and College of Media professor Charles "Stretch" Ledford, students from the College of Media at Illinois interviewed those closest to the individuals to capture who they were, what they endured, and how their legacy



perseveres. Each person's video vignette was displayed alongside their quilt. The exhibit ran through July, but these stories live on via Illinois Public Media's YouTube channel and at willillinois.edu/sewninmemory.

"Sewn in Memory" was a community-curated show created for the Spurlock Museum with these partners: the Greater Community AIDS Project of East Central Illinois (GCAP), who holds the panels and assisted in exhibit research and creation; History Harvest, a University of Illinois course which seeks to gather

historical stories and documents from local communities; and the Department of Journalism at the University of Illinois, whose independent study class conducted the interviews.

"The partnerships that have formed to make this exhibit possible opened new pathways for documenting the struggle against AIDS, as well as the larger stories and oral histories of LGBTQ+ people in central Illinois in the 1980s and 1990s. There were many stories that were yet to be told, and it was our hope to help tell some of them," said Kranich.

NEWSROOM

STAYING INFORMED, BEING EMPOWERED

One of your most influential powers as a citizen is exercising your right to vote. However, with this power comes responsibility. Responsibility to consider your options and the responsibility to make informed decisions when electing representatives to office or voting on issues.

As central Illinois prepared for the midterm election in November, the Illinois Public Media news team provided voters a trusted source for the latest information on candidates and the issues. Listeners could tune to WILL-AM and -TV for news updates and interviews and look to Illinois Public Media's Election

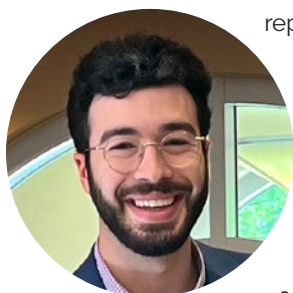
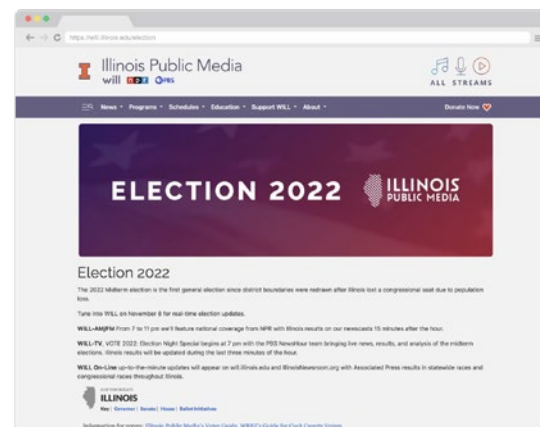
Center for full versions of these stories and more. This digital repository was frequently updated with stories from the

newsroom and featured interviews from our statewide talk show, *The 21st*, including candidate interviews and election news to empower voters to cast a vote based on facts.

The Election Center was a voter guide, providing a comprehensive Frequently Asked Questions section, registration deadlines, and ballot information. In addition to finding what exactly would be on each district's ballot, visitors could peruse stories from political reporter Harrison Malkin — who

interviewed many of the candidates in the 2nd, 13th, and 15th Congressional Districts. He also provided a closer look at the effects gerrymandering would have on Illinois voters and fact checked claims made by candidates.

On election night, Campbell Hall was buzzing with live local and national election coverage on both WILL radio and TV. From 7 to 11 pm, our various channels featured live news, results, and analysis of the midterm elections with national coverage from NPR and PBS NewsHour and Illinois results during local newscasts at the top of the hour from our own Tinisha Spain and Brian Mackey. Other members of the Illinois Public Media news team, including Malkin and Emily Hays, brought us updates from campaign headquarters around the region.



Harrison Malkin



CONNECTING WITH THE LOCAL LATINO COMMUNITY

Illinois Public Media welcomed Luis Velazquez as the new Latino Communities reporter for the newsroom in August. In this new role, Velazquez focused on elevating the voices of one of the fastest growing communities in central Illinois. According to the U.S. Census, between 2010 and 2020, the Hispanic community grew by 32% in Macon County, 53% in Coles County, 57% in Champaign County, and 88% in Ford County. Given this data, we prioritized hiring a reporter dedicated to connecting with local Latino communities and bringing their stories and the issues affecting them to a wider audience.

As this new Latino Communities beat grows, Velazquez will team up with education, politics, agriculture, and other reporters to bring special features on how each of these beats uniquely affect the local Latino community.

Velazquez is a former Donald P. Mullally intern. He worked in the newsroom while completing his master's degree in journalism at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign back in May, 2022. He is also a former reporter for Cicero Independiente, a bilingual, nonprofit news source in the Chicago area, and a former assistant editor at *The Daily Illini*.



Luis Velazquez



DEBATING THE ISSUES

Illinois Public Media, in partnership with WAND News and the League of Women Voters of Champaign County, hosted Illinois 13th Congressional District debates between Democratic primary candidates Nikki Budzinski and David Palmer in May and Republican primary candidates Regan Deering, Matt Hausman, Terry Martin, and Jesse Reising in June. Later in the fall, when the candidates had been decided for each side, we teamed up again for another debate between Illinois 13th Congressional District candidates Deering and Budzinski.

These debates were moderated by Illinois Public Media journalist Tinisha Spain and WAND News evening anchor Sean Streaty and featured questions from constituents and panels of local journalists — including Brian Mackey, host of *The 21st* talk show in Urbana; Doug Wolfe and Caryn Eisert, reporters for WAND News in Decatur; Hannah Meisel, reporter for NPR Illinois in Springfield; and Mark Maxwell, reporter for KSDK-TV in St. Louis. These events gave people a chance to hear candidates discuss the issues affecting the district, which stretches from Champaign-Urbana west to the Mississippi River and to the Illinois suburbs of St. Louis.

Broadcast live from the Collins Studio in Campbell Hall, the debates aired on WILL-TV, WSIU-TV, and COZI-TV and were simulcast on radio on WILL-AM and -FM out of Urbana, WSIU-FM out of Carbondale, and NPR Illinois (WUIS-FM) out of Springfield. Members of the public were able to interact with the debates in realtime via Illinois Public Media's Facebook page.



"In a growing news desert like central Illinois, it's harder to know where candidates stand on the issues. These debates served as a valuable opportunity for the voters to learn where the candidates stand on issues like abortion rights, inflation, agriculture, climate change, and more," said Reginald Hardwick, news and public affairs director at Illinois Public Media.

NEWBOOM

WELCOMING NEW PRODUCERS TO *THE 21ST*

Over the summer, Illinois Public Media welcomed two new producers to *The 21st* team. Christine Hatfield and Jose Zepeda work closely with host Brian Mackey and Director of News and Public Affairs Reginald Hardwick to create timely, relevant, and inclusive programming around the news, culture, and stories that matter to Illinoisans. Their goal is to create a daily talk show that stands out among local and national public media programs with topics that surprise, guests who captivate, and issues that connect *The 21st* with its listeners.

Hatfield has spent her career in public radio, working at WNIJ, WGLT, and WCBU before heading up to Wisconsin Public Radio in Milwaukee to join their team as a news reporter. She also worked with Indiana Public Radio as a student at Ball State University. For her, a show like *The 21st* gives the audience a chance to take a deeper dive into the topics that permeate their lives and discuss things a bit more off the beaten path.

Zepeda comes from a television background, working as a morning show producer at WQAD, the ABC television station in the Quad Cities, before joining the Illinois Public Media team. For him, a show like *The 21st* is important to the Illinois audience because it provides a voice to those you may not typically associate with the state of Illinois



Christine Hatfield

"Programs like *The 21st* give people a chance to slow down, to really talk through and make sense of what's happening within our own state, learn about our history, the common threads we see,

that sort of thing. Here, we don't just talk at the audience, we're talking with the audience, often in real time, and that makes all the difference — we get to hear perspectives that maybe we don't usually hear so much!"

"It's always exciting to hear a new voice on *The 21st* and learn about a new viewpoint that really makes listeners look deeper into what's trending in the news. The format really allows the audience to gain new perspectives on a particular news story and to learn more about the rich history of the state of Illinois."



Jose Zepeda

Friends of will



CELEBRATING AN ENDURING FRIENDSHIP

In November, Illinois Public Media toasted our nearest and dearest with Friendsgiving, an open house celebration for the Friends of WILL. Campbell Hall opened its doors to the community, and we were thrilled so many people braved the cold and snowy weather to join our last public event commemorating WILL's 100th anniversary.

This event marked the second time Illinois Public Media hosted Friendsgiving in person, and we took advantage of the opportunity, making this event more interactive and easier

for guests to explore Campbell Hall at their own pace. Upon arrival, friends received a "passport" facilitating a self-guided tour of the station, featuring Illinois Public Media staff and community advisors along the way. Passports were stamped at each stop, such as the Collins Studio, FM library, newsroom, and education and outreach offices. Full passport cards could be turned in to claim vintage WILL swag. There were also drinks and food for all to enjoy.



TRAVELING WITH FRIENDS

Also in November, a group of Friends of WILL escaped the winter weather and headed south to explore the Jewel of Central America. Part beach getaway and part tropical jungle adventure, this trip to Belize was the perfect combination of culture, nature, history, science, and fun. Director of Development John Steinbacher joined the group as they explored the lovely seaside village of Hopkins and the tropical jungle and visited Mayan ruins and the Green Iguana Conservation Project. Friends had the opportunity to snorkel, go birdwatching, take a day trip to Tikal in Guatemala, go fishing, tour a chocolate farm, and so much more. For many the highlight of the trip was a boat tour of the Smithsonian's Caribbean Coral Reef Ecosystem program at Carrie Bow Cay Research Field Station, which included a brief lecture from University of Illinois professor and tourmate Katy Heath. She spoke about the red mangrove ecosystem near the Belize Barrier Reef, a topic she explored during her onsite research years before.

DEVELOPMENT

REACHING OUR GOALS



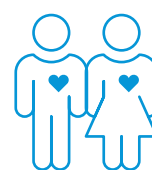
To mark our centennial anniversary, Illinois Public Media's development team established two 100-themed goals in 2022. Our first goal was to encourage 100 additional Friends of WILL to join our Vision Circle of Giving. Members of our Vision Circle enhance the long-term excellence and impact of Illinois Public Media programs and services through leadership-level annual gifts of \$1000 or more. We are thrilled to report that 114 more Friends were added throughout the year, meaning we now have more than 400 Vision Circle members.

Our second goal was to increase the total known planned gifts in our Mullally Circle to more than 100. Our Mullally Circle members have created a legacy by investing in local public media for the future generations of community members. Planned gifts help to ensure our services will continue to be free and accessible to everyone. Thanks to an outreach campaign and individual interactions, we were able to reach our goal and now have 108 planned gifts in place. A huge thank you to these generous donors, who are helping to ensure we remain a valuable resource for the next 100 years.

To view a complete audited financial statement, please visit will.illinois.edu/about/compliance.

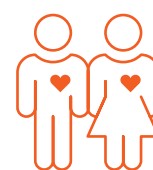
Friends of will

TOTAL FRIENDS



12,104

FY 2021



12,012

FY 2022

TOTAL ANNUAL FRIENDS GIFTS



\$2,377,821

FY 2021



\$2,555,210

FY 2022

OUR 100TH GOALS



114

New Vision Circle Members



108

Total Mullally Circle Gifts



ILLINOIS PUBLIC MEDIA

A NEW LOOK FOR A NEW CENTURY

Spending a year looking back on our century long legacy had many of us at Illinois Public Media asking what our goals are for the next 100 years. How can we more fully embrace our role as your full-service public media organization in the modern era? And one small but significant way we believed we could deliver on our promise was through a modernization of the visual representations of Illinois Public Media. We needed to better showcase what we are today and what we are striving to be tomorrow. From those efforts our new mark was born.

Today, Illinois Public Media's news, outreach efforts, music programs, and more can be found on multiple platforms. Our original documentaries and short stories reach new audiences both over-the-air and in the streaming space, and those streaming capabilities allow our listeners and viewers to take us with them anywhere. Today, we offer so much more than our past colleagues could ever have imagined a century ago, and it can't be contained within just four letters.

WILL — both TV and radio — has always been, and will continue to be, where you can turn for the very best in what public media has to offer. Our local environment, our talented staff, and the needs of those around us will always drive the efforts of the organization. You, the Friends and neighbors of WILL, have always been the reason for our work. And you will continue to be what connects us with our 100-year legacy and encourages us to look to the future, acknowledging the changes we must make to represent and serve everyone.

To that end, we believe our name, Illinois Public Media and its accompanying mark, encapsulates everything we are and everything we hope to be moving forward: a robust public media organization meeting the needs of its community, state, and region ... on and off the air.



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