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Virginia Communications Hall of Fame to Induct Five

RICHMOND, Va. (Feb. 18, 2013) – A bureau chief, print journalist, editor, newspaper publisher and advertising executive are the 2013 inductees into the [Virginia Communications Hall of Fame](#). This is the 26th Hall of Fame class to honor significant achievements in the fields of media.

The inductees are:

- Dorothy Abernathy, bureau chief for Virginia and West Virginia with the Associated Press, has been involved in the AP's coverage of many of the biggest stories of the past two decades, including the D.C. sniper shootings, 9/11 and the Virginia Tech shootings. Abernathy is a founding member of the Virginia Coalition for Open Government, as well as a long-time member of the VCOG board, who recently completed a two-year term as president. She spearheaded the second FOIA audit in the country and the first one organized by an AP bureau. Two years ago, Abernathy's role became more focused on AP services and revenue, gaining experience in product and project management.
- Steve Bassett, senior vice president and group creative director at The Martin Agency, has worked on accounts for North Carolina Tourism, Piedmont Airlines, Norwegian Caribbean Lines, Nissan, J.C. Penney, Tabasco, Walmart, Yellow Pages, Wrangler, Partnership for a Drug-Free America and GEICO. His work has been recognized in international award shows including The One Show, Communication Arts, D&AD and Cannes. Bassett served as an adjunct professor at the VCU [Brandcenter](#), was named Richmond Ad Person of the Year and was featured on the cover of Creativity magazine. Prior to The Martin Agency, Bassett worked at McKinney & Silver, Chiat-Day and DDB.

- Don Belt of National Geographic has traveled to 70 countries during the past three decades working as a writer and editor of articles for National Geographic magazine. Along the way, he has covered the defining issues of our time such as environmental degradation, vanishing cultures, Islam and the West, the effects of global climate change and the geopolitical trends that are shaping our world. As senior editor of National Geographic from 1998 to 2010, he helped guide the magazine's coverage of topics ranging from weapons of mass destruction and the use of terrorism to the legacy of colonialism in the modern Middle East.

- Doug Harwood, editor, The Rockbridge Advocate, launched his career as a radio host in his sophomore year at Washington and Lee University, WLUR-FM. From there, Harwood quickly launched a career in journalism, writing stories for Buena Vista News, which became Rockbridge Weekly, and earning a reputation for always getting to the bottom of a news story. Since 1992, Harwood has served as the editor for The Rockbridge Advocate, writing influential stories and shedding light on a variety of topics including health code violations, dethroning a knight and piecing together an unsolved murder case. Harwood previously taught journalism at Washington and Lee University and Virginia Military Institute.

- Tom Silvestri, president and publisher, Richmond Times-Dispatch and vice president of the Richmond Group of World Media Enterprises, has enjoyed a 35-plus-year career in newspapers, digital media and teaching. That career came full circle with a return to the Richmond Times-Dispatch as president and publisher at a time of unprecedented challenges. Prior to rejoining the Times-Dispatch, Silvestri was president of Media General's community newspapers, responsible for 20 daily newspapers and more than 25 weeklies in five Southeastern states. In 2012, he was named co-chair of the Capital Region Collaborative, which is building a vision for the Richmond Region, and president-elect of the Southern Newspaper Publishers Association.

These five media leaders will be inducted into the Hall of Fame on Thursday, April 11, at the John Marshall Hotel in Richmond. The reception begins at 5:30 p.m. and the induction ceremony follows, beginning at 6:30 p.m. Virginia Commonwealth University's [School of Mass Communications](#) will host the ceremony. Mass communications' professors Scott Sherman and Bill Oglesby will co-emcee the event.

The Virginia Communications Hall of Fame recognizes communication professionals with exceptional careers in journalism, public relations,

advertising and other media fields. This newest class of five inductees will bring the total number of inductees to 145.

“The Hall of Fame has been a signature event hosted by the VCU School of Mass Communications,” said Yan Jin, Ph.D., associate professor of public relations and interim director for the School of Mass Communications at VCU. “Induction into the Hall of Fame is a much celebrated career highlight and recognition of professional excellence for communication leaders in the media industry of Virginia.”

Tickets are \$100 each and can be reserved online at <https://www.support.vcu.edu/event/HallofFameTickets>, or by calling Lauren Stewart at the School of Mass Communications at (804) 827-3761. Proceeds from the evening will benefit the Hall of Fame scholarship fund at VCU. Scholarship sponsorships are available at <https://www.support.vcu.edu/event/HallofFameSponsorship>.

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