

The Decline of Local News and the Rise of Polarization

Thursday, September 29th at 5 pm

Suffolk Law Sargent Hall
120 Tremont St., Boston, MA
5th Floor Blue Sky Lounge

Reception to follow in the same location

THE MASTERMAN SPEAKER SERIES

On the First Amendment and the Fourth Estate



The Decline of Local News and the Rise of Polarization

Local journalism is in crisis. Community newspapers are folding and those that remain struggle to devote resources to reporting on local issues. Meanwhile political polarization is growing and local issues are increasingly viewed through the lens of national politics and partisanship. This year's Masterman Speaker Series will examine the relationship between the decline of local news and the rise of polarization, as well as the effect this decline has had on government accountability and democracy more generally. The discussion will also consider models for strengthening and reimagining local journalism in the years ahead.

THE MASTERMAN SPEAKER SERIES

On the First Amendment and the Fourth Estate

Some of the most polarizing and provocative issues of our time involve matters rooted in the First Amendment. Edward I. Masterman, JD '50, LLD '90 and his wife Sydel, established the Masterman Speaker Series on the First Amendment and the Fourth Estate to provide a forum for robust debate and exchange of ideas on freedom of the press and its attendant responsibilities. The Speaker Series brings together representatives from government, the legal profession, and the press for the purposes of informing, educating, and engaging those who care deeply about these issues.

Our Speakers



Joshua P. Darr is an associate professor of political communication in the Manship School of Mass Communication and Department of Political Science at Louisiana State University. He co-authored *Home Style Opinion: How Local Newspapers Can Slow Polarization* (2021, Cambridge University Press). From 2022-2024, he will serve as a Carnegie Fellow, researching the connection between local media and political polarization. He has written about politics and media for outlets such as *FiveThirtyEight*, *The Boston Globe*, and *Scientific American*. Darr also serves as an associate dean.



Renée Loth is an opinion columnist for *The Boston Globe*. Loth has been a presidential campaign reporter, political editor, and editor of the *Globe's* editorial page, where for nine years she was the highest-ranking woman at the newspaper. She is currently an adjunct lecturer in public policy at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government, and was twice a judge for the Pulitzer prizes in journalism. Through traveling awards and fellowships, she has reported from 14 countries.



Charles St. Amand joined Suffolk University's Communication & Journalism Department as its Practitioner in Residence in July 2018 after working 31 years in community journalism, most recently as editor of the *Sentinel & Enterprise* in Fitchburg, Mass. A 1986 graduate of Suffolk University, he began teaching journalism part time at Suffolk, his alma mater, in 2000. He is vice president of the New England Society of News Editors' Board of Governors.

Moderator



Dan Kennedy is a professor in the School of Journalism at Northeastern University and the author of two books about the changing media landscape—*The Wired City: Reimagining Journalism and Civic Life in the Post-Newspaper Age* (2013) and *The Return of the Moguls: How Jeff Bezos and John Henry Are Remaking Newspapers for the Twenty-First Century* (2018). His forthcoming book, *What Works: The Future of Local News*, to be co-authored with Ellen Clegg, will be published by Beacon Press in 2023. Their podcast on local news, also called *What Works*, can be found at whatworks.news.

Co-sponsored by the Ford Hall Forum.

