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STANGLER ELECTED NATIONAL ACT PRESIDENT — Michelle Stangler, rising junior at the University of Wisconsin River Falls, has been elected president of the National Agricultural Communicators of Tomorrow (NACT). Stangler has been involved with NAFB and her local ACT chapter throughout her time in college.

After graduating high school, Stangler served as a Wisconsin State FFA officer for a year before beginning her college career. It was during her time as a state officer that she learned how much she loved sharing the stories of agriculture with others.

Stangler learned about NAFB and the farm broadcasting community when she interned for the Midwest Farm Report in Madison, Wisconsin, during the summer of 2021. Through that internship, she was able to attend the 2021 NAFB Convention and grow her network and future career plans. This summer, she was able to further her passion for farm broadcasting through an internship with WRDN Radio in Durand, Wisconsin, funded by a grant from the NAFB Foundation.

“NAFB has really shifted my focus for post-graduation. I never thought I would be more interested in farm broadcasting than I am now,” Stangler said.



While serving as a newsroom intern at National FFA Convention, Stangler learned about ACT and how to become involved with that organization. She went back to UW-River Falls hoping to grow and share the many ways for students to get involved, like NACT.

Her involvement in networking with ACT members across many universities inspired her to run for national office this July at the 2022 Agriculture Media Summit in Raleigh, North Carolina.

“I want to serve students who share a similar purpose but have many different backgrounds,” Stangler added.

Additionally, **Olivia Larson**, NAFB student member from the University of Arkansas, was elected as the NACT communications coordinator.

Both Stangler and Larson hold a common passion for sharing the positive stories of agriculture to their peers and the community.

Larson has noted she's excited to serve in her new role and work with like-minded people from across the country.

The tie between NACT and NAFB is strong, and both organizations are helping to pave the way for the next generation of agricultural communicators.

"The foundation, the networking, and the opportunities these organizations have given me are irreplaceable; and I would love to give back to the future of these groups," Stangler concluded.

HALVORSON PUBLISHES FIRST BOOK — **Sabrina Halvorson**, an NAFB Broadcast Council member, recently published her first book, a novel titled "Sins of the Father." Halvorson has been a news professional for more than 30 years and has been actively involved with NAFB since she became a member 10 years ago.

Halvorson's background is in journalism, rather than agriculture. She has spent many years in larger markets in California, where she began working in newspaper then in radio and television.



"Ten years ago, I was brought on at AgNet West and switched from reporting on things like major crimes, political happenings, and world events to reporting on the wide world of agriculture. I'm now the national correspondent for AgNet Media, which owns AgNet West and Southeast AgNet. It turns out, while being a farm broadcaster, I still report on political happenings, world events, and even occasionally major crimes," Halvorson said.

Although Halvorson's career was already established when she became a NAFB member, the organization has given her some of her dearest friends as well as the opportunity to mentor others who are just starting their careers.

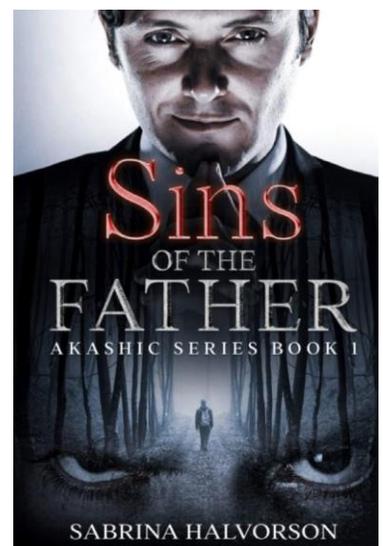
"I like helping new generations find themselves in our industry. During my time in NAFB, I've been elected to the Board of Directors three times, and that has given me a new understanding of service. I was also in the inaugural Leadership

NAFB group, which was life-changing for me, not only because of what we learned but because of the amazing friendships that came from it," Halvorson said.

When she's not reporting, traveling, serving in a leadership role, or working in another one of her many capacities, Halvorson is writing fiction novels. Her first novel, "Sins of the Father," is a psychological thriller with paranormal elements that explores theories of life after death and the depths some people will sink to as they try to prove these theories.

"I've been asked many times what inspired me to write this story, and it's a difficult question to answer. It started with the simple thought of 'What would happen if...'. From there it evolved into me learning about Einstein's theories of quantum physics and how they relate to some metaphysical theories," Halvorson said.

To learn more about Halvorson's book, visit her website at <https://sabinahalvorson.square.site/>.



MEDINA WINS NACTA TEACHING AWARD — **Daniela Medina**, a second-year graduate student at the University of Arkansas, has been awarded the North American Colleges and Teachers of Agriculture (NACTA) graduate student teaching award for her service and outstanding performance in the classroom.

Medina was involved with the Agricultural Communicators of Tomorrow (ACT) during her time as an undergraduate at Texas A&M University and now serves as the graduate student advisor for the ACT chapter at the University of Arkansas. Medina learned about NAFB through her undergraduate advisor, Dr. Deborah Dunsford, and has been a student member ever since. ACT and NAFB are two organizations that have helped Medina become the agricultural communicator she is today.

To win the NACTA teaching award, nominees must apply with a form of nomination from a faculty or staff member. Applicants also must submit his/her personal teaching philosophy, current teaching responsibilities, and letters of recommendation from students.



Out of hundreds of applications, only roughly 30 awards are given. This year, the University of Arkansas brought home two graduate student teaching awards from the 2022 NACTA Annual Conference. **Hannah Chambers**, also a second-year graduate student, was recognized for her exemplary performance as a teaching assistant.

While Medina’s graduate assistantship is based in the Dale Bumpers College of Agricultural, Food & Life Sciences Dean’s Office, she also has had ample opportunities to assist various professors in their classrooms. She works on the communications team in the Dean’s Office, so she wanted to be able to translate her practical knowledge to undergraduate agricultural communications students.

“I expressed with my advisors that if it was possible, I would like to have classroom teaching experience on top of my current assistantship. If I could teach the material I learned during my undergraduate and graduate studies, I knew I would have a better understanding of communications skills,” Medina said.

Medina has a strong passion for communication and hopes to spread that love to her students. The NACTA graduate teaching award has inspired her future career.

“To be recognized with the NACTA Graduate Assistant teaching award inspires me to strive to continue to foster positive relationships with my students. It means a lot, but I want to continue improving upon this so I can be the best I can be for my students. The graduate assistants who mentored me during my undergraduate career have and continue to make an impact on me. They are also recipients of this award, and to be recognized like them is an honor and one that I do not hold lightly,” Medina said.

WITY RADIO CELEBRATES 20 YEARS WITH FARM BROADCASTING — In January, WITY Radio celebrated its 20th anniversary of farm broadcasting across the central Illinois and western Indiana regions. For most of those 20 years, **Dave Brown**, vice president and general manager of WITY Radio, has been responsible for the station’s farm broadcasting efforts.

Brown has been involved in radio for more than 45 years and began working at WITY in 1994.



“Farm broadcasting provides agriculture information to a diverse audience on local, regional, statewide, and national levels,” Brown said. “We can accomplish that by multiple partnerships, including a local farm department, the RFD Illinois Radio Network for state coverage, Max Armstrong’s Midwest Digest and Farm Progress America, and the Hoosier Ag Today Network.”

WITY began with farm broadcasting in early 2002, with just one farm director, **Marvin Wells**. The station now has a group of several individuals who all make up the ag team, covering community events as well as providing traditional

farm and market reports.

“It takes a team to make it work. One person cannot do it all. But I believe we have a great agriculture team here at WITY, when you add all the resources up,” Brown added. “99.5 FM and 980 AM WITY provides more than three hours of farm programming every weekday.”

Phyllis Parks, Dennis Michelsen, and Erin Anderson are the three primary members of the ag team at WITY. Together, they cover events impacting the area, including county fairs, regional agriculture shows, and other special events. In addition, the WITY ag team presents coverages on all-day markets, interviews, online podcasts, videos, and more with the “Down on the Farm” feature.

WITY also provides audience members with information from ABC News, including state and local news, weather, and The Dave Ramsey Show, along with the area’s only adult contemporary and country-crossover music format, featuring favorites from the 1960s through the 1980s.



In addition to sharing agricultural information and stories with the station’s farming audience, Brown said, he and his team also realize the importance of sharing that information to urban listeners.

“Over the years, I have had many listeners tell me how they appreciate hearing agriculture information, even if they are not directly involved with the industry,” Brown said. “It allows everyone to understand better what the farmer or agriculture business goes through to provide those necessities. At WITY, we try to give people a better feel for the agriculture industry, and we are proud to do so.”

WE WANT YOUR NEWS —Send us your stories and photos for future newsletter issues. Contact Erin Nash at erin@nafb.com or phone 816/431-4032, x 107. *Airing on the Side of Agriculture* is included in the blog section of NAFB.com. For an archive copy of any past issues, go to **Membership** and click on **Airing on the Side of Agriculture**.

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