

Wisconsin Public Radio: Welcomes New “Second Century News Fellow” in Milwaukee

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Milwaukee, Wis. – Wisconsin Public Radio (WPR) welcomes Ximena Conde to the news team in the role of Second Century News Fellow. “We’re really excited to have Ximena join WPR for this fellowship,” said WPR Director Mike Crane. “She has a fascinating background, and her passion for public radio and the news will serve her well in the Second Century News Fellowship.” Conde, a graduate of Rutgers University, began her career as a producer at WFMT, Chicago’s classical public radio station, and most recently worked as a producer at Rhode Island Public Radio.

“I was late in discovering public radio,” said Conde. “I grew up watching Spanish news and the local 10 o’clock news, but in high school, I had a teacher who began the day by reading the paper and she was always touting the merits of NPR. Up until that point, my impression of public radio was that it was dry, or sleepy programming that did not pertain to me; then I heard This American Life and everything changed.”

For Conde, Ira Glass’s popular national program was a gateway to other NPR shows such as Morning Edition and All Things Considered. “I was hearing news stories that went beyond the headlines and really helped educate me and turn me into a more engaged citizen. NPR was also the first news outlet I discovered that tried to share both sides of every issue,” she added. The more Conde listened, the more interested she became in journalism as a career.

According to Kyla Calvert Mason, assistant news director and Conde's supervisor, helping develop the next generation of journalists is some of the most important work WPR does. "Journalism has always been vital to democracy and a sense of community, but as more and more newsrooms are consolidated or shuttered, there are fewer places for young journalists to be trained in the ethics and standards our audiences count on," she said.

Created in 2016 with a generous gift from WPR members Joan Leonard and Michael Vigoda, the Second Century News Fellowship provides an opportunity for new and diverse journalists to gain practical, hands-on experience in public media news production. While she is a Fellow, Conde will earn a salary and be a full-fledged member of the WPR news team with responsibilities like filing stories, voicing segments, going out into the community to conduct interviews and more.

"In the 100 years that WPR has been around, they've fostered generations of reporters and producers through programs like this fellowship," said Conde. "I made the decision to move to Wisconsin and work for WPR because the people here are experts. I'm thrilled to have the opportunity to witness firsthand what drives them and to learn from them every day."