

Marquette University: Journalism fellowship program receives \$5 million gift

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MILWAUKEE — A distinguished journalism fellowship program at Marquette University will get a major boost, thanks to a \$5 million gift from the Frechette Family Foundation. President Michael R. Lovell announced the donation to the [Perry and Alicia O'Brien Fellowship in Public Service Journalism](#) at his recent Presidential Address.

The commitment builds on an \$8.3 million gift that Peter and Patricia Frechette made to the Diederich College of Communication in 2013, which launched the program named for Patricia's parents, Marquette alumni couple Perry and Alicia O'Brien.

"Our parents were very involved in the launch of the O'Brien fellowship and it was one of the greatest joys of their lives," said Kathy Frechette Tenhula, President of the Frechette Family Foundation. "Over the past four years, we've been fortunate to meet with fellows and listen to student interns and witness the powerful impact of the program. It is both exciting and inspirational to carry our parent's legacy forward."

"On behalf of the entire university community, I want to thank the Frechette Family Foundation for this generous gift, which will bolster the important work being done through the O'Brien Fellowship program," President Lovell said. "In-depth journalism that serves the greater good is vital to our nation's democracy and it aligns perfectly with our Catholic, Jesuit mission. It is Marquette's great privilege to bring professional journalists together with our students to help build a better future for journalism."

Led by Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Dave Umhoefer, O'Brien fellows spend nine months researching, reporting and writing stories with the potential to change policies and improve lives. O'Brien fellows have covered stories covering a wide range of topics, including [youth sports safety](#), the [struggle for equality for black Americans](#) and the [ripple effect of Milwaukee's backlog of unsolved homicide cases](#).

"With the generous support of the Frechette Family Foundation, the Diederich College of Communication can grow the O'Brien Fellowship, giving more of our students the unique opportunity to work alongside an even broader group of professional journalists as they report on the stories that make a difference," Dr. Sarah Feldner, dean of the college, said.

"The Frechette Family Foundation's generosity to Marquette University and the Diederich College of Communication has solidified a long-lasting legacy and also helps ensure a bright future for in-depth, ethical journalism," Tim McMahon, vice president for university advancement, said. "The O'Brien Fellowship is a shining example of how philanthropy can be a game-changing force for Marquette students and the greater community."

Editor's note — related content: Dave Umhoefer, director of the O'Brien Fellowship program and a Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist, shares his thoughts on what the Frechette Family Foundation gift means for the future of the fellowship—and journalism in America. ([Link to the story](#))

About the O'Brien Fellowship

The O'Brien Fellowship is designed to give reporters the outlet they need to produce a world-class public service project and train the next generation of outstanding journalists. O'Brien Fellows spend the academic year at Marquette University producing a multimedia public service journalism project along with a group of Marquette student interns. As a result of an \$8.3 million gift from Patricia and Peter Frechette, the O'Brien Fellowship has been able to give more than 20 journalists the opportunity to craft in-depth projects since 2013.

A complete [list of current and past O'Brien Fellows](#) is available online.