

# Marquette University: To confer honorary degree on Karen Lincoln Michel

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MILWAUKEE — In conjunction with its annual Mission Week, Marquette University will confer an honorary doctorate on alumna Karen Lincoln Michel, CEO of Indij Public Media, a nonprofit news organization that covers the Indigenous world. Michel will receive a Doctor of Humane Letters during a conferral event on Thursday, Feb. 9, at 7 p.m., where she will also deliver a keynote address.

“Karen Lincoln Michel has built a distinguished career on her deeply held values that honor Marquette’s mission. She has been recognized nationally for her servant leadership in advancing diversity in news coverage and newsroom staffing, as well as excellence in journalism,” Marquette President Michael R. Lovell said. “We are proud of the way Karen represents the Marquette University Graduate School as an alumna and are equally honored to bestow upon her an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters.”

Michel has built a noteworthy career as a publisher, editor, writer and reporter, now serving as president of ICT, formerly *Indian Country Today*, an independent, nonprofit news organization devoted to serving Indigenous people with quality journalism. Under Michel’s leadership, ICT formed a separate nonprofit news organization, Indij Public Media, to serve as its parent company and help insure ICT’s independence and financial viability into the future.

Prior to this venture, Michel was publisher and executive editor of the influential regional *Madison Magazine*; served on the editorial board of WISC-TV, the CBS affiliate in Madison, Wisconsin; led news operations at two Louisiana daily newspapers; served as assistant managing editor and state bureau chief at

the *Green Bay Press-Gazette* in Wisconsin; and was a staff writer for *The Dallas Morning News*.

As a freelancer, Michel wrote about issues affecting Native Americans for newspapers and magazines, including *The Washington Post*, *Chicago Tribune*, *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*, *Columbia Journalism Review*, *Native Americas* and the *American Indian*. Her columns for The New York Times Syndicate's former "New America News Service" and her blog "Digital Native American" brought discussions about the future of journalism as it relates to communities of color, and specifically Native Americans, to a mainstream audience. Through it, she promoted a search for ideas, solutions and collaborations that allow people from diverse communities to be seen and heard in new ways.

Michel's leadership is extensive, both in her professional posts and her service. As a former two-term national president of UNITY: Journalists of Color, she led the largest association of journalists in the nation. She is the also first woman to have served as president of the Native American Journalists Association. Through NAJA, she worked with student projects and mentored young Native American journalists. She was also board president of the Wisconsin Center for Investigative Journalism and is a board member and stockholder of Indian Country Communications.

Michel graduated from Marquette's Graduate School in 1989 with her master's degree in journalism.