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## Connecting April 24, 2020

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Colleagues,

Good Friday morning on this the 24<sup>th</sup> day of April 2020,

We bring sad news of the death of **Virginia “Ginny” Byrne**, former police reporter and broadcast editor in AP's New York City bureau during a 28-year career, who died Thursday of lung cancer.

Our colleague **Beth Harpaz** brings us the story of her friend. Ginny is survived by her husband, **Reilly Dodson**, and stepson, **Alex Dodson**, of New Providence, New Jersey.

If you would like to share a favorite memory of Ginny, please send it along.

We also bring you in today's issue the AP announcement of the 17 journalists hired to cover statehouses across the country as part of its collaboration with Report for America. They will start in June. These journalists are in addition to the statehouse reporters AP already has in all 50 states. They will provide local newsrooms with important accountability journalism and state government coverage.

**LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, START YOUR ZOOM!** – Our colleague **John Strauss** invites his fellow AP Indianapolis alums to join their pals for a Zoom reunion this Saturday at 4 p.m. EDT. Evansville and South Bend alums included. If you would like to take part, drop John a note at: [johncstrauss@gmail.com](mailto:johncstrauss@gmail.com)



**AP GROUND GAME** : Staying safe during the pandemic may mean giving up more of your privacy to Big Tech. In this episode of the “Ground Game: Inside the Outbreak” podcast, host Ralph Russo speaks to AP global science and environment writer Christina Larson about how the virus is raising questions about how we balance public health and individual privacy.

Listen [here](#) .

May you have a safe and healthy weekend.

Paul

## Uplifting thoughts in these trying times

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CHARLES BAUDELAIRE

### GET DRUNK

ONE SHOULD always be drunk. That’s the great thing; the only question. Not to feel the horrible burden of Time weighing on your shoulders and bowing you to the earth, you should be drunk without respite.

Drunk with what? With wine, with poetry, or with virtue, as you please. But get drunk.

And if sometimes you should happen to awake, on the stairs of a palace, on the green grass of a ditch, in the dreary solitude of your own room, and find that your drunkenness is ebbing or has vanished, ask the wind and the wave, ask star, bird, or clock, ask everything that flies, everything that moans, everything that flows, everything that sings, everything that speaks, ask them the time; and the wind, the wave, the star, the bird and the clock will all reply: “It is Time to get drunk! If you are not to be the martyred slaves of Time, be perpetually drunk! With wine, with poetry, or with virtue, as you please.”

## **Ginny Byrne, former police reporter and broadcast editor in NYC bureau, dies of cancer**

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**Ginny and her husband Reilly Dodson. (Photo provided by Kiley Armstrong. Photo below provided by Verena Dobnik.)**

**Beth Harpaz ( [Email](#) )** – Virginia Byrne, former police reporter and broadcast editor in AP's New York City bureau, died Thursday (April 23) of lung cancer. She is survived by her husband, Reilly Dodson, and stepson, Alex Dodson, of New Providence, New Jersey.

Ginny, as she was known to friends and colleagues, grew up in from the Bronx, and was a graduate of Cardinal Spellman High School and New York University. She worked at AP from 1982 to 2010, including a long stint covering the NYPD out of One Police Plaza with great dedication during the late '80s and early '90s when crime in the city soared. She also served as president of the Newswomen's Club of New York, was a strong union supporter, and volunteered as an advocate for a cancer group. She was predeceased by her first husband, Newsday reporter Joey Queen.

Ginny was smart, witty, outgoing, and extremely kind and caring, but she was also known for her outspoken moral courage. "She had the biggest heart and a fierce determination to fight for those she loved and what she believed was right," recalled Karen Sloan, one of many former AP colleagues who shared anecdotes and tributes on Facebook and in messages after hearing of her passing.

Jeff Baron described her as "funny, friendly and a great professional, the sort of person you want wherever you work." Frank Eltman called her "one of the warmest, friendliest people I ever encountered in the NYC Bureau." Molly Gordy recalled a 2017 outing with Ginny, Ula Illytzyk and others to

Governors Island where they came across a 1920s-themed party. "Ginny, who was retired, took notes on it and phoned it in to AP metro in case they wanted to do something on it," Molly recalled. "Because how can you just see something and not report it, right?"

Announcing her death on Facebook, her stepson Alex wrote: "She was an amazing mother who made me the man I am today. She was much more than just a stepmother, she was a mom, through and through. Thank you for everything Ginny. You may be gone, but you will never be forgotten."





**When Ginny Byrne began the police beat in 1987, she introduced herself and the AP to New York City Chief of Police Benjamin Ward. Photo courtesy AP Corporate Archives.**

Ginny had been battling a type of lung cancer called ALK+ (anaplastic lymphoma kinase positive). Just last month, she'd sent her friend and former bureau colleague, Verena Dobnik, a photo of herself in a wheelchair in the garden of Rockefeller University next to Memorial Sloan Kettering Hospital, where she was being treated. "You look great!" Verena told her. Indeed, with her trademark bright red hair and a broad smile, she looked in the photo very much like the Ginny her friends all knew and loved. "Thanks," she wrote back, "I'm actually pretty ill."

In a Facebook post about Ginny's passing, Verena added: "The entire time she was battling cancer, she was never maudlin, pursuing the latest in medical expertise while keeping alive her zest for living and enjoying what was possible, visiting great people and places."

## **AP, Report for America to put 17 journalists in statehouses**



**This image shows the 17 new journalists joining the Associated Press in a partnership with Report for America to boost the news agency's statehouse coverage. Seen are from top L-R: Farnoush Amiri, Bryan Anderson, Cedar Attanasio, Sara Cline, Acacia Coronado, Sophia Eppolito. Middle L-R: Camille Fassett, Andrew Tsubasa Field, Piper Hudspeth Blackburn, Mohamed Ibrahim, Michelle Liu, Samuel Metz. Bottom L-R: Anna Nichols, Patty Nieberg, Iris Samuels, Casey Smith, Leah Willingham. The journalists will cover beats including climate change, public health policy, infrastructure and voting security. They will help enhance statewide elections coverage and help chronicle the state economic and policy decisions that are being developed in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. (AP Photo)**

NEW YORK (AP) — The Associated Press and Report for America are hiring 17 journalists to boost the AP's statehouse coverage.

The journalists will cover beats including climate change, public health policy, infrastructure and voting security. They will help enhance statewide coverage of elections and help chronicle the state economic and policy decisions that are being developed in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

A data journalist will help deliver policy-focused datasets that help individual newsrooms tell customized stories for their own communities.

Report for America is an initiative of the nonprofit news organization The GroundTruth Project and places emerging journalists in local newsrooms. The AP hires are part of 225 journalists in the 2020 Report for America reporting corps being hosted by 160 news organizations in 45 states and Puerto Rico.

“The AP-Report for America partnership ensures that we are able to provide and build upon the high quality news we break from the nation’s statehouses,” Noreen Gillespie, the AP’s deputy managing editor for U.S. news, said Thursday in announcing the appointments.

The journalists bring a mix of local news experience and a background of strong policy reporting to the AP:

Click [here](#) to read more. Shared by Peg Coughlin.

## Nick Jesdanun's cousin to 'walk/run' New York Marathon in his honor



**Mark Mittelstadt** ([Email](#)) - In this June 2015 photo taken at a gathering in Brooklyn's Prospect Park, Associated Press technology writer Anick Jesdanun smiled as he appeared to show off four wrist gadgets. Jesdanun, an avid marathoner, died April 3 of the COVID-19 virus at the age of 51.

His cousin Prinda Mulpramook shared the photo on her Facebook page Thursday in announcing she had decided to run the 2020 New York City Marathon.

"It's been a tough few days, trying to deal with things affecting my physical safety and mental well-being," she said. "Monday was especially difficult as I decided to finally pick up Nick's belongings, before the hospital would be forced to destroy them." As she was stopped before crossing a bridge into Manhattan, she said she spotted a mural painted on a wall with the letters

"NYC," the "Y" being a runner. "And I knew in that moment I had to commit to the best way I could think of to honor Nick -- I will complete the 2020 New York City Marathon in his memory (regardless of when it actually occurs)."

A friend teasingly asked, "Can you wear about five watches when you run it?" Prinda explained that her cousin "had a reputation for wearing all the gadgets he was testing out for his AP articles."

As a non-runner herself, she said she would likely "walk/run" the marathon. "But I am fully committed to completing it in any way I can." Her marathon cause will be Reading Partners New York, a non-profit where she is completing a third year of AmeriCorps service. "Fundraising details to come, but the commitment is made. #miles4nick."

Prinda's email is - [prinda.mulpramook@gmail.com](mailto:prinda.mulpramook@gmail.com)

## Recalling the support of Kathleen Carroll

**Carol Robinson ( [Email](#) )** - I was so happy to read of Kathleen Carroll's honor in Thursday's Connecting. She was of great help to me during my later years as Director of Group Sales for AP Broadcast. The VP of one of my largest accounts and AP's largest radio barter account was very critical of our stories and accused us of being biased, especially after Donald Trump won the U.S. presidential election on November 9, 2016, and became the President-elect.

It seems the VP would spend his weekends reading our report and firing off not-so-nice email complaints to me about one story or another. I sought help from Kathleen on how to respond to the first email I received since my duties had to do with Sales and I didn't have the expertise to handle his editorial issues. She called me and somewhere in the conversation she honed in on the fact that they were both Texans. She replied to the email and offered to meet with him the next time she would be in Dallas. They established an email relationship and he would send future email missile complaints directly to Kathleen and copy me - whew and thank goodness! She met with him in Dallas and they took a picture together, which he sent to the Radio trades and referred to her as his AP "frenemy."

When I told him Kathleen would be retiring, he asked for her address to send her a gift. Imagine that!

## United We Read: Reading Project Bridges the Red-Blue Divide





**Heather John Fogarty is reading her way across the country this year. (Cat O'Neil/ For The Times)**

**Rev. Cinthia Jean Saul ( [Email](#) )** – Recognizing how politically fractured the nation is and how little she knew about people in other parts of the country, Heather John Fogarty, writing for the Los Angeles Times and adjunct professor USC Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism, set a goal of reading one book from each of the 50 states, plus Puerto Rico and Washington D.C., during the months leading up to the 2020 election. She's giving priority to memoirs and contemporary fiction. ( [Los Angeles Times, January 10](#) )

Heather John Fogarty got my attention and I began my own read-across-America in February. I am giving priority to memoirs, literary fiction and nonfiction – almost all award winning, and have read 16 books for this project so far this year. Some titles I have selected include Call it Grace: Finding Meaning in a Fractured World, a theological memoir by Serene Jones, President of Union Seminary, who grew up in Oklahoma; There, there, Pulitzer Fiction finalist, 2019, by Tommy Orange, follows a large cast of Native Americans living in the area of Oakland, California; Amity and Prosperity, the Pulitzer Nonfiction, 2019, about environmental consequences of fracking in Pennsylvania by Eliza Griswald; Lost Children Archive, Booker Prize long list Fiction 2019, set in New York and Arizona, by Valeria Luiselli inspired by the ongoing American policy of separating children from their parents at the Mexican-American border, a love letter to literature; and, Salvage the Bones, 2011 recipient of the National Book Award for Fiction by Jesmyn Ward, explores the plight of a working-class African-American family in Mississippi as they prepare for Hurricane Katrina.

I have allowed some nonfiction selections to overlap in subject matter; for example, I have read three books about the abuse of the criminal justice system including American Prison about a for profit prison in Louisiana by

Shane Bauer, an American journalist, best known for his undercover reporting for Mother Jones magazine; Just Mercy: a Story of Justice and Redemption by Bryan Stevenson, New York Times Best Book, a memoir about those wrongfully accused in the criminal justice system; and, The New Jim Crow, by Michelle Alexander, award winning legal scholar.

Ms. John Fogarty is reading in alphabetical order by state. I am doing no such thing. I don't finish a book if I don't appreciate it, and most align with my "no greater than one inch" rule. This is for fun, after all. With apologies to publishers everywhere, I have not purchased a single book, instead had been using the "zero-price bookstore," and now that libraries are closed, I am taking advantage of the online library resource Libary2Go.

Will I read 54 books by November 3rd? Is my read-across-America worthwhile? I'll probably tell you on Inauguration Day as Ye Olde Connecting Editor allows. Whether I do or not, my reading project – inspired by a young journalism professor on the West coast – brings me, a Presbyterian minister in the South, great joy and a solemn perspective during a fearful and unpredictable time in our shared history. What I do know is this: the Pulitzers will be announced on May 4th.

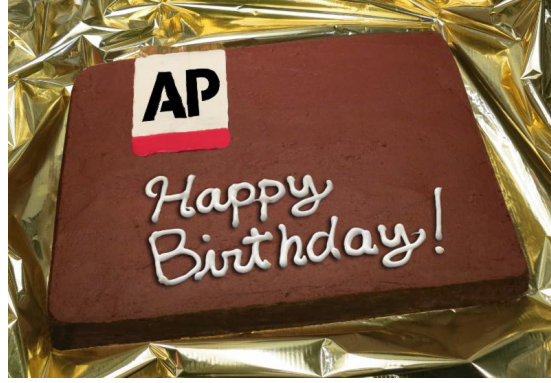
## **It was a privilege to work with Harry Harris**



**Home run king Babe Ruth bows as he acknowledges the cheers of thousands of fans at Yankee Stadium in New York, June 14, 1948, as his number 3 is retired permanently. His 60 homers for the Yankees in 1927 stood as the season record until Roger Maris topped it with “61 in 61.” (AP Photo/Harry Harris)**

**Hal Bock** ([Email](#)) - What a magnificent portfolio of Harry Harris' photos (in Thursday's Connecting). I was privileged to work with him on a few assignments and it was a terrific experience watching a true professional at work. The Babe Ruth photo that was part of the portfolio is iconic!

**Connecting wishes Happy Birthday**



to

Evelyn Calvert-Colucci – [eccalvert@ap.org](mailto:eccalvert@ap.org)

Reed Saxon – [reedsaxon@gmail.com](mailto:reedsaxon@gmail.com)

## Stories of interest

***This project is paying out-of-work journalists to keep covering Oklahoma*** (Poynter)



Mike Simons is a photojournalist with the Tulsa World. On furlough, he worked on a project for the Coronavirus Storytelling Project. (Photo by Brandi Simons)

By Kristen Hare

This month, Berry Tramel was furloughed. Twice.

It's his first furlough in the 28 years he's worked for The (Oklahoma City) Oklahoman. And his first in the 12 years he's hosted a sports radio show for WWLS.

Until recently, Tramel was an exception to the many and massive cuts that have been shrinking the local news industry for a decade. But he's now in crowded company.

As the coronavirus closes businesses and puts people out of work, local newsrooms are laying off journalists, cutting pay, instituting furloughs and, in some cases, closing altogether. You can see Poynter's tracker [here](#).

Local newsrooms aren't alone in this.

But many newspapers — ones that have spent years working to shift habits, adjust to technology and attract new, paying readers while counting on shrinking advertising revenue — have found themselves in a dangerous place. And many journalists who spent their lives covering local news, including Tramel, are now under- or unemployed when their communities need them most.

In Oklahoma, a new project is putting them back to work, five journalists at a time.

Read more [here](#) . Shared by Lindel Hutson.

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## ***Why We Should All Be Keeping Coronavirus Journals*** (Time)

**BY KATHERINE SHARP LANDDECK**

I often tell my students you don't want to be interesting to doctors or historians. Yet here we are, in interesting times for both. The medical field will spend the next decades studying this coronavirus and COVID-19. Epidemiologists, doctors, researchers and even hospital administrators are already busily studying how this pandemic has happened, what it is doing to our bodies and how to respond. But historians, while busy now putting current events into historical context, will not begin actively studying our times for another 30 years or so. And they will need our help.

Future generations of historians, who haven't lived through this moment, will be key in studying it. By the 2050s, they will have more perspective on the causes and effects of this moment, as well as plenty of sources—government documents, transcripts of press conferences, newspaper opinion pieces. They will have more public sources too. While most of our Facebook debates will likely be lost to time, at least some of our tweets will be saved by the Library of Congress for posterity. But these public sources will be just snippets of our

present. Historians will need other sources to be able to understand, and learn from, our times. They will need more to ensure that the stories that are so often lost to the past are told. Oral histories and personal journals will be vital tools to take their understanding beyond the headlines.

Read more [here](#).

## Today in History - April 24, 2020



### By The Associated Press

Today is Friday, April 24, the 115th day of 2020. There are 251 days left in the year.

#### Today's Highlight in History:

On April 24, 1877, federal troops were ordered out of New Orleans, ending the North's post-Civil War rule in the South.

#### On this date:

In 1800, Congress approved a bill establishing the Library of Congress.

In 1913, the 792-foot Woolworth Building, at that time the tallest skyscraper in the world, officially opened in Manhattan as President Woodrow Wilson pressed a button at the White House to signal the lighting of the towering structure.

In 1915, in what's considered the start of the Armenian genocide, the Ottoman Empire began rounding up Armenian political and cultural leaders in Constantinople.

In 1961, in the wake of the failed Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba, the White House issued a statement saying that President John F. Kennedy "bears sole responsibility for the events of the past few days."

In 1967, Soviet cosmonaut Vladimir Komarov was killed when his Soyuz 1 spacecraft smashed into the Earth after his parachutes failed to deploy properly during re-entry; he was the first human spaceflight fatality.

In 1980, the United States launched an unsuccessful attempt to free the American hostages in Iran, a mission that resulted in the deaths of eight U.S. servicemen.

In 1986, Wallis, Duchess of Windsor, for whom King Edward VIII had given up the British throne, died in Paris at age 89.

In 1995, the final bomb linked to the Unabomber exploded inside the Sacramento, California, offices of a lobbying group for the wood products industry, killing chief lobbyist Gilbert B. Murray. (Theodore Kaczynski was later sentenced to four lifetimes in prison for a series of bombings that killed three men and injured 29 others.)

In 2003, U.S. forces in Iraq took custody of Tariq Aziz (TAH'-rihk ah-ZEEZ'), the former Iraqi deputy prime minister. China shut down a Beijing hospital as the global death toll from SARS surpassed 260.

In 2005, Pope Benedict XVI formally began his stewardship of the Roman Catholic Church; the former Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger said in his installation homily that as pontiff he would listen to the will of God in governing the world's 1.1 billion Catholics.

In 2009, Mexico shut down schools, museums, libraries and state-run theaters across its overcrowded capital in hopes of containing a deadly swine flu outbreak.

In 2013, in Bangladesh, a shoddily constructed eight-story commercial building housing garment factories collapsed, killing more than 1,100 people.

Ten years ago: The policy-setting panel of the International Monetary Fund, with a nervous eye on Greece, pledged during a meeting in Washington to address the risks posed to the global recovery from high government debt. A dozen people were killed by a tornado system that bumped down in Louisiana before plowing into Mississippi and then Alabama. Etiquette expert Elizabeth Post (granddaughter-in-law of Emily Post) died in Naples, Florida, at 89.

Five years ago: President Barack Obama marked the 10th anniversary of the Office of the Director of National Intelligence, praising the nation's spying operations as the most capable in the world. The presidents of Russia and France joined other leaders at ceremonies in Yerevan commemorating the estimated 1.5 million Armenian victims of the 1916 massacre by Ottoman Turks. In a long-awaited interview about his gender identity, former Olympic champion Bruce Jenner told ABC's Diane Sawyer said that "for all intents and purposes, I am a woman."

One year ago: Avowed racist John William King was executed in Texas for the 1998 slaying of James Byrd Jr., who was chained to the back of a truck and dragged along a road outside Jasper, Texas; prosecutors said Byrd was targeted because he was black. North Korea's Kim Jong Un arrived in Russia aboard an armored train for a summit with Russian President Vladimir Putin. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said nearly 700 cases of measles had been reported in the United States so far in 2019; it was already the nation's worst year for measles since 1994. Hundreds of students and staff at two Los Angeles universities were placed under quarantine, after officials said they may have been exposed to measles and either had not been vaccinated or could not verify that they were immune.

Today's Birthdays: Movie director-producer Richard Donner is 90. Actress Shirley MacLaine is 86. Actress-singer-director Barbra Streisand is 78. Former Chicago Mayor Richard M. Daley is 78. Country singer Richard Sterban (The Oak Ridge Boys) is 77. Rock musician Doug Clifford (Creedence Clearwater Revival) is 75. R-and-B singer Ann Peebles is 73. Former Irish Taoiseach (TEE'-shuk) Enda Kenny is 69. Actor-playwright Eric Bogosian is 67. Rock singer-musician Jack Blades (Night Ranger) is 66. Actor Michael O'Keefe is 65. Rock musician David J (Bauhaus) is 63. Actor Glenn Morshower is 61. Rock musician Billy Gould is 57. Actor-comedian Cedric the Entertainer is 56. Actor Djimon Hounsou (JEYE'-mihn OHN'-soo) is 56. Rock musician Patty Schemel is 53. Actress Stacy Haiduk is 52. Rock musician Aaron Comess (Spin Doctors) is 52. Actor Aidan Gillen is 52. Actress Melinda Clarke is 51. Actor Rory McCann is 51. Latin pop singer Alejandro Fernandez is 49. Country-rock musician Brad Morgan (Drive-By Truckers) is 49. Rock musician Brian Marshall (Creed; Alter Bridge) is 47. Actor Derek Luke is 46. Actor-producer Thad Luckinbill is 45. Actor Eric Balfour is 43. Actress Rebecca Mader is 43. Country singer Rebecca Lynn Howard is 41. Country singer Danny Gokey is 40. Actress Reagan Gomez is 40. Actor Austin Nichols is 40. Actress Sasha Barrese is 39. Contemporary Christian musician Jasen Rauch (Red) is 39. Singer Kelly Clarkson is 38. Rock singer-musician Tyson Ritter (The All-American Rejects) is 36. Country singer Carly Pearce is 30. Actor Joe Keery is 28. Actor Jack Quaid is 28. Actor Doc Shaw is 28. Actor Jordan Fisher is 26. Golfer Lydia Ko is 23.

**Thought for Today: "I feel proud to be living in a country where people are not afraid to laugh at themselves and where political satire is tolerated by the government, if not the television network." [-] Pat Paulsen, American comedian (born 1927, died this date in 1997).**

## Got a story or photos to share?

Got a story to share? A favorite memory of your AP days? Don't keep them to yourself. Share with your colleagues by sending to Ye Olde Connecting Editor. And don't forget to include photos!

Here are some suggestions:



- Second chapters - You finished a great career. Now tell us about your second (and third and fourth?) chapters of life.

- **Spousal support** - How your spouse helped in supporting your work during your AP career.

- **My most unusual story** - tell us about an unusual, off the wall story that you covered.

- **"A silly mistake that you make"**- a chance to 'fess up with a memorable mistake in your journalistic career.

- **Multigenerational AP families** - profiles of families whose service spanned two or more generations.

- **Volunteering** - benefit your colleagues by sharing volunteer stories - with ideas on such work they can do themselves.

- **First job** - How did you get your first job in journalism?

- **Connecting "selfies"** - a word and photo self-profile of you and your career, and what you are doing today. Both for new members and those who have been with us a while.

- **Most unusual** place a story assignment took you.

**Paul Stevens**

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