

Gary O'Brien

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Professional ExperienceThe Charlotte Observer

- Night Picture Editor, September 2009 – May 2011.
- Multimedia Producer/Night Picture Editor, September 2007 – 2009.
- Night Picture Editor, September 2006 – 2007.
- Photographer/Photo Lab Manager, June 2003 – May 2006.
- Regional Picture Editor - January 2003 – June 2003.
- Photo Systems Editor, 1997 – 2003.
- Special Assignment/Photo Systems, 1996 – 97.
- Staff Photographer/Picture Editor, 1988 – 96.

The Mesa (AZ) Tribune

- Staff Photographer/Picture Editor, 1983 – 88.

The (Flagstaff) Arizona Daily Sun

- Staff Photographer, 1982 – 1983.

Awards

- McClatchy President's Award, 2008
- Robert R. Eunson Award for distinguished achievement in Journalism, Northern Arizona University, 2007.
- Observer Newsroom Division Star Award, Q3 2003.
- Sabbatical Award, Charlotte Observer, 2001.
- NC News Photographer of the Year, 1993 and 1994.
- NC Clip Photographer of the Year, 1994.
- Best of Cox Publications, 1987

Education

- B.S. Photography – Northern Arizona University 1979

Teaching Experience

- Photography Instructor, Elderhostel Learning Institute at Geneva Point, Moultonborough, NH, 2009 – 2011
- Faculty, NPPA Multimedia Immersion Workshop 2007 – 2010.
- Faculty, UNC-Chapel Photojournalism Workshop, 2004 – 2007.
- Visiting Professional, UNC-Chapel Hill, UNC-Charlotte, Central Piedmont Community College, Northern Arizona University. 1988 - 2011
- Instructor, The Light Factory Contemporary Museum of Photography and Film, Charlotte, NC.

References available upon request

Gary O'Brien

Narrative Resume, 1979-2011

Professional Experience

Night Picture Editor – Charlotte Observer

September 2009 to May 2011, September 2006 – 2007

I worked full-time as the night photo editor, Tuesday through Sunday, until the position was eliminated in May, 2011.

- My duties include editing wire images for the national/international report, business and sports sections. I assist the Director of Photography with page 1A photo selection, and make changes as needed through the night.
- I help section editors understand which stories have the strongest images and advise them on their story selections.
- I edit photographers' images and consult with designers on page layout.
- I am ultimately responsible for color reproduction in all sections of the paper, adjusting as needed the CMYK images produced from our CCI content management system. I also work with the production department on maintaining color workflow equipment calibration.
- I build "The Daily Edit", an online photo gallery of the day's news. On especially busy news days, I build as many as a half-dozen galleries.
- I've also learned how to seek out images from multiple sources across the country as well as better understanding the copy and page flow needed to produce The Observer.

During my first stint on the night desk, I pushed to have the night photo editor (PE) included as a peer in the content editing process (both in print and online), rather than as a clerk.

Combining that with my knowledge of our newsroom systems and photo editing, I was able to create a new way of working for the PE. These changes now enable us to provide excellent visual journalism to our readers.

The key to these changes was placing the PE directly in the midst of the copy and page workflow. The PE now has access to the same information that editors, designers and copy editors are viewing in the CCI content management system. This allows the PE to make photo decisions based not just on aesthetics, but on news value and news judgment.

As part of this work, I began producing a nightly online photo gallery called The Daily Edit. Page views on this feature rose from an initial average of 8,000 page views in 2007 to nearly 65K views in Q1 2011,

I devised a workflow using our print photo handling applications to quickly and easily produce these galleries, and wrote a how-to document for staff and other picture editors. This allowed us to expand our gallery production to as many as a dozen a day.

One of my favorite parts of working on the night desk is that I have time to work with student interns. I enjoy the "ah-ha" moments when a technique or concept clicks into place – she or he has added another tool to their bag.

Multimedia Producer/Night Picture Editor - September 2007 – September 2009

I can and did do it all, working four days a week shooting stills, video and producing multimedia for daily publication and one night a week on the night photo desk. I shoot a variety of assignments, incorporating stills, video, VR panoramas, time-lapse and sound for charlotteobserver.com.

During this time, my videography and stills were part of a print and online project marking the 50th anniversary of the seminal Swann vs. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education case, which established busing as a means of desegregating schools. This project won the McClatchy President's Award.

Photographer/Photo Lab Manager - June 2003 to May 2006

In mid-2003, I began shooting again, concentrating on project work and multimedia production along with systems and department admin duties.

- One notable project was a yearlong project documenting a fifth-grade classroom in a high-poverty school during the 2005-06 school year. I created a weekly photo for feature sections, as well as three long-form multimedia pieces at various junctures throughout the year.
- I also created over 40 panoramas using QuickTime for charlotteobserver.com, as well as several video productions using Final Cut Express, all from daily assignments. I continued to improve my use of panoramic photography and sound in online presentations, as well creating some of the first video content for charlotteobserver.com.
- I set up two webcams which were featured two years on charlotteobserver.com, allowing anyone on the web to see weather and sky conditions in Charlotte as well as the construction of a skyscraper across the street from the Observer building.
- In addition to shooting, I continued to maintain the photographers' equipment and Macintosh computers as well as purchase equipment and supplies, and capital procurement and planning. Much of the planning I did was oriented toward procuring the first generation of multimedia equipment (sound and video) and software used by the photo staff.
- In 2005 and 2006, I was part of a team that designed and implemented our current SCC MediaServer installation. My role was to use my knowledge of AP Preserver and JobMinder to assure accurate migration of data, including 200K images and 35K assignments. I also led an initiative to improve digital photo workflow, which implemented automated archiving of photographers' digital negatives.

Regional Picture Editor - The Charlotte Observer January 2003 to June 2003

This was a six-month temporary assignment (filling an open position).

- I supervised five photographers and four stringers in our regional bureaus.
- I was responsible for assignment editing, photo selection and working with designers to use photos to best advantage.
- The work I did during this time learned me a quarterly award for the top performer in the Observer newsroom.

Photo Systems Editor – The Charlotte Observer 1997-2003

During this period, I led the following photography IT projects. I also explored the new field of online multimedia.

- AP Preserver installation and photo workflow revision 1998.
- AP JobMinder installation and training 1999.
- Staff photographers' conversion from film to digital, 1998-2001.
- First digital negative archiving system 1998.

My other duties during this time were:

- Photo Department liaison to CCI superuser group 1998-2001.
- Capital and supply/equipment budgeting, planning and monthly procurement.
- Maintaining photographers' Macintosh laptops and software.
- Created and maintained equipment inventory and supervised repairs.

During this time, I also explored the new field of multimedia photojournalism.

- I did the first online multimedia projects in 2000 for charlotte.com, incorporating sound and simple Flash animation to create slide shows.
- I also began shooting panoramic photographs in 2003, publishing my first QTVR virtual tour on charlotte.com in early 2004.
- I produced annual year-end multimedia presentations from 1997 to 2001.

Special Assignment/Photo Systems - The Charlotte Observer 1996-97

After a photo system failure on election night 1996, I was tasked to revamp our photo systems and workflow. I implemented a folder-based filing system using SCC PhotoGrid as a browser to temporarily replace a beta version of AP Preserver for local photos, and began the process of replacing the Preserver.

Staff Photographer/Picture Editor – The Charlotte (NC) Observer 1988-96

General assignment photographer. Saturday picture editor, and substituted in assignment desk and night picture desk roles as required. I covered assignments across the Carolinas, the US and Europe.

Won NC Photographer of the Year in '93 and '94. NC Clip POY in '94.

Staff Photographer/Picture Editor – The Mesa (AZ) Tribune 1983-88

General assignment photographer. Substitute picture editor, filled in for Director of Photography during paternity leaves. I covered assignments across the Southwest and in Mexico.

Staff Photographer – The (Flagstaff) Arizona Daily Sun 1982-1983

General assignment photographer. I covered assignments across northern Arizona.

Partner – The Naked Eye, Flagstaff AZ 1980-1982

Ran a freelance photography/custom photo lab business in Historic Downtown Flagstaff. Publication credits from this time include: The Christian Science Monitor, Asahi Shimbun, Arizona Highways, The Arizona Republic, The Arizona Daily Sun.

Education

B.S. Photography – Northern Arizona University 1979

Photojournalism emphasis. Minor in Chemistry. Student newspaper, yearbook.

Teaching experience 1988-2011

Road Scholar (formerly Elderhostel) Lifelong Learning Institute

I teach a five-day intermediate photography class for Elderhostel/Road Scholar at the Geneva Point Conference Center in Moultonborough, NH. We travel in the White Mountains and Lakes during the fall colors.

Photojournalistic panorama Seminars

I developed and presented a lecture on the photojournalistic ethics of panorama to audiences at the NPPA Multimedia Boot Camp in Portland, Oregon; McLean, Virginia; Las Vegas, NV; and Syracuse, NY. (May 2007 - 2010); and at the International Virtual Reality Photographers Association (IVRPA) Annual Summit in Berkeley, California in June 2007.

In addition to a basic introduction to the production of an interactive panorama, part of this presentation is a "How It's Done" online feature explaining the basics of panoramic photography and its relationship to photojournalism ethics. In 2007, this feature was highly praised by Tom Kennedy, then Managing Editor for Visuals at washingtonpost.com.

I have taught photographers at small and large publications, as well as Associated Press and McClatchy Interactive multimedia producers.

Visiting Professional series

I have presented many classroom demonstrations and lectures in schools and universities across the Carolinas and in Arizona during the past 25 years. My focus is not on showing off my portfolio, but to use my work to help students understand the why as well as the how of making news photographs.

Community Seminars

I have taught a number of seminars at The Light Factory (<http://lightfactory.org>), a photographic arts cooperative in Charlotte. These included: Pinhole photography for elementary school students; Creating a personal history through photography for secondary school students; and Basic photojournalism (six-session night class).

Photojournalism Workshops

- I was a faculty assistant for the NPPA Multimedia Immersion Workshops 2007 – 2010, teaching a section on photojournalistic panorama photography, and assisting other faculty in teaching video production.
- I was part of the teaching faculty for the first four years of the Carolinas Photojournalism Workshop, a week-long seminar headed by UNC-Chapel Hill photojournalism instructor Pat Davison.