

LINDELL KAY

lj kay1@gmail.com

Navy veteran, experienced award-winning professor and award-winning career journalist with degrees in English, Communications and Multicultural Literature. Experienced instructor in communications, English and humanities, teaching a new generation skills learned knocking on doors, filing public records requests and writing thousands of news stories.

Education

- Master's Degree in Multicultural Literature; East Carolina University.
- Bachelor's Degree in Communications; Southern New Hampshire University.
- Associate's Degree in English; Coastal Carolina Community College.
- 18 credit hours post graduate course work in communications; Southern New Hampshire University.
- 18 credit hours post graduate course work in history; Liberty University.

Academic Achievement

- 2026 Naomi Dickens Shaw for Teaching Excellence, Louisburg College.
- Moderated faculty panel at 2026 Undergraduate American Arts Conference, Louisburg College.
- Created digital media platforms for student-led newsletters, Barton and Louisburg colleges.

Work History

- Full time instructor of journalism, writing and research, literature and communications at Louisburg College; Aug. 2024 to present.
- Adjunct professor of English, communications and humanities at Roanoke-Chowan Community College; Aug. 2022 to present.
- Adjunct professor of communications at Fayetteville Tech Community College; Jan. 2025 to present.
- Adjunct professor of journalism at Barton College; Aug. 2023 to May 2025.
- Adjunct professor of English at N.C. Wesleyan College; March 2022 to March 2024.
- Adjunct professor of literary theory and multi-ethnic literature at Southern New Hampshire University; Sept. 2022 to March 2024.
- Adjunct professor of English and communications at Johnston Community College, Halifax Community College, Durham Tech Community College and Mitchell Community College; Aug. 2023 to Dec. 2024.
- Local government reporter; Nashville Graphic; Oct. 2022 to Aug. 2023.
- News editor at Spring Hope Enterprise; July 2019 to Oct. 2022.
- Co-host of The Kay Files on WHIG-TV; June 2020 to August 2021.
- Political reporter at The Rocky Mount Telegram; 2014 to July 2019.
- Contributing Editor and reporter at ENC Weekly from 2013 to 2014.
- Senior Reporter at The Daily News in Jacksonville from 2006 to 2013.
- Private security officer at various posts from July 1995 to present.
- U.S. Navy firefighter from June 1992 to July 1995.

Courses Taught

ACA 111: College Success

ACA 122: College Transfer Success

COM 021: Journalism Practicum

COM 120: Interpersonal Communications
COM 201: Mass Media and Society
COM 225: Media Writing
COM 231: Public Speaking
COM 303: Understanding Comic Books
COM 303: Investigative Reporting
COM 305: Junior/Senior Seminar
COM 316: Advanced Reporting
COM 360: Media Law and Ethics
COM 470: Communication Internships
ENG 111: Writing & Inquiry
ENG 112: Writing & Research
ENG 114: Prof Research & Reporting
ENG 200: Independent Study
ENG 201: Journalism
ENG 231: American Literature I
ENG 261: World Literature I
ENG 275: Science Fiction
HUM 120: Cultural Studies
HUM 115: Critical Thinking
LIT 500: Literary Theory
LIT 529: Multiethnic Literature
WRT 101: College Writing I
WRT 102: College Writing II
WRT 112: Combined College Writing

Skills

Training new writers, newswriting, editing, research, attention to detail, sound judgment, great investigative skills. Background in crime reporting. Experienced with Moodle, Blackboard, Canvas, Brightspace and Jenzabar learning management systems.

Special Training

- Certificate in human research through CITI at ECU.
- Suspicious Activity Reporting certificate from DHS.
- Body recovery training with Naval Criminal Investigative Service.
- Recognizing sexual abuse training with the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children.
- Certificate from the Smithsonian in The Rise of Superheroes.
- Certificate of Ordination from the Atheopagan Society.
- Scooby Doo Award for solving crimes in Jacksonville signed by JPD detectives.

Awards

Winner of the 2018 O. Henry Award for Exceptional Writing from the Associated Press.

N.C. Press Association awards:

2021-22 - 1st place Local Government Reporting - mayor dodging meetings; The Enterprise

2021-22 - 2nd place Enterprise Reporting - Unidentified bodies; The Enterprise

2020 - 1st place Investigative Reporting - Murder investigation leads to new witnesses; The Enterprise

2020 - 1st place Local Government Reporting - City councilman owes \$47,000 utility bill; The Enterprise

2020 - 2nd place Political Reporting - Source behind attack ads in state senate race; The Enterprise

2020 - 3rd place Beat News Reporting - Hotel builder indicted by federal jury; The Enterprise

2019 - 3rd place General News Reporting - Inmate sues over jail conditions; The Enterprise

2019 - 2nd place Investigative Reporting - City department head lives out of state; The Rocky Mount Telegram

2019 - 3rd place Local Government Reporting - City emails shine light on secrets; The Rocky Mount Telegram

2018 - 1st place General News Reporting - No trace of missing man; The Rocky Mount Telegram

2017 - 3rd place Beat News Reporting - Officials tour devastated sweet potato farms; The Rocky Mount Telegram

2016 - 2nd place Local Government Reporting - Schools almost split; Rocky Mount Telegram

2016 - 3rd place Political Reporting - Efforts to get folks to register to vote; The Tarboro Weekly

2016 - 2nd place Religion Reporting - Church celebrates 150th anniversary; The Tarboro Weekly

2016 - 2nd place Enterprise Reporting - Sheriff spends money on dog pound; The Tarboro Weekly

2016 - 2nd place Enterprise Reporting - Woman has to choose between medicine and food; The Tarboro Weekly

2016 - 1st place Beat Feature Reporting - Beer brewery popularity; The Tarboro Weekly

2016 - 1st place Investigative Reporting - Reopen Pizza Hut murder case; The Tarboro Weekly

2015 - 3rd place Local Government Reporting - Schools system almost split; The Rocky Mount Telegram

2015 - 1st place General News Reporting - Man with rebel flag fortress; The Rocky Mount Telegram

2010 - 2nd place Investigative Reporting - Broke up corrupt police unit; The Daily News

2009 - 2nd place - Online Breaking News - Marine killed wife, left her in their bed; The Daily News

2008 - 2nd place Investigative Reporting - Solved a 1972 murder; The Daily News

2007 - 2nd place Business Writing - Houses built to withstand hurricanes; The Daily News

2007 - 3rd place Photography - New Year's Day Polar Plunge; The Topsail Voice

Courses Completed as Student

East Carolina University

Folklore, World Literature, Postcolonial Literature, African Literature, Ethnic U.S. Literature, Jewish Literature, Literary Theory, Chinese Cinema, Research Methods in Literature, Research in Technical Writing, Advanced Nonfiction Writing

Liberty University

Historical Methods, Historiography, Development of Western Freedom, Historical Foundations of Education, Advanced Learning Theory, Trends in Curriculum and Instruction, Current Issues in Online Learning

Southern New Hampshire University

Communications, Media & Society, Knowledge & New Media, Law & Ethics, Identity & Personal Brands, Communication Platforms, Media Technology, Journalism, Public Relations, World Cultures & Mass Media, Organizational Communications, Graphics & Layout in Print Media, Social Media, New Media Technologies, Communication in Digital Age, Technology and Society, English Composition

UNC Wilmington

Research Methods, Business Communication, Print Editing, Writing Internship, Philosophy

LSU Shreveport

Newswriting, Writing for Public Relations, Mass Communication, Public Speaking, Criminal Investigation

Coastal Carolina Community College

Writing & Inquiry, Writing & Research, American Literature I, II, Interpersonal Communication, Art History, Western Civilization, U.S. History, Information Technology, Criminal Justice, Political Science, General Psychology, Sociology, Biology & Labs, Environmental Biology, Applied Statistics

Baptist Bible College

Bible History I, Life of Christ I, Theology, Religion Philosophy, Personal Evangelism, English Composition

Moody Bible Institute

The Gospel of John

Bircham International University

World Mythology

U.S. Navy

Marine Engineering, Blueprint Reading, Shipboard Fire Fighting, Steam Plant Fundamentals, Steam Plant Maintenance, First Aid and Safety, Heat Stress Afloat, Swimmer First Class, Personal Fitness, Community Health

Private Security Credentials

Master Security Officer, White Glove Customer Service, Telephone Etiquette & Protocol, Effective Listening, Interacting with Media, Active Shooter, Managing Conflict, Negotiation Skills, Terrorism Awareness, Cultural Diversity, Interpersonal Communications, Hazard Communications, Crime Scene & Testimony, Domestic Violence in the Workplace, Sabotage & Espionage, Arrest & Detainment, Emergency Preparedness, PPE & Blood Pathogens, Dealing with Aggressive Behavior, Workplace Violence, Safe & Tactical Interactions, Detecting & Preventing Social Engineering, Interacting with the Unhoused, Patrol Techniques, Emergency Situations, Situational Awareness, Use of Force

Access Management, Emergency Management, Personal Safety, Exceptional Customer Care, Professionalism & Appearance, Liability & Loss Prevention, Communications: Electronic & Interpersonal, Note-Taking & Report Writing, Contract Security, Driver Training, Tactical Engagement, The Rights of People, Time Management, Critical Response, Monitoring & Dispatch, What is PTSD?, Discrimination & Harassment, Ready Response, Fire Safety Code of Business Ethics, Ladder & Lift Safety, Transit Security, Deterring Crime

Sample Article

Decades later, migrant deaths unsolved

By Lindell J. Kay

The Wilson Times

September 30, 2019

Being a migrant worker in eastern North Carolina has always been a dangerous job, but in Johnston and Wilson counties in the 1970s and '80s, it sometimes meant murder.

Bones discovered in 1974, hidden beneath straw in a barn near Lucama, belong to an unknown man who died of a shotgun blast to the back. Someone stabbed another man so furiously that when a farmhand discovered his skeleton at a labor camp near Johnston County's McGee's Crossroads community in 1992, the ribs and vertebrae bore cuts a quarter-inch deep, according to archived autopsy reports.

Of the eight unidentified bodies discovered in Johnston County from 1978 to 1994, five are directly related to migrant farms. The other three cases involve pedestrians believed to be migrant workers struck and killed by vehicles.

Similar circumstances occurred in neighboring counties during the same timeframe: In Wilson County, authorities recovered bones found in a barn, and in another case an unidentified migrant worker died in a car wreck. In Nash County, two bodies were found on migrant farms. And in Sampson County, a man and a woman were found dead near migrant farms.

With the exception of one other case, these are the only unidentified body cases in North Carolina with information linking the decedent to migrant work, confining the cases to Wilson and surrounding counties from the 1970s to early 1990s, according to an extensive review of autopsies, death certificates, missing person databases and other sources.

As far back as 1972, articles in the Times detail physically exhaustive work, a deplorable work environment and abuse and neglect of migrant workers by farm owners and overseers. After a migrant worker was worked to death in 1980, federal authorities arrested three crew chiefs in Nash County. The trio were convicted of conspiracy, kidnapping and slavery.

The indictment states the farmers continued to push the worker to harvest sweet potatoes and cucumbers even after he began spitting up blood. In other cases, the farmers forced workers to continue laboring in the field at gunpoint, according to the Times articles.

Crew leaders used alcohol to control workers, buying it by the case and selling it by the bottle, even by the drink, according to a 1977 New York Times article that lays out how migrant workers in Johnston County labored under slave-like conditions.

One crew leader always kept a gun nearby and boasted of killing a man with it. Another crew leader owned a machine gun and fired rounds above workers' heads as an intimidation tactic, according to court documents.

FORENSIC ADVANCES

Improvements in forensic science have made identifying bodies much easier, said Capt. Jeff Caldwell of the Johnston County Sheriff's Office.

Born in 1974, Caldwell grew up in Johnston County. He said he's seen fewer migrant workers in the area as the years went by, but he thinks the reason there are fewer unidentified bodies is because of scientific advances in DNA and other methods of identification.

"The science is better," Caldwell said. "Law enforcement capabilities like we have today just didn't exist back then. A case file from back then looks nothing like a file today."

Caldwell said he doesn't believe the victims being migrant workers affected the effort detectives put into the cases.

"A decedent is a decedent," Caldwell said. "We treat them all the same."

Caldwell said he remembers one of the original detectives on one of the cases reviewed at the Times' request.

"He was a good investigator," Caldwell said. "I'm sure he did everything possible."

The Wilson Times sent information about eight unidentified bodies to Caldwell. He found three case files.

As for the bones found near Lucama in 1974, the Wilson County Sheriff's Office doesn't have any case files from that year, said Wanda Samuel, the sheriff's chief of staff.

Even as advanced as forensic science is today, investigators have to have something to go on, Caldwell said.

In one of the oldest unsolved homicide cases in the state, police in 1972 found missing 33-year-old Bonnie Neighbors bound and shot in a migrant worker barracks near Benson.

Authorities in April of this year charged Larry Joe Scott, now 65, with murder. Living homeless in Florida, Scott frequented labor camps near Neighbors' home in the early 1970s. DNA connected him to the crime, according to statements from Johnston County District Attorney Susan Doyle.

"In the Neighbors case, we had a fresh body," Caldwell said. "Almost all these other cases are skeletons."

Other technological advances, especially cellphones and the internet, help identify decedents before they become unidentified body cases, said Nash County Sheriff Keith Stone.

"Facebook and other social media helps families keep in touch and know where someone is," Stone said. "In the old days, someone would leave their country to come to work here, and their family wouldn't know where they were."

CHANGING TIMES

In the 1970s, migrant workers had fewer protections, said Justin Flores, vice president of the Farm Labor Organizing Committee, headquartered in the Dudley community near Goldsboro.

"It's a time in history when minorities weren't treated fairly," Flores said. "The tobacco harvest was at the peak of summer. We are talking no proper medical care. If a worker sat down under a tree and died of heat exhaustion, no one cared."

The situation changed for the better with the improved guest worker program, Flores said.

The Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 allows foreign workers to temporarily reside and work in the U.S. The new guidelines meant farmers fell under the scrutiny of the U.S. Labor Department.

"It got better," Flores said. "We now have some actual infrastructure for enforcement agencies and labor organizations. Society seems to care a little more."

With the guest worker program, farmers are getting people with experience and an agricultural background, Flores said.

Unidentified Bodies

The National Missing and Unidentified Persons System maintains a database with details of more than 12,000 unidentified bodies, including 118 from North Carolina.

The following cases are related to migrant workers or farms. According to the database:

- On Feb. 6, 1974, in Wilson County, authorities found the body of a young man in a barn.

- On April 20, 1978, in Sampson County, authorities found the remains of a young woman at migrant camp.
- On Aug. 15, 1978, in Nash County, authorities found the body of a young man in a pond on a farm.
- On Nov. 21, 1978, in Johnston County, a hunter found the body of an older man at the edge of a soybean field.
- On Nov. 18, 1979, in Sampson County, a hunter found the scattered remains of an older man near a bean field.
- On Dec. 25, 1982, in Nash County, a hunter discovered the body of an older woman at migrant camp.
- On July 26, 1984, in Johnston County, an older man reported to be a migrant worker was struck by two vehicles on N.C. 242.
- On Aug. 31, 1985, in Wilson County, an older migrant worker died as a passenger in a fatal wreck on I-95.
- On Jan. 10, 1986, in Johnston County, authorities recovered the body of an older man in an old migrant camp.
- On Nov. 26, 1988, in Johnston County, hunters found the body of an older man along a road leading to a migrant camp.
- On June 20, 1989, in Johnston County, authorities located the body of an older man along a swampy creek bank near a migrant camp.
- On Oct. 2, 1989, in Johnston County, a young man reported to be a migrant worker stepped onto Rural Route 1008 and a passing vehicle struck him.
- On Dec. 30, 1992, in Johnston County, authorities discovered the skeletal remains of an older man in the woods behind a labor camp.
- On Sept. 18, 1994, in Johnston County, a young man reported to be a migrant worker walked into heavy traffic on I-95.

Anyone with information about any of these cases is asked to call the N.C. State Bureau of Investigation at 800-334-3000 or call local authorities.

Links

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References available upon request.