

## **VENITA HAWTHORNE JAMES**

### **SUMMARY**

Experienced news professional with proven ability to develop and motivate journalists to excel through high-impact content optimized for digital and print platforms. My passion is to develop people to their highest potential, drive content that matters, and build an audience that deserves our best work.

### **PROFESSIONAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

- Integrated structures, systems and people to develop reporters who use public records, sources and interviewing skills to develop quick-hits, deeper enterprise and online assets in a digital-first culture. Reporters promoted to consumer protection, Congress and other high-profile beats.
- Conceived and carried out training programs for new reporters, including ASU data training and journalism basics for Journalists-in-Training. Received a newsroom award for Manager of the Year two years running.
- Initiated and helped develop the azcentral Virtual School Fair, live chat sessions between parents and school representatives to allow parents to learn about viable options for their children using their smart phone, tablet or desktop.
- Focused teams on metrics analysis and passion topics of government accountability, growth and development and public safety to drive platform-specific content aimed at Millennials, Gen Xers and Boomers, from city watchdog to a new ASU Millennials beat to the 3 Cs of education coverage (Controversy, Comparison and Change).
- Lifted content coverage of The Republic's signature fundraiser, Season for Sharing, from the routine to Page One storytelling.
- Changed years long strategy of reader contributions from print-only to digital approach, adding thousands of page views and increasing the quality of the submissions, based on metrics.
- Directed teams to experiment with different platforms and approaches, using SEO headlines and optimizing content for an audience that is increasingly accessing content on smart phones.
- Launched Community Republics and websites in West Valley.
- Facilitated community-based events, including a 2015 panel at the 2015 Education Impact Summit, election forums, the 2009 Leadership West Summit and 2000 NABJ convention.

## **WORK EXPERIENCE**

Azcentral/The Arizona Republic/La Voz (July 1981 – November 2015)

Leadership roles through 2015 include:

- Community Watchdog Director/Strategist (local government, breaking news, education editor/reporter teams)
- West Valley Editor (Surprise, Southwest Valley, Glendale, Northwest Valley)
- West Valley General Manager (Community publisher connecting news, advertising, marketing)
- Acting Metro Editor
- Communities Editor (Scottsdale, West Valley, East Valley and Phoenix teams)
- Enterprise Team Leader (mid-range and long range investigations and enterprise)
- Public Safety Editor

Reporter roles include:

- Maricopa County Superior Court
- Maricopa County government
- Phoenix City Hall
- Health

## **EDUCATION**

A.B. degree in Journalism from Lincoln University, Jefferson City, MO

## **REFERENCES**

Randy Lovely, Executive Editor and Senior Vice President for Audience Development, The Arizona Republic. 200 East Van Buren, Phoenix, AZ 85004. 602.444.8790. [randy.lovely@arizonarepublic.com](mailto:randy.lovely@arizonarepublic.com).

Nicole Carroll, Vice President/News and Executive Editor, The Arizona Republic, 200 E. Van Buren, Phoenix, AZ 85004. 602.444.8797. [nicole.carroll@arizonarepublic.com](mailto:nicole.carroll@arizonarepublic.com).

Phil Boas, Editorial Page Director, The Arizona Republic, 200 E. Van Buren, Phoenix, A, 200 E. Van Buren, Phoenix AZ 85004. 602.444.8292. [phil.boas@arizonarepublic.com](mailto:phil.boas@arizonarepublic.com)

Landis Elliott, Manager of Internships at Estrella Mountain Community College, 3000 N. Dysart Road, Avondale, 85392. 623.935.8000. [landis.elliott@estrellamountain.edu](mailto:landis.elliott@estrellamountain.edu).

## WORK SAMPLES

Enterprise and quick hits (watchdog, education, growth and development, etc., from my teams)

A public service for parents: <http://schoolfair.azcentral.com>.

Topic page launched with school fair and Education Resource Guide: <http://education.azcentral.com>.

<http://www.azcentral.com/story/news/local/mesa/2015/09/08/mesa-neighborhood-flooded-human-decisions-set-stage/71730798/>

<http://www.azcentral.com/story/news/local/phoenix/2014/11/26/valley-cities-fix-eyesores/19564597/>

<http://www.azcentral.com/story/news/local/ahwatukee/2015/08/27/ahwatukee-foothills-home-demolished-loop-202-path/32473047/>

<http://www.azcentral.com/story/news/local/phoenix/2015/10/02/nowakowski-scrutinized-downtown-phoenix-land-deal/32542429/>

<http://www.azcentral.com/story/news/local/phoenix/2014/04/06/arizona-canals-fresh-vision/7378573/>

<http://www.azcentral.com/story/news/local/tempe/2015/05/25/arizona-revenue-department-spending-millions-outdated-computer-system-plans-replace/27810949/>

Graphics: <http://www.azcentral.com/story/news/local/phoenix/2015/08/05/phoenix-transit-tax-prop-104-dem>

<http://www.azcentral.com/story/news/local/scottsdale/2015/08/29/scottsdale-homes-development-desert-foothills-battle/32296163/>

A digital approach to education and other content that continues to provide page views:

<http://www.azcentral.com/picture-gallery/news/local/phoenix/2015/05/13/15-priciest-valley-private-schools/27239639/>

This enterprise story also contained a video where reporters tested transportation types:

<http://www.azcentral.com/story/news/local/phoenix/2015/06/21/voters-decide-tax-fund-urban-options/29018395/>