

# LINDSAY CRYSLER OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

*The Lindsay Crysler Outstanding Achievement Award is one of QCNA's most prestigious honours because it pays tribute to individuals who set the highest standard of excellence which in turn raises the profile of community newspapers. The award is named after Lindsay Crysler, a former dean of journalism at Concordia University who was instrumental in raising the bar for journalists within QCNA, and for recognizing the high impact of community journalism. In the early 1980s it was Lindsay, and then-editorial services coordinator Judith Taylor, who judged all entries in the QCNA Better Newspapers Competition. Lindsay encouraged his journalism students to do a stint, or forge a career, in a community newspaper so they can truly appreciate the impact of what they write. QCNA wanted to recognize his longstanding contribution, thereby creating the Lindsay Crysler Award, first presented at the QCNA gala in 1994 and renamed the Lindsay Crysler Outstanding Achievement Award in 2016. It was Lindsay's wish that the award be presented to an individual who has made an outstanding contribution to the community newspaper industry in general or whose work in a community newspaper has made an extraordinary contribution to the community.*

*The winners of the 2016 Lindsay Crysler Outstanding Achievement Award for outstanding contribution to the growth and development of community newspapers in Quebec are:*

## LILY RYAN AND SOPHIA RYAN

Co-Publishers  
Bulletin d'Aylmer, Pontiac Journal  
and The West Quebec Post



As our newspapers face their greatest existential threat, with investors and corporations bailing and newsrooms skinned alive, when so many in the industry are looking for the exit, there remain bright lights within our industry, led, driven almost, by exceptional individuals.

These newspaper people, not New York investors, carry the future of our industry. I am nominating not one person but two sisters for the Lindsay Crysler Outstanding Achievement Award this year, Lily and Sophia Ryan, co-publishers of the West Quebec Post, Bulletin d'Aylmer, and the Pontiac Journal. All three are dynamic hard-copy newspapers serving Western Quebec.

In our era's scramble for exit doors, the Ryan sisters have taken up these three newspapers (and associated publications, West Quebec Cottage Living magazine, the Aylmer Business Directory, two websites, and the TéléPontiac phone directory). This is an act of personal bravery and of confidence in our industry, which deserves our recognition. It is also an act of encouragement to all of us struggling in the "new media reality". It is the Ryan sisters' commitment - and abilities - which will keep their newspapers rolling and which can motivate all of us to keep our original commitments to our communities and our profession.

Lily claims she grew up under the original photocopier of her family's first newspaper, the Pontiac Journal. In actuality, it was the dark room. In those days of black-and-white film Lily mastered the dark room, good photography and good cropping. She moved to layout, and then to the real nuts and bolts, advertising sales. Following her graduation from McGill, with two majors, she came home to West Quebec to follow this career, which included marriage and two exceptional daughters (both today showing interest and capabilities in journalism!).

Younger sister Sophia was the explorer, travelling through Canada, the USA and Latin America, working her way through jobs that included serving the public, especially tourism. In Vancouver, she worked with a small avant-garde restaurant chain, later to be promoted to manager of the chain's flagship outlet for the Vancouver Olympics.

As I approached retirement, the sisters proposed a family transfer. Both knew the industry and saw the long-term viability of newspapers and their importance to smaller communities.

Five years later, Lily and Sophia have led the papers through redesigns, major staff changes, and most recently, our governments' lack of interest with independent media. Both women earn less than they might have in

their original career paths, and the workload has taken its toll on their marriages.

These women rose to every challenge. Aided by dynamic teams at each paper, especially with Lynne Lavery, my partner, who continues to work in accounts, they have steered the papers to their present success and, especially, to their remarkable importance and popularity within their communities.

Lily and Sophia Ryan deserve to carry our industry's torch, symbolized by the Lindsay Crysler Outstanding Achievement Award. They have a proven record of newspaper management and production. They are multi-lingual. Lily has multiple QCNA writing awards, and has worked for our industry, as vice-president of QCNA and chair of several QCNA board committees, having first joined the board in 2003, stepping down from the Board for maternity leave in February 2005, and rejoining the Board in 2011.

She has been part of our dealing with the provincial and federal governments, and with the minority language APF media network and the unlamented Canadian Community Newspapers Association. For example, she represented QCNA and our industry at Parliament's National Official Language Consultation last fall held in Gatineau and has been instrumental in the RecycleMédias imbroglio; she chaired the rewrite of QCNA's bylaws in the face of our national association's withdrawal from Quebec. Her work lobbying against Bill 122 giving municipalities the option to withdraw publication of public notices is ongoing, now as part of the Quebec Newspaper Coalition.

Sophia Ryan's contribution has been crucial in business and management. She has taken on the dual and difficult role of Operations and Sales Manager, reshaping the sales team and trying new advertising products and services. From their Gatineau website and a new division called Contact Communications to a full-on engagement with the business community via the annual "Best of Aylmer" competitions, Sophia has solidified the link between local small business and local media. She has linked with the local business association and expanded the monthly insert in all three papers to a solid regional publication called "Big Bang."

This is our opportunity to put their youthful, smiling faces as the dynamic face of our industry here in Quebec. This is as much our opportunity as it is theirs.

These two women represent the future of our industry, working with every new media, with partnerships, and sustaining the identities of our communities through our

media. By encouraging them, we encourage all younger people who recognize and value the importance of true media and the efficacy of modern community-building media. Awarding this honour to them is a bold step to the future.

*Submitted by Fred Ryan  
Publisher Emeritus  
Bulletin d'Aylmer, Pontiac Journal  
and The West Quebec Post*

Lily and Sophia Ryan are a singular sister act in Quebec's community newspaper industry. It is a great pleasure to choose these exemplary representatives of the twin pillars of community newspapers, from both the editorial and business sides of the office, as this year's co-recipients of the Lindsay Crysler Outstanding Achievement Award.

At a time when many publications find it difficult to attract and retain talent, the Ryan sisters have chosen to not only maintain the traditions set by their trailblazing parents, but to reinvent the idea of a community newspaper. As co-publishers of The West Quebec Post, Bulletin d'Aylmer and the Pontiac Journal, they have built a path upon which survival and success can be reached.

On the editorial side, Lily Ryan has shown courage, determination and flair in her writing and community leadership. As a dogged reporter and editor, and as a combative representative of the industry in the face of government, Lily Ryan sets a standard for our industry. Sophia Ryan gave up a promising business career to join her sister in a commitment to build the financial foundation for the family collection of publications, which also include West Quebec Living, the Aylmer Business Directory, TéléPontiac phone directory and two websites. Their ability to innovate and to thrive in the face of adversity is a beacon for all QCNA members. Together, this example makes Lily and Sophia Ryan worthy recipients of the QCNA's most prestigious honour, the Lindsay Crysler Outstanding Achievement Award.

Judges:  
Linda Ludwick,  
Director of Finances, the Nation

Lyle Stewart,  
Editor, the Nation