

The logo for WGLT.org features the letters 'WGLT' in a bold, sans-serif font. The 'W' is black with a white radio tower icon inside its left vertical stroke. The 'G' is red, and the 'L' and 'T' are black. The '.org' is in a smaller, red, sans-serif font to the right of 'GLT'.

WGLT.org

89.1FM



**2018–2019
Annual Report**

A WGLT.org Year in Review

from General Manager R.C. McBride

Welcome to WGLT's 2018 Annual Report! We present this narrative every year for several reasons. Chiefly, it's to keep you, our users and contributors, as informed as possible, but it also serves as another chapter in the station's ongoing, 50-plus year history.

For those of you who might be new, WGLT is a National Public Radio affiliated, non-profit radio station (plus a growing suite of digital services) owned and operated by Illinois State University. We're a service of Illinois State University - a part of its School of Communication, which itself is part of the College of Arts and Sciences. As such, we take the educational portion of our mission seriously. We're proud to have a number of



Laura Kennedy's retirement

student employees and interns coming through each semester. Our plans to add a two-year graduate assistant journalist fell through this past year when the selected candidate opted for full-time employment in town; we hope to have someone in that position this upcoming August.

In the spring, Laura Kennedy retired, leaving behind a legacy as one of the most recognizable and talent voices ever to grace the Bloomington-Normal airwaves. Fortunately, Laura has decided to rejoin the WGLT team in a part-time capacity as an arts and culture reporter.

The WGLT news team got a big boost during the summer, with two new additions: Mary Cullen and Eric Stock. Neither is a stranger to the community; Eric was a longtime news anchor, reporter, and sports broadcaster at WJBC, while Mary is an Illinois State School of Communication alumna who comes to us by the Public Affairs Reporting Master's program at the University of Illinois-Springfield. We also added to our impressive list of part-time local news correspondents when Breanna Grow joined the team.

We made a few programming changes this year to bolster our news, talk, and information programming. Morning Edition is now available at 4 a.m. for you early risers. 1A can be heard from 9 until 11 a.m. (with a one-hour rebroadcast at 11 p.m.) while On Point has shifted to the 9 to 11 p.m. slot.

Not all changes have involved new staff or programming. For those of you who've visited WGLT's studios before, you'll probably remember the 1970s-era orange carpet that was held together (literally) by duct tape. That's gone. Also gone is the station's



Eric Stock



Mary Cullen

2004-era on-air automation system, replaced by a new, state-of-the-art setup led by Operations Director Travis Meadors. And we're in the very early stages of a fundraising campaign - tied in with the University's Redbirds Rising effort - to build a brand-new master control studio!

The space will feature enough microphones to allow us to host panel discussions with multiple guests, cameras for live social

media telecasts, its own set for Tiny Desk concerts, and much more. Trust me, you'll be hearing more about this.

During 2018, WGLT hosted community forums on timely issues in need of public education and dialogue. We hosted candidate forums from Congress to McLean County Clerk. We won a slew of newsroom awards under the direction of News Director Charlie Schlenker, with Ryan Denham and Jon Norton both winning first place Associated Press Awards. AP also cited WGLT for having the best online news presence of any station in Illinois. Speaking of that online presence, WGLT is available on all major streaming services and via smart speaker. And more of you are [READING WGLT.org](http://READING.WGLT.org) than ever, with monthly unique visitors regularly ranging between 80,000 – 120,000.

We're very excited for the future. Summer Concert featured an expanded format thanks to growing community sponsorships and support. Radio Faces will have a new location and a new date. We will continue with our live community dialogues. A new daily podcast, *The Leadoff*, recently debuted. And, as of this (slightly tardy) writing, we are one month into our partnership with Bradley University with WGLT taking over day-to-day management of Peoria's NPR station, WCBU. The goal is to establish enough economies of scale so both WGLT and WCBU are able to increase their local news, information, and cultural coverage in their respective communities.

I'm also happy to say WGLT ended FY18 in positive financial territory for the third consecutive year thanks to a lot of hard work led by our development team – Director Melissa Libert, Individual Giving lead Pat Peterson and Corporate Support lead Bobby Nash Castillo! Simply put, this allows us to invest more in the product. We never take your support for granted.

Now for all the thank yous. First, the full and part time staff members that haven't already been mentioned: Bruce Bergethon, Bryan Bloodworth, Mark Hill, Ariele Jones, Willis Kern, Mike McCurdy, Patrick Murphy, Colleen Reynolds, and Nicole Welsh. How's that for an impressive crew?

Illinois State University is very supportive financially - funding five full-time positions - and of course, federal grants help. But it's you, our local underwriters and donors, who provide MORE THAN HALF our annual operating funding. It couldn't happen without you.

Here's to a fantastic 2019, and beyond!

From the WGLT Newsroom...

Here's a look at WGLT's best reporting of 2018:

Series

Skipping School—Four-part series on how the teacher shortage is impacting McLean County schools

Autonomous Driving—Special episode of WGLT's Sound Ideas focused on the self-driving revolution, and how local companies like Rivian and State Farm are at the forefront

Collaboration

For the first time, WGLT jointly reported two investigative stories with *The Pantagraph* in 2018. Both focused on the criminal justice system, including the unusual spike in gun violence.

WGLT continued its partnership with the League of Women Voters of McLean County, hosting six candidate forums and publishing candidate questionnaires ahead of the November election.

WGLT Community Conversations

The WGLT newsroom is committed to public discourse on the issues that matter most. In 2018, WGLT launched a new Community Conversation series made possible by the Alice and Fannie Fell Trust at Illinois State University. The first two discussions focused on gun violence in Bloomington-Normal and changes in local journalism.

Corporate Support Spotlight

Underwriting and sponsoring WGLT is a win-win. Our corporate supporters raise awareness of their business among an exceptional audience, AND they contribute to the success of a vital and valued community service. WGLT audience members, in turn,



2019 WGLT Events

**SUMMER
CONCERT**

CEFCU Presents the
WGLT Summer Concert
June 8, 2019

**RADIO
FACES**

Country Financial
Presents Radio Faces
October 18, 2019

WGLT.org's Most-Read Stories

For many news sites, the most-clicked stories aren't always the most important ones. We're proud to report that WGLT.org bucks that trend. The Top 10 most-read stories of 2018 on WGLT.org include some of our most impactful, important reporting from across the community.

1. Why Is State Farm Making So Many Changes?
2. Normal West Family Mourns Team Volunteer After Bus Crash
3. Bloomington Mom Shares Heroin Heartache To Help Others
4. Central Illinois Small Animal Rescue Facing Shutdown
5. Tree Removal Causes Stir In Bloomington's Founders' Grove
6. Lack Of Child Psychiatrists Poses Threat To McLean County Youth
7. Obituary: Bloomington Pastor McSwain Remembered As 'Dynamic, Kind'
8. Frontier Airlines Returning To Central Illinois Regional Airport
9. Children of Skilled Indian Workers In B-N Face Uncertain Future
10. Fatal Attraction: How A Young Couple's Dark Journey Led To Murder

SUMMER CONCERT





2018 WGLT Event Sponsors and Underwriters

Advantage Lawn and Landscape
Bike Share 309
Bloomington Center for the Performing Arts
Bloomington-Normal Area Convention and Visitors Bureau
Bloomington-Normal Young Professionals
Bloomington Public Library
Brad Barker Honda
Castle Theatre
CEFCU
Center for Youth & Family Solutions
Central Illinois Regional Airport
Charles Schwab Independent Branch, Mark Brownlee
Children's Discovery Museum
City of Bloomington
City of Bloomington Parks & Recreation Department
Coffee Hound
Comcast Business
Community Cancer Center
Community Players Theatre
Connect Transit
COUNTRY Financial
COUNTRY Financial Representative Justin M. Boyd
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DoubleTree by Hilton
Downtown Bloomington Association
Eagle Performing Arts & Conference Center
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Epiphany Farms Hospitality Group
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Forget Me Not Flowers
Fox & Hounds Day Spa
The Garlic Press
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Home Sweet Home Ministries
Illinois Prairie Community Foundation
Illinois Shakespeare Festival
Illinois Symphony Orchestra
Illinois State University Admissions
Illinois State University Athletics
Illinois State University College of Applied Science and Technology—Gamma Phi Circus
Illinois State University College of Business
Ivy Lane Bakery
Jazz UpFront
Jimmy Johns of Bloomington-Normal
Kur's Autobody Repair Shop Inc.
Luther Oaks
McLean County Chamber of Commerce
McLean County Museum of History
Mid-Illini Credit Union
Multicultural Leadership Program
Mucky Duck Marina
The Music Shoppe & Pro-Sound Center
National Shows 2
Nightshop
The Normal Theater
Often Running
Prairie Oak Veterinary Center
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Specs Around Town
State Farm Bank
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Vermillion Players
Vitesse Cycle Shop
Waiting Room Records
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Zimmerman & Armstrong Investment Advisors

2018 WGLT Major Donors

Like all WGLT contributors, major donors give generously to help ensure this public radio station has the resources it needs to inform and engage our community. Whether they contribute to the annual operating budget, invest in WGLT's future, or both, they help make the excellent programs and services WGLT offers possible.

WGLT Legacy Donors

Generous donors are helping to sustain the future of quality public radio in central Illinois by establishing and investing in one of the WGLT endowments: the Future Fund; the Dr. Robert & Marilyn Sutherland Endowment; or the Albert N. Attaway Endowment. Others have made substantial commitments to WGLT through planned giving.

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(\$1,500-plus)

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Ongoing monthly contributions are convenient for you and WGLT. Automatic monthly contributions from your bank account or credit card provide WGLT with a reliable, steady stream of financial support. It's a comfortable way to fit your support for WGLT into your budget, and because your ongoing contribution continues until you say otherwise, you don't have to remember to renew. Set up your monthly contribution today at wgl.org/contribute.



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