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For more information: Diana Mitsu Klos, dmk@splc.org or 202-728-7267

Veteran Journalists and Media Lawyers Join Student Press Law Center Board of Directors

The Student Press Law Center has named four new members to its [Board of Directors](#) to serve its mission to support, promote and defend the First Amendment rights of student journalists and their advisers at the high school and college levels.

Media attorney [Matthew Cate](#) of Ballard Spahr; [Lynette Clemetson](#) who heads the Wallace House journalism program at University of Michigan; [Steven A. Holmes](#), recently retired executive director of Standards and Practice for CNN; and [Ava Lubell](#) former general counsel of Quartz.com and current Legal Fellow at the Cornell Law School First Amendment Clinic all join the SPLC Board of Directors.

“Steve, Lynette, Ava and Matt represent the best of thoughtful leadership in the fields of journalism and law. I know that they will each share their expertise and insights to help the Student Press Law Center continue to grow and respond to the needs of student journalists. Our mission has never been more important and the voices and perspectives of young journalists are essential to preserving and protecting democracy. We welcome our new Board members and look forward to their active engagement,” said Jane Eisner, chair of the SPLC Board of Directors.

SPLC’s Board of Directors consists of up to 15 volunteers from across the fields of journalism, education, law, philanthropy and nonprofit management. Board members serve for three-year terms which are renewable for one additional term. The new board members are:

Matthew Cate

Cate is a media and First Amendment lawyer based in Washington, D.C. at the law firm Ballard Spahr LLP. Cate helps reporters break through barriers to public information, defends journalists’ rights to shield their confidential newsgathering materials, and represents media companies and journalists facing legal threats.

Before becoming a lawyer, Cate was a reporter for the *Chattanooga Times Free Press* and the *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*, primarily covering government and politics. His journalism career began as a student journalist, producing and editing features for the daily news broadcast of



Jefferson County High School daily news broadcast in Dandridge, Tennessee. His first byline appeared in *The Daily Beacon*, the independent student newspaper of University of Tennessee.

Cate is a member of the First Amendment Coalition in California and maintains an active pro bono practice as a member of the attorney referral services of the Electronic Frontier Foundation and the Student Press Law Center. In 2019, he successfully represented a student newspaper editor and adviser in Stockton, Calif., in a First Amendment controversy that was covered by the [*New York Times*](#), the [*San Francisco Chronicle*](#), and other U.S. and international news outlets.

Lynette Clemetson

Clemetson is Director of Wallace House, home of the Knight-Wallace Fellowships for Journalists and the Livingston Awards at The University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. Prior to joining the university, she was Senior Director of Strategy and New Initiatives at NPR, guiding projects across broadcast, digital and events. A veteran reporter, Clemetson was a domestic correspondent for The New York Times and a correspondent for *Newsweek* magazine, based in Hong Kong and Washington DC. She was the founding managing editor of the website TheRoot.com, and served as Director of Digital Strategy at the Pew Center on the States. In her current work, Clemetson is engaged in upholding press freedom and sustaining journalism across a variety of forms.

Steven A. Holmes

Holmes, a veteran journalist with more than 40 years in the business, recently retired from his position as executive director of Standards and Practices at CNN. He has also been national domestic policy editor at The Washington Post and reporter and editor at The New York Times where he was part of a team awarded the Pulitzer Prize in 2001 for reporting on race relations in America.

Holmes is the author of “Ron Brown: An Uncommon Life,” a biography of the former commerce secretary and Chairman of the Democratic Party who died while working in the Clinton Administration. He put himself through college by driving a New York City taxicab at night, and still insists that this was the second best job he’s ever had.

Ava Lubell

Lubell is a Legal Fellow at the Cornell Law School First Amendment Clinic, providing pro bono legal advice to New York City metro area journalists on a range of First Amendment issues arising from newsgathering and publication. Previously, Lubell served as the General Counsel of Quartz Media. Quartz focuses on global business news and has reporters based in cities around the world, including New York, London, Hong Kong, New Delhi, Nairobi, and San Francisco. Lubell directed legal strategy and worked directly with the newsroom, product, and business teams. Prior to Quartz, Lubell worked at Slate as General Manager & General Counsel where, in



addition to overseeing Slate’s legal work, she managed the division responsible for day-to-day operations of the business (including HR, IT, and facilities). Lubell served as Special Assistant for Briefing under New York Governor Andrew Cuomo, and as the Political Director for the Women & Politics Institute at American University. She is a graduate of NYU Law School and Brown University. Lubell is a member of the American Bar Association Communications Law Forum Committee on Training and Development and an affiliate member of the New York City Bar Association Communications and Media Law Committee.

The Student Press Law Center (splc.org, [@splc](https://twitter.com/splc)) is an independent, nonpartisan 501(c)(3) nonprofit working at the intersection of law, journalism and education to support, promote and defend the rights of student journalists and their advisers at the high school and college levels. Based in Washington, D.C., the Student Press Law Center provides information, training and legal assistance at no charge to student journalists and the educators who work with them.