



Communication Matters: The NCA Podcast | **TRANSCRIPT**  
Episode 0: Welcome to Communication Matters: The NCA Podcast!

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**\*\*Please note: This is a rough transcription of this audio podcast. This transcript is not edited for spelling, grammar, or punctuation.\*\***

**Participants:**

Trevor Parry-Giles  
Ronald L. Jackson II  
Kathleen J. Turner

*[Audio Length: 0:14:16]*

RECORDING BEGINS

**Trevor Parry-Giles:**

Hello and welcome to *Communication Matters: The NCA Podcast*.

I'm Trevor Parry-Giles, the Executive Director of the National Communication Association. I'll be serving as moderator of what I hope will be a rich and diverse series of conversations about the scholarly discipline of Communication, emerging Communication research, communication's critical role in confronting a wide range of societal challenges, and a lot more.

**Introduction:**

This is Communication Matters, the NCA podcast.

**Trevor Parry-Giles:**

In this first episode, I'd like to introduce you to the National Communication Association, or NCA, which is the preeminent scholarly association devoted to the study and teaching of Communication.

NCA was founded in 1914 by a group of 17 Speech teachers, who voted unanimously to leave the National Council of Teachers of English and form the National Association of Academic Teachers of Public Speaking; this initial break from English happened in late November at the NCTE convention in Chicago. Over the days of the convention, members of the Public Speaking group met frequently to discuss and debate the possibility of creating a new academic association. When the 17 founders finally made the decision to form the new association, they essentially formed a new academic discipline at the same time. Here's how NCA's 104<sup>th</sup> president, Ron Jackson, characterized the founding and the founders, from his 2018 presidential address.

**Ronald L. Jackson II:**

Frist, we go to the beginnings of a National Communication Association. The National Communication Association was founded in 1914. There were 113 individuals who were members of the National Council of Teachers of English. These individuals were Speech



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---

teachers and they voted to succeed from NCTE to establish their own independent organization. The vote was narrow: 57 to 56. They decided with this narrow vote, we ought to think about it a little bit and as the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary edition of *Spectra* indicated, “well it was an unseasonably warm day,” so perhaps some people decided to enjoy the rays. So, when they met later on, out of those individuals that were there earlier, only 34 convened. Those 34 individuals that convened voted once again and by a very narrow margin, 18 to 16, they voted to establish the organization that became known as the National Association of Academic Teachers of Public Speaking. Now, of course, we know that as our own NCA. Very exciting that these individuals had a vision. They had a vision that they were willing to fulfill, and they understood there was a voice that they had to offer, and they wanted to make sure that voice was heard. That is our first step along the way of the NCA heritage trail.

**Trevor Parry-Giles:**

As Jackson noted, those “founding” 17 sought to encourage research, improve teaching, and create a community of scholar-teachers dedicated to the art and science of public communication.

Now over the next century, this community evolved and expanded into the National Communication Association. We’re a thriving group of thousands from across the nation and around the world who are committed to a collective mission to advance Communication as an academic discipline; they are also committed to NCA’s dedication to diversity, equity, and inclusion in all that we do: NCA supports inclusiveness and diversity among our faculties, within our membership, in the workplace, and in the classroom; and NCA supports and promotes policies that fairly encourage this same diversity and inclusion. As a result, perhaps, NCA is now the largest scholarly association in the world dedicated to the study and teaching of Communication.

For many of our members, NCA means the NCA Annual Convention. Each year, some 5,000 of these scholars gather for the NCA Annual Convention to present and discuss new Communication research and to reconnect with their colleagues and friends from around the discipline. I’ve come to see NCA’s convention as a really important moment for our discipline and for our members. In their book *The Art of Gathering*, Priya Parker expresses why we gather together: “We gather to solve problems we can’t solve on our own. We gather to celebrate, to mourn, and to mark transitions. We gather to make decisions. We gather because we need one another. We gather to show strength. We gather to honor and acknowledge. We gather to build companies and schools and neighborhoods. We gather to welcome, and we gather to say goodbye.” I think that’s kind of a nice way to think about all the reasons why NCA continues to convene an annual convention.

We’ve hosted a convention for 105 years; the only time NCA’s Annual Convention was cancelled was in 1918, because of World War I. NCA’s 100<sup>th</sup> president, Kathie Turner,



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---

discussed the changes over the years to the NCA convention in the Centennial presidential address of 2014.

**Kathleen J. Turner:**

In 1915 we had our very first Convention for the National Association of Academic Teachers of Public Speaking or NAATPS as rolls so trippingly off the tongue. Now I would note that these rebels met at the same time and in the same place with the National Council of Teachers of English. And what's more, one afternoon they all adjourned from their convention to go to the conference sessions at the National Council of Teachers of English so that they could attend the public speaking panels that were offered there. So, it wasn't exactly a clean break, but we had a hearty 60 members attending that convention, paying membership dues of two dollars, paying a conference fee of one dollar, sixteen people appeared on the program, the treasurer reported a deficit of \$508.69, with loans from members amounting to \$479. Those were our beginnings. We've come a long way since 1914 and we've had a lot of adventures in the process. Think about it, we've had five general sessions and four periods of special sessions, this was in 1933. One year 52 institutions granted advanced degrees to 450 candidates, that was in 1948, our silver anniversary. Lionel Crocker served as President while teaching seven classes a semester at Denison. The wives of officers hosted a reception for the wives' faculty. A tradition that Bobby Patton discovered carried over into the early '70s. Mike and Susy Osbourne covered their walls with butcher paper and then used color-coded index cards to schedule the 1987 convention. All of us who are more recent primary program planners say, "thank you, Michelle Randall and NCA Convention Central."

**Trevor Parry-Giles:**

As Turner said, NCA's convention has come a long way; we'll be meeting for the first time in NCA's history in Indianapolis in 2020.

Since 1915, NCA has published the latest scholarly research in Communication; currently, NCA publishes 11 scholarly journals that are the venues for the most current research across a wide range of the Communication discipline. NCA publishes more journals than nearly all of the other major learned societies; only about 2% of all the learned societies that are members of the American Council of Learned Societies publish 10 or more journals. NCA provides members with free access to the current and archived electronic editions of all our journals, going back all the way to 1915; this is especially important at a time when many academic libraries are reducing or eliminating their journal subscriptions.

Members of NCA include researchers, professional communicators, teachers, administrators, and students, and their areas of scholarly emphasis are rich and varied. To ensure that they find a supportive professional home with NCA, members often pursue leadership opportunities and collaborations among the more than 60 interest groups that connect members with other scholars and practitioners who share similar research, professional, or institutional interests.



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At NCA, we attempt to serve our members in myriad ways—offering extensive teaching and learning resources, data about the discipline, including a new special issue of the November *Spectra* in 2019 devoted to the State of the Communication Discipline, research and publishing resources, and a variety of granting opportunities to support our members' work. In addition, NCA serves as a national voice in advocating for social science and humanities funding, and for protections of vital academic interests. Here are just a few examples of NCA's work in public advocacy: In January of this year, NCA co-signed a letter issued by the Coalition for National Science Funding (CNSF) and endorsed by more than 125 organizations expressing serious concerns about the impact of the federal government shutdown on America's research enterprise. In March of this year, NCA issued an action alert asking NCA members to write to Members of Congress, in partnership with the National Humanities Alliance, to encourage continued support for the National Endowment for the Humanities and all other federal humanities programs. Also in March, NCA co-signed a letter (with 31 other professional societies) to Alaskan officials expressing concern about proposed funding cuts for higher education. In July, NCA co-signed a letter to Turkish Constitutional Courts with 26 other professional societies expressing support for the right of scholars and academics to sign the Academics for Peace Petition. And in September, NCA joined on a statement from the American Sociological Association and 15 learned societies encouraging institutions to use evidence-based best practices for collecting student feedback, including using student evaluations as part of a holistic assessment that includes peer observations and other forms of evaluation.

NCA's social media presence continues to grow, and we recently began driving even greater engagement with responses to some of the comments people make to our posts and tweets. Nearly 11,000 individuals now "like" NCA's Facebook page, and 10,500 follow us on Twitter. We crafted more than 1,000 unique Facebook posts in 2018. NCA launched an Instagram account that in only a few months has nearly 1,300 followers. And we've launched a brand-new video series on Concepts in Communication, available to anyone via NCA's YouTube channel.

In keeping with our mission to "advance the discipline" of Communication, NCA has developed this podcast series to expand the reach of our member scholars' work and perspectives. In our next episode, to air on Thursday, January 9, 2020, you'll hear from attendees at NCA's 105<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention in Baltimore about their personal journeys, their most memorable NCA Convention moments, and what the 2019 convention theme, "Communication for Survival," means for them.

We'll follow up with an episode featuring an important figure in free speech history, Mary Beth Tinker. Tinker was featured on a special panel at the NCA Annual Convention in Baltimore; Tinker was one of three students who was suspended for wearing black armbands to school in



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the late 1960s and that dissent resulted in the famous 1969 case *Tinker v. Des Moines Independent School District*, where the Supreme Court ruled, that Warren Harding Junior High School could not punish Tinker and the other students for wearing a black armband in school in support of a truce of the Vietnam War. The case set a precedent for student speech in schools, and Tinker (along with Haiman Award winner Stephen A. Smith) will join us to discuss what's changed (and what's remained the same) in the 50 years since 1969.

And, we'll talk with Joëlle M. Cruz, the inaugural recipient of NCA's Orlando L. Taylor Distinguished Scholarship Award in Africana Communication. Dr. Cruz's research in the area of "alternative organizing" contributes significantly to understanding ways that Black women grapple with entrepreneurship in post/conflict situations in both Africa and the United States. As an added bonus, Orlando Taylor himself will join the conversation and commemorate the first presentation of the NCA award established in Taylor's honor in 2018.

Be sure to listen in as we discuss emerging scholarship, established theory, and new applications, all exploring just how *Communication Matters*—in our classrooms, in our communities, and in our world. And be sure to subscribe to *Communication Matters* wherever you listen to your podcasts. Thanks so much for listening...we'll see you next time!

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