

Constitution of the Greater Cleveland Association of Black Journalists (GCABJ)

Article I: Organization

Section I: The name of this organization shall be the Greater Cleveland Association of Black Journalists, hereinafter referred to as the GCABJ.

Section II: OBJECTIVES – GCABJ shall have as its objectives the organization of Black journalists and shall act as an agency through which Black journalists, media professionals, communication and public relations specialists can implement the following goals:

- Strengthen ties between Blacks in the local and mass media;
- Sensitize mass media to institutional racism in coverage and employment practices;
- Encourage the entry of minorities into journalism and communication fields;
- Honor excellence and outstanding achievement among Black journalists.

Section III: This constitution shall be in compliance with any federal, state or local laws, which govern the transaction of business by GCABJ.

Section IV: GCABJ shall, after membership approval, take stands of social and /or professional concern.

Article II: Membership

Section I: Full membership is available for working journalists, including reporters, editors, photographers, newsroom managers, etc., who produce, gather and disseminate news for newspaper, television, radio stations, magazines, online and wire services, etc., and full-time freelance journalists. Associate membership is open to part-time freelance journalists, journalism professors and other media related professionals. Student membership is open to all students enrolled in a high school, college or university journalism or communications curriculum.

Section II: All membership applications are subject to review by the Membership Committee. Anyone wishing to appeal a related committee decision may do so to the board of directors, which may endorse or overrule the committee's decision. Membership Committee members are recommended by the board and appointed by the President.

Section III: Membership Composition should consist of the following membership eligibility

- a.) **Professional Members** - Professional membership shall be open to any person whose principal livelihood comes from creating, producing or supervising the creation of journalism. Professional members may serve on the board of directors and vote in any GCABJ matter calling on the entire membership to decide.
- b.) **Media Related Professionals** - Media-related professional membership shall be open to an individual working primarily in a field related to journalism – such as public relations, public information, marketing, communications, advocacy, legal, etc. – and whose work supports the mission of GCABJ/NABJ. Media-related professional members shall be admitted to membership sessions, may voice a non-binding opinion at such meetings and may serve on committees, provided they do not comprise more than one-third of any committee. Media-related professional members may not vote in GCABJ matters.

- c.) **Academic Members** - Academic membership shall be open to high school, college and university faculty and other academic professionals, including administrators and trainers, with research and or teaching interests in journalism. Academic members with at least five years prior experience in journalism may serve on the board of directors, and may vote in any GCABJ matter calling on the entire membership to decide.
- d.) **Alumni Members** - Alumni membership shall be open to anyone who had been a professional or academic member of GCABJ/NABJ for no less than 25 years, and who has either retired or otherwise no longer works within journalism or academia. Alumni members may not serve on the board of directors, but may vote in any GCABJ matter calling on the entire membership to decide.
- e.) **Honorary Members** - The board of directors shall have the authority to establish additional categories of non-voting memberships, such as honorary or corporate memberships, to corporate sponsors and community members who support GCABJ/NABJ's mission. Such categories shall be considered honorary, and no individual or sponsor granted such designation may vote or is eligible for any of the rights afforded members as defined above.
- f.) **Lifetime Members** - Those who have paid for lifetime membership as prescribed by the NABJ operating procedures. Lifetime members may vote in any GCABJ matter calling on the entire membership to decide except for the election of the academic, media-related or student representatives. Lifetime members may also seek election to the board of directors as constitutionally permitted.
- g.) **Student Members** - Student membership shall be open to high school, college or university students – including undergraduate, graduate and associate degree students – who have a demonstrated interest in journalism. Student members shall be admitted to membership sessions, may voice a non-binding opinion and may serve on committees, provided they do not comprise more than one-third of any committee. Student members may not vote in any other GCABJ matter.

Section IV: A member with dues that are in arrears for a period of ninety (90) days shall be deemed to have forfeited his or her membership.

Section V: Anyone who, in applying for membership in GCABJ, does not fulfill the requirements of a full member, shall be considered for associate membership. The dues for an associate member shall be set by the dues schedule. Associate members are allowed to vote, but cannot hold office of the President or Vice-President of the organization, in compliance with the criteria of Chapter affiliation of the National Association of Black Journalists.

Section VI: Student membership shall be open to all students enrolled in a high school college or university journalism or communications curriculum with dues determined by the dues schedule. Student members are not entitled to vote or hold elective office in GCABJ.

Section VI: All GCABJ members are required to pay dues according to the dues schedule. Those dues will be made payable to GCABJ through the bonded treasurer.

Article III: Officers (Board of Directors)

Section I: In accordance with the Chapter affiliation requirements of the National Association of Black Journalists, the President, Vice-President of Print/Multimedia and Vice President of Broadcast must be Full members in good standing with the National Association of Black Journalists as well as the Greater Cleveland Association of Black Journalists. The remaining offices may be held by an Associate member who must be in good standing with the Greater Cleveland Association of Black Journalists. Officers of GCABJ shall be President, Vice-President (print/multimedia), Vice President (broadcast), Secretary, bonded Treasurer, Parliamentarian and an At-Large representative of the general body.

Section II: All officers shall be elected individually by popular vote.

Section III: All officers will serve two-year terms. Each elected officer may serve up to, but not more than two consecutive terms. The deadline for nominations shall be set in March (and nominees must be publicized to the membership no later than 30 days before the election) with elections held at the April meeting. All elected officers will be installed during the June meeting.

Section IV: In the event of any vacancy in an elective office, the president or acting president shall appoint a member to the position for the unexpired term. The appointment shall be subject of the approval of the general membership. If the office of President should become vacant, one of the vice-presidents will become acting-president until a special election is called. The special election must be called within 60 days of the vacancy. The acting president will be appointed by the remaining officers.

Section V: Any member wishing to run for office, but is unable to attend the election shall be deemed eligible if nominated and the nomination was accepted, provided he or she has notified the secretary in writing of the absence.

Article IV: Meetings

Section I: The six (6) officials shall form the Board of Directors, Board meetings shall be held at least once a month. General meetings (including forums) should be held at least once a month and be open to the general membership.

Section II: Meetings shall be held as designated by the president, provided the members are duly advised.

Section III: Votes by written proxy shall be allowed with a valid signature.

Section IV: A special general membership meeting can be called by the president or vice-president(s) on e-mail request to the secretary. The request must state the subject of the said meeting. The notice must be seven (7) days in advance of said meeting.

Article V: Duties of the President

Section I: The president shall preside at all meetings of the membership and meetings of the Board. The president shall also govern the deliberation of said meetings.

Section II: The president shall exercise as general chairperson over all business of GCABJ or designate the vice-president(s) to do so.

Section III: The president shall have the power to appoint all committees.

Section IV: The president shall serve as an ambassador to the public and actively promote GCABJ objectives with various media outlets, the community and social/activist organizations.

Article VI: Duties of the Vice-President(s)

Section I: The vice-president of print/multi-media and the vice-president of broadcast shall exercise all power and rights of the president during the president's absence or inability to act.

Section II: The vice-president of print/multi-media shall be in charge of the publication of the GCABJ newsletter and, along with the vice-president of broadcast, the content of the GCABJ Web site. The vice-president of broadcast will be responsible for recruitment of members in broadcast, as well as sharing the responsibility of content in the newsletter, GCABJ Web site and other social media.

Article VII: Duties of the Secretary

Section I: The secretary shall take charge of all books, correspondence, records, documents, photographs, and other property of GCABJ invested in his or her care. The secretary shall also keep these items at a place indicated by the Board and, relinquishing office, shall deliver the same to his or her successor.

Section II: The secretary shall attempt to attend all meetings of GCABJ, both general body and the Board, and shall keep a true and faithful record of all deliberations of same.

Section III: The secretary shall receive and answer all correspondence at the direction of the president and shall keep a list of all members in good standing and oversee the issuance of GCABJ membership ID cards.

Section IV: The secretary shall be responsible for providing minutes to the Board and the general body in a timely matter for review and approval.

Section V: The secretary shall keep an account of the petty cash fund entrusted to his or her care for stationary and postage.

Article VIII: Duties of the Treasurer:

Section I: The treasurer must be bonded in accordance with the Chapter Affiliation requirements of the National Association of Black Journalists. The treasurer shall take charge of all funds and monies of GCABJ and receive all monies and deposit same to the credit of the Chapter in any financial institution designated by the executive committee.

Section II: The treasurer shall keep a faithful account of all expenditures and receipts in books provided by GCABJ for all monies paid.

Section III: The treasurer shall pay out the funds of the Chapter, all such accounts, up to two hundred fifty dollars (\$250.00).

Section IV: The treasurer shall prepare monthly reports or financial standings of the Chapter and submit same to the executive meeting at the regular meeting for review and approval.

Section V: The treasurer is responsible for upkeep of any tax records as required by law.

Section VI: The treasurer shall allow any two or more members of the Board to examine any financial books of the Chapter.

Article IX: Direction of the Parliamentarian

Section I: The parliamentarian is responsible for maintaining the GCABJ constitution.

Section II: He or she must refer to the GCABJ constitution when questions and disputes occur during any general or Board meeting. The parliamentarian is responsible for maintaining order during any meeting or public forum.

Section III: The parliamentarian assures that GCABJ business is conducted according to the GCABJ constitution. Roberts Rules of Order shall apply to all meetings of the general membership.

Article X: At-Large Representative

Section I: Appointed to represent the membership of the body

Section II: Act as a liaison between all committees and the general membership body in regard to the Board of Directors. Will serve as tie-breaking vote in the event that Board of Directors is tied.

Section III: Will fill in, in order of succession when other members of the board are not present.

Article XI: Finance

Section I: Membership fee shall be set by the Board of Directors with the approval of the general membership, and shall be paid no later than March 15 of each year.

Section II: All checks issued by GCABJ under two hundred fifty dollars (\$250.00) must bear one of the signatures of the following officers: president, vice-president of print/multimedia, or vice-president of broadcast. No checks shall be written without an approved check request (obtained through treasurer and signed by the president. If the president requests the check, the check request shall be approved by one of the vice presidents).

Section III: All checks for more than two hundred fifty dollars (\$250.00) issued by GCABJ must bear the signatures of any two (2) of the following officers: the president, and either the vice-president of print/multimedia, or vice-president of broadcast. No checks shall be written without an approved check request (obtained through treasurer and signed by the president). All check signers must be bonded.

Section IV: The Board of Directors shall not approve any purchase exceeding the sum of two hundred fifty dollars (\$250) without approval of the general membership.

Section V: No part of the net earnings of the association shall inure to the benefits of, or be distributed to members, trustees, officers, or other private persons, except that the association shall be authorized or empowered to pay reasonable compensation for services rendered to make payments and distribution in furtherance of the purposes set forth hereof. No substantial part of the activities of the association shall not be the carrying on of propaganda, or otherwise to influence legislation, and to participate in, or intervene in, any political campaign on behalf of any candidate for public office. Notwithstanding, any other provision of these activities are not permitted to be carried on: (a) by an

association exempt from federal income tax under 501(c)3 if the Code, or (b) by an association contribution to which are deductible under 170(c)3 of the Code.

Article XII: Amendments

Section I: This constitution may be amended as follows:

- (a) The proposed amendment must be presented in writing at a Board of Directors meeting
- (b) All Board members must be aware of the amendment
- (c) The proposed amendment may be mentioned at the next Board meeting or in the next newsletter or mass correspondence with the general membership
- (d) The amendment may be appealed if a simple majority of the members at the next general meeting motion and vote for it.

Standing Committees

Board of Directors

Governance

Membership

Fundraising /Scholarship

Programming/ Business Development

Public Relations/Watch Dog

Digital Media

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