



# Shining a Bright Light Into HOLLYWOOD's Dark Places

Claudia Eller and Andrew Wallenstein Receive the Press Club's Luminary Award for Career Achievement

BY PATT MORRISON

**I**T TOOK *Variety* 40 years from the time it started publishing, in 1905, to come up with the breezy portmanteau word "showbiz."

It took *Variety* another 68 years after that to come up with its editorial "dream team"—one that rivals any "showbiz" duo ever to appear in its pages.

Snappier than Burns and Allen, smarter than Laurel and Hardy, the co-editor-in-chief team of Claudia Eller and Andrew Wallenstein is taking the publication to digital and investigative heights... and tonight is taking home the Los Angeles Press Club's Luminary Award for Career Achievement.

In Eller's and Wallenstein's case, it is quite liter-

ally luminous, shining a light into Hollywood's dark places.

Since its beginnings, *Variety* has been about scrutinizing the "biz" in "showbiz." By its recent deep dive into covering—and uncovering—sexual harassment and abuse, it has had a hand in upending Hollywood's old "business as usual," wink-and-nod accommodation of sexual misconduct.

It may be the biggest shakeout in Hollywood since the talkies.

"The sexual harassment and abuse scandal implicating such powerful industry figures as Harvey Weinstein, Brett Ratner, Kevin Spacey and many others is the highest-impact story to hit Hollywood in my 30 years of covering this business," said Eller.

*Variety* will keep devoting "significant resources and



Stewart Cook



Stephen Lovelkin

Andrew Wallenstein moderates the *Variety Sports & Entertainment Summit* held in July 2017. Spike Lee and Wallenstein meet up at the *Variety Fandango Studio* at Sundance Presented by Dockers, in January 2016.

endless hours" to unearthing "perpetrators who've operated in the shadows and have been protected by this industry for decades," she said. "We won't stop until every rock is overturned" on what she calls "the great Hollywood cover-up."

The more the staff covers the story, the more stories it gets—"emails, texts and phone calls from more victims, some willing to go public with their horrific stories, others still petrified to speak out because they still fear career repercussions. This," Eller promised, "is far from over."

Wallenstein thinks that some of his own challenges as an editor—like guiding *Variety's* evolution "in a publishing business that demands rethinking established practices"—are paradoxically not unlike those facing the industry his staff covers: one that is trying to re-imagine itself in the face of the demands of digital media.

Both editors came to *Variety* in a roundabout fashion. Eller was a film reporter there from 1989 to 1993 before heading to the *Los Angeles Times* for 20 years as a reporter

and editor. She also made stops at *The Hollywood Reporter* and *On Location* magazine. Wallenstein came to *Variety* in 2001, after spending almost 10 years as an on-air contribu-

**"Artisans" features the industry's below-the-line workers with a feature and video series covering the able men and women who shape the sound and the look of film, TV and digital productions.**

tor at NPR's "All Things Considered" and eight years at *The Hollywood Reporter*, where he edited the publication's online undertaking.

*Variety* is changing with times and tastes; it's no longer the paper that "used to curry favor and tread lightly when covering the very companies that were its biggest advertisers," Eller said. With owner Jay Penske having



Wallenstein interviews keynote speaker Trevor Noah at the *Variety* Entertainment and Technology Summit, New York, in May 2017

Wallenstein and Eller confer regularly as they pursue the mission of great journalism and being the bible of choice for the entertainment industry.

Checking proofs is a never-ending responsibility.



their backs, along with the paper's first woman publisher, Michelle Sobrino, Eller—who is the first woman editor-in-chief—assures readers that “we have taken a ‘no-prisoners’ approach.”

To flesh out its coverage beyond big names and famous faces, it's also undertaken serious, regular coverage of the industry's below-the-line workers with a feature and video series called “Artisans,” for the able men and women who shape the sound and the look of film, TV and digital productions.

The reach of those stories has been all the wider because of *Variety's* deep bench and its digital leverage, says Wallenstein, who regards himself as “something of a player-coach” there.

In fact, he believes, the publication has “probably changed more in the last five years than it has in the previous century.”

Its revived digital operation, *Variety.com*, now gets 20 million unique visitors a month—a boffo box office compared to less than a million not long ago.

Online readers have changed *Variety* too, Wallenstein thinks. “In addition to the core industry audience



we've always served, there's a much bigger secondary audience of consumers who may not work in the entertainment business but find it fascinating.” So fascinating, in fact, that coverage has extended to reporters working in places as disparate as Washington, D.C. and Northern California.

Even in the HD intensity of competition, as more outlets decide to get into the business of entertainment coverage, Wallenstein says that “the more things change, the more things stay the same. The central mission remains being the bible of choice for the entertainment industry.”

Sharing the wheelhouse there with Wallenstein, Eller says that *Variety's* mission of “great journalism” has landed her right in “the best f----- job in journalism.”

# VARIETY

Congratulates

*Claudia Eller*  
*Andrew Wallenstein*

*Co-Editors-in-Chief, Variety*

*The Luminary Award for Career Achievement*

## *And Our Nominees*

*Debra Birnbaum*  
*David S. Cohen*  
*Bailey Franklin*  
*Owen Gleiberman*  
*Ted Johnson*  
*Brent Lang*  
*Cynthia Littleton*  
*Preston Northrop*

*Jenelle Riley*  
*Janko Roettgers*  
*Maureen Ryan*  
*Sonia Saraiya*  
*Ramin Setoodeh*  
*Brian Steinberg*  
*Kristopher Tapley*  
*Elizabeth Wagmeister*

We Proudly Support

