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From Intern to Owner: Grad Revamps Newspaper

CEDARVILLE, OHIO -- It's not often that employers ask their interns to buy their company, but for Bonnie Rutledge, an offer her junior year changed her career and local community for the better.

Rutledge, a 2020 Cedarville University graduate from Jewett, Ohio, was an intern at the Harrison News-Herald, fulfilling a requirement for her [professional writing and information design](#) degree.

"I loved it," she said. "I continued to write for them the rest of my undergrad career."

Later that year, she received an offer from the News-Herald, but it wasn't for a job. "They were very much pursuing me to buy the paper," she continued. "I was in college at the time. I was not ready to think about something like that."

Rutledge declined multiple offers throughout college, and after graduation, found herself in a full-time English teaching position to fill an urgent need in her community.

"As I was teaching, I realized how uneducated my students were about their community," she noted. "The newspaper itself was dying. It was rapidly thinning and became somewhat of a joke around town due to chronic typos and other mistakes."

Recognizing this problem, Rutledge agreed to purchase the paper.

"I wanted to help my community and make sure the paper was in good hands," she said. "I also saw the paper as a viable business model with potential for growth. Newspapers are still alive and can make a difference today."

In addition to working full-time as an English teacher, Rutledge now works as owner, graphic designer and publisher at the paper.

Devoting her spare time to her new business, Rutledge revamped the paper, doubling the content, writers and reach.

"Our subscriptions have increased significantly, we have received great feedback from readers and our staff has almost doubled," she said. "We went from an eight-page newspaper to 12 to 14."

“Newspapers, to this day, still have influence,” she added. “They can make or break politicians or small businesses. Reporting fairly matters. I want to give what I can to this paper so that small rural communities, like mine, can thrive.”

Located in southwest Ohio, Cedarville University is an accredited, Christ-centered, Baptist institution with an enrollment of 4,715 undergraduate, graduate, and online students in more than 150 areas of study. Founded in 1887, Cedarville is one of the largest private universities in Ohio, recognized nationally for its authentic Christian community, rigorous academic programs, including the Bachelor of Arts in [Professional Writing and Information Design](#), strong graduation and retention rates, accredited professional and health science offerings, and high student engagement ranking. For more information about the University, visit cedarville.edu.

Written by Alex Boesch

Photo captions:

- 1- Rutledge shakes hands with the previous owner of the Harrison New-Herald to make her ownership official.
- 2- 2020 Cedarville University graduate Bonnie Rutledge is the new owner of the Harrison News-Herald

Photos by Bonnie Rutledge, Harrison News-Herald