

Participant Bios

Wednesday March 16, 2022 6:30 PM

DEMOCRACY IN CRISIS: Promoting Media Literacy & Combating Fake News

Cathy Saunders – Facilitator, Lippitt House Museum, Curator of Education



Edward Fitzpatrick is a [Boston Globe](#) staff writer covering Rhode Island. He worked for 16 years at the Providence Journal, including eight years as the political columnist and five years as the courts reporter. He is a member of the New England First Amendment Coalition board. Fitzpatrick worked as director of media and public relations at Roger Williams University, where he launched a First Amendment blog and taught journalism. He was a reporter at the Hartford Courant, the Albany Times Union, and was the city editor at The Saratogian. He is a Rhode Island native who graduated from Syracuse University with a degree in magazine journalism and political science.

Renee Hobbs, EdD is an internationally recognized authority on digital and media literacy education and a Professor of Communications at the University of Rhode Island. She is Founder and Director of the [Media Education Lab](#), whose mission is to improve the quality of media literacy education through research and community service. She has published ten books and over 150 articles in scholarly and professional journals. Hobbs holds an EdD in Human Development from the Harvard Graduate School of Education, a MA in Communication from the University of Michigan, and a BA with a double major in English Literature and Film/Video Studies from the University of Michigan. She is a member of the Rhode Island Council for the Humanities Culture is Key Advisory Committee.



Lynette Labinger a long-time cooperating attorney for the [American Civil Liberties Union of RI](#). She served as lead trial and appellate counsel for the plaintiff class in the landmark Title IX sex discrimination case challenging the treatment of women athletes at Brown University (Cohen v. Brown University) and litigated many high-profile civil rights cases in Rhode Island. From 2004 to 2019, Labinger served as an Associate and later Chief Judge of the Housing Court of the City of Providence. Since 2018, she has limited her practice to cases sponsored by the ACLU. She's received many accolades including recognition as a New England

“Super Lawyer” by the American College of Trial Lawyers and for her advocacy for civil rights and gender equity by the RI Commission on Women, RI Legal Services, RI Lawyers Weekly, and Justice Assistance of RI.

Joan Retsinas is a long-time member of the [League of Women Voters of Providence](#) and moderator of this Community Conversation program. Retsinas had a long career in health policy. She earned her PhD in sociology at Brown University and went on to teach health policy at Tufts, Brown’s Department of Family Medicine, and at George Washington University. She also worked for the Rhode Island Health Policy Consortium and was the manager editor for the journal *Medicine & Health/Rhode Island* for 15 years.

