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*"At the Summer of Justice, activists with ties to the mainstream conservative movement mingled with those with explicit ties to anti-abortion violence," according to Miranda Blue's report "Return to Wichita," about the 2016 revival of a 1991 anti-abortion protest movement in Wichita, Kan.*

# Documenting the RELIGIOUS RIGHT

*As editor at Right Wing Watch, Miranda Blue tracks and archives the activities of extremist movements*



Miranda Blue

**BY EMILY GREEN**  
STAFF WRITER

America's religious right first emerged as a powerful political force in the mid 1970s.

Followers of televangelists, such as Pat Robertson on the Christian Broadcasting Network and Jerry Falwell with his Moral Majority, were organizing and becoming vocal opponents of pornography, abortion, homosexuality and other issues they deemed immoral.

In 1980, they propelled Ronald Reagan's landslide victory into the White House.

Behind the movement was a new and disturbing message: There is only one right way to be a Christian, and that narrow definition of Christianity should shape public policy. You're either with us or against us.

In 1981, in response to the growing influence of the Christian right, television producer Norman Lear ("The Jeffersons," "All in the Family," "Sanford and Son"),

along with a bipartisan alliance of lawmakers and religious, business and civil rights leaders, founded People For the American Way.

In its early years, this Washington, D.C.-based nonprofit organization ran public service announcements warning against the tactics of radio and TV preachers who told their listeners that if they don't fall in line with their political stances, they are bad Christians. In the years since, People For the American Way has sought to defend the constitutional values it perceives as under attack by factions of the far right, such as equality and freedom of speech, and it continues to fund opposition to Republican candidates and far-right judicial nominations.

It also runs a project called Right Wing Watch, where researchers archive the declarations and radical beliefs of far-right extremists.

"We used to keep all our research in a room with VHS tapes of shows we had recorded, filing cabinets of mailers and a whole library of books by these right-wing

figures we had followed," right-wing researcher Miranda Blue said.

Today, that archive is the public online news site and blog RightWingWatch.org.

Blue came to People For the American Way after working on several political campaigns, including Barack Obama's in 2008. Before that, she wrote for Congressional Quarterly and opensecrets.org, a project of the Center for Responsive Politics. Today she's the research editor at People For the American Way and editor at Right Wing Watch.

Blue recently spoke with Street Roots from her office in Washington, D.C., about the far-right landscape as it exists under Trump, the evangelical influence in the White House and efforts to replace mainstream media with far-right propaganda.

*Emily Green: Right Wing Watch reports on the statements and efforts of some real*

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