

Jon Stewart leaving ‘The Daily Show’

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Jon Stewart, who turned his biting and free-wheeling humor into an unlikely source of news and analysis for viewers of “The Daily Show,” will leave as host this year, Comedy Central said Tuesday.

His departure was announced by Comedy Central President Michele Ganeless after Stewart, host of the show since 1999, broke the news to the audience at Tuesday’s taping in New York.

“Through his unique voice and vision, ‘The Daily Show’ has become a cultural touchstone for millions of fans and an unparalleled platform for political comedy that will endure for years to come,” Ganeless said in a statement.

She called Stewart, 52, a “comic genius.” He will remain as host until later this year, she said, but did not specify his exit date or what led to his decision.

Stewart’s influence is seen in the work of Stephen Colbert, John Oliver and Larry Wilmore, who went on to earn shows of their own. Other “Daily Show” alumni include Steve Carell, Ed Helms, Josh Gad and new “Saturday Night Live” Weekend Update anchor Michael Che.

“Shocked & sad to see the man who gave me my big break on (at)TheDailyShow is ready to hang it up,” “Frozen” actor Gad posted on Twitter.

Stewart leaves a substantial void for Comedy Central, which has no heir apparent to replace him — unless Oliver bolts his HBO show to return to the fold.

For political junkies who depended on Stewart for his acumen as well as comic relief, the 2016 presidential election may be looking bleak.

The Comedy Central statement did not indicate what his plans are after leaving.



AP Photo/Brad Barket, File

This Nov. 2011 file photo shows television host Jon Stewart during a taping of “The Daily Show with Jon Stewart” in New York.

Brian Williams suspended 6 months

NEW YORK (AP) — NBC announced Tuesday that it is suspending Brian Williams as “Nightly News” anchor and managing editor for six months without pay for misleading the public about his experiences covering the Iraq War.

NBC chief executive Steve Burke said Williams’ actions were inexcusable and jeopardized the trust he has built up with viewers during his decade as the network’s lead anchor. But he said Williams deserved a second chance.

Williams apologized last week for saying he was in a helicopter that was hit by a grenade while covering the Iraq War in 2003. Instead, he was in a group of helicopters and another was hit, and some veterans involved in the mission called him out on it.

Turness said Lester Hold would continue to substitute for Williams as anchor.

BRIEFLY

South Korean container carrier leaving Portland

PORTLAND (AP) — A South Korean shipping company that is the Port of Portland’s largest container carrier will be terminating its service with the city, but it will continue to use rail and truck transportation, port officials said.

Hanjin Shipping notified the port and customers it will withdraw services on March 9, port spokesman Josh Thomas said Tuesday. Hanjin handles nearly 80 percent of the container volume at the port’s Terminal 6.

Hanjin has had a presence in Portland since 1993. But its pullout isn’t a surprise. In recent years, the company has been unhappy about the pace of work among longshore workers and announced its intention to withdraw two years ago.

Since 2012, members of the International Longshore & Warehouse Union clashed with the Philippines-based company known as ICTSI that operates it for the port. Those labor troubles didn’t help make the port more competitive, Thomas said

Hanford releases plan for dealing with toxic vapors

SPOKANE, Wash. (AP) — A plan to reduce the exposure of Hanford Nuclear Reservation employees to hazardous chemical vapors while working on radioactive waste storage tanks will be adopted immediately, Hanford contractor Washington River Protection Solutions said Tuesday.

Hanford contains the nation’s largest amount of radioactive waste, left over from the Cold War production of plutonium for nuclear weapons. The most dangerous wastes are stored in underground tanks on the sprawling site near Richland, Washington.

More than 40 workers in the past two years have reported being sickened by chemical vapors while working near the tanks, but the cause remains unknown.

The new plan, based on recommendations last year from a panel of experts, will be adopted immediately. It called for improving sampling and vapor detection technology; expanding sampling and identification gases in the tanks; increasing real-time monitoring of the tanks; and evaluation and deployment of new vapor abatement technologies.

The U.S. Department of Energy, which manages Hanford, said the goal is to reduce risks to workers around the deadly wastes.

Cleanup of the site costs some \$2 billion per year, and the work is expected to take decades.

U.S. says foreign fighters flock to join Islamic State

WASHINGTON (AP) — Foreign fighters are streaming into Syria and Iraq in unprecedented numbers to join the Islamic State or other extremist groups, including at least 3,400 from Western nations among 20,000 from around the world, U.S. intelligence officials say in an updated estimate of a top terrorism concern.

Intelligence agencies now believe that as many as 150 Americans have tried and some have succeeded in reaching the Syrian war zone, officials told the House Homeland Security Committee in testimony prepared for delivery on Wednesday.

Nick Rasmussen, chief of the National Counterterrorism Center, said the rate of foreign fighter travel to Syria is without precedent, far exceeding the rate of foreigners who went to wage jihad in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iraq, Yemen or Somalia at any other point in the past 20 years.

U.S. officials fear that some of the foreign fighters will return undetected to their homes in Europe or the U.S. to mount terrorist attacks. At least one of the men responsible for the attack on a satirical magazine in Paris had spent time with Islamic extremists in Yemen.

Arizona mountain town mourns for American woman held by IS

By FELICIA FONSECA
Associated Press

PRESCOTT, Ariz. — The small Arizona town where Kayla Jean Mueller grew up gathered in grief Tuesday upon learning that the 26-year-old aid worker who traveled the world on a quest to help others had died while in the hands of Islamic State militants.

A memorial of flowers and handwritten notes took shape on the courthouse plaza in Prescott near a sign calling on people to pray for her.

In Washington, President Barack Obama pledged to bring Mueller’s captors to justice “no matter how long it takes.”

Muller’s 18-month captivity had largely been kept secret in an effort to save her. The Islamic State group claimed Friday that she had died in a recent Jordanian airstrike targeting the militants.

On Tuesday, her parents and U.S. officials confirmed her death. The Pentagon said U.S. officials don’t know how or when she died but are certain it was not in the Jordanian airstrike.

“What a fine, fine woman and a tribute to Prescott,” said 15-year resident Tina Nemeth. “It’s just so sad, it really is, and everyone feels exactly the same. It’s a shock it hit Prescott. We’re not that big of a town.”

The former territorial capital of Arizona has only recently begun to recover from a devastating 2013 wildfire that claimed the lives of 19 members of an elite firefighting squad. Stickers featuring the fire crew’s logo and bearing the number “19” are still fixed to vehicles all around town.

The mountain town of 40,000 people resembles a relic of the Old West in many ways, with its colorful downtown saloons and a dirt road leading out of town to where Mueller’s family lives. Its picturesque downtown courthouse lawn is recognizable to outsiders who still recall it as the site of the dramatic martial-arts fight scene in the 1971 film “Billy Jack.”

On Tuesday, that lawn was crammed with members of the media gathered to hear an emotional, often tearful tribute from Mueller’s family and friends.

“All these stories about Kayla, she sounds so extraordinary,” said the Rev. Kathleen Day, who heads the United Christian Ministry at Northern Arizona University,



AP Photo/The Arizona Republic, Rob Schumacher

Terri Crippes, left, and Lori Lyon, maternal aunts of Kayla Mueller, speak at a press conference in Prescott, Ariz., Tuesday. Mueller, a 26-year-old American woman held by Islamic State militants, has been confirmed dead, her parents and the Obama administration said Tuesday.



Kayla Mueller

where Mueller attended college.

“What was so extraordinary about Kayla was she did ordinary things to extraordinary measures,” Day continued. “She gave people food. She gave people water.” She even befriended her captors, the reverend added, at one point trying to teach them origami.

And she wrote passionately about conditions in war-torn Syria, where she had gone to help refugees.

“Every human being should act. They should stop this violence,” Day said, quoting one of Mueller’s blog posts.

Her aunt Lori Lyon said Mueller accomplished more in her 26 years than most people do in a lifetime, adding that her death had “touched the heart of the world.”

From Jordan, government spokesman Mohammed al-Momani offered his country’s condolences.

The White House said Obama had spoken with Mueller’s parents and offered his prayers. The president said Mueller “epitomized all

Obama defends policy of not paying Islamic State ransom for hostages

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Barack Obama says telling families of American hostages like Kayla Mueller that the U.S. will not pay ransom for their release is “as tough as anything I do.”

Still, Obama defended the U.S. government’s no ransom policy hours after Mueller’s family said it had received confirmation of her death from her Islamic State captors. The president says that by paying ransom, the U.S. would be strengthening terror groups and putting Americans at greater risk for future kidnappings.

The president says a rescue mission to recover Mueller and other hostages last summer probably missed them by “a day or two.”

Obama called Mueller an outstanding young woman with a great spirit that “will live on.”

that is good in our world.”

Arizona Sen. John McCain hailed Mueller’s humanitarian work in a speech from the Senate floor.

“After graduating from Northern Arizona University in Flagstaff in 2009, Kayla committed her life to helping people in need around the world — first in India, then Israel and the Palestinian territories and back home in Prescott, where she volunteered at an HIV/AIDS clinic and a women’s shelter,” he said.

As a high school student in Prescott, McCain noted, Mueller was recognized as a leader and received the President’s Award for Academic Excellence, as well as other honors.

Mueller is the fourth American to die while being held by Islamic State militants. Three others — journalists James Foley and Steven Sotloff and aid worker Peter Kassig — were beheaded by the group.

Journalist Austin Tice disappeared in August 2012 while covering Syria’s civil war. It’s not clear what entity is holding him, but it is not believed to be the Islamic State group or the Syrian government, his family has said.

Mueller was taken hostage in August 2013 while leaving a hospital in Syria.

In each case, their captors demanded huge ransoms, which the United States has refused to pay.

Islamic State said last week that Mueller was killed in a recent airstrike Jordan launched as retaliation for the militant group’s gruesome killing of one of its pilots, who was burned to death.

Jordan denied that, and on Tuesday a Pentagon spokesman, Navy Rear Adm. John Kirby, said there was “no doubt” Islamic State killed Mueller. He said officials have not learned yet how she died.



APPLY NOW



Win One of Twelve UEC
\$2,500 Academic Scholarships

OR A

\$5,000 Electrical Engineering Scholarship

OR A

\$2,000 Linemen College Scholarship

FOR 2015-16

APPLY ON-LINE AT:
www.oregonstudentaid.gov

OR

WWW.UMATILLAELECTRIC.COM

Deadline March 1, 2015