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Michael Gartner

Michael Gartner is a third-generation Iowa newspaperman who started out answering phones in the sports department at The Des Moines Register when he was 15. He has had a varied career in the news business.

Gartner was born in Des Moines in 1938. He received a BA in 1960 from Carleton College in Northfield, Minnesota. He followed that up with a JD from New York University School of Law in 1968 while he was working at The Wall Street Journal.

Gartner joined The Wall Street Journal in 1960 as a copy editor. During 14 years there, he rose to become Page One Editor, the second-ranking job in the news department. In 1974, he moved to The Des Moines Register, where over 11 years he would serve as executive editor, editor, president, COO and editorial chairman.

Next followed two years at Gannett Co., where he was general news executive of the company and of USA TODAY, and then a period as editor of the Courier-Journal and Louisville Times in Kentucky.

After working as president of NBC News from 1988 to 1993, Gartner returned to Iowa and became chairman, editor and co-owner of The Daily Tribune in Ames until 1999. In 1997 he was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for Editorial Writing at The Daily Tribune.

A past president of the American Society of Newspaper Editors, he has served on several boards, including the Nieman Fellow program at Harvard and the First Amendment Center at Vanderbilt University. He currently is on the board of the Freedom Forum's Newseum in Washington, D.C., and its Diversity Institute in Nashville, and of Creative Loafing, Inc. in Tampa, Fla., which owns alternative newspapers in several cities. Closer to home, he is on the board of Big Green Umbrella, which owns Cityview, and of The World Food Prize Foundation, both in Des Moines.

Gartner has written columns and commentaries for The Wall Street Journal, USA Today, Iowa Public Television and Voice of America.

In recent years, Gartner has branched out from journalism. He was Chairman of the Vision Iowa Board from 2000-2005, a government board which allotted money for community projects across the state. He is chairman and co-owner of the Iowa Cubs baseball team, a Triple-A franchise in the Pacific Coast League. And he became President of the Iowa Board of Regents in 2005, which governs the state's regents institutions.