

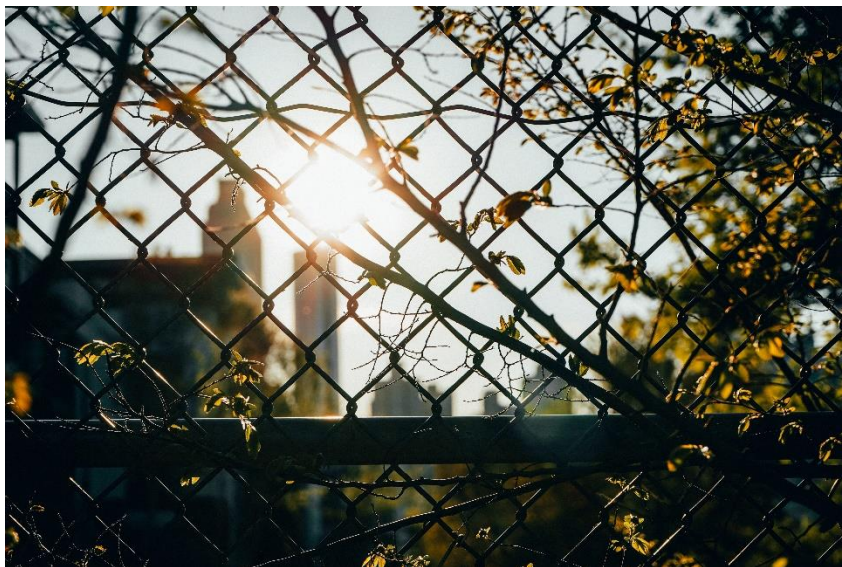
WABE

2020-2021 LOCAL CONTENT AND SERVICE REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY

**We are Atlanta's NPR and PBS stations:
WABE 90.1 FM and WABE TV.**

Independently minded and inclusive to the core, WABE is the conduit for perspectives, voices and stories as unique and diverse as the people of the greater Atlanta area. We are our community's steadfast public resource for local and national news and stories. Through well-rounded, thoughtful content, we share the commonalities that help a big world feel smaller. Whether by broadcast, digital, social or in person, the connections we create are grounded in the truth and presented without bias.

With every story, we're AMPLIFYING ATLANTA.



IN THE COMMUNITY

LOCAL VALUE

WABE is a vital part of the Atlanta community. We provide high-quality local journalism and serve to focus community conversation around issues of importance to people all across our area. Our programming and community engagement efforts highlight important issues in Atlanta and build bridges across the people and neighborhoods of the city. Our content takes audiences around the metro Atlanta area, the country, and the world with engaging, multi-faceted stories and context. We report stories, assemble conversations, and present content that is relevant to the community's well-being and reflects our community's composition, priorities, issues, solutions and culture.

KEY SERVICES

WABE provides credible, accurate reporting. We counter false narratives with verified facts. We are tireless in our effort to present the fullest version of the truth we can deliver—from the tiniest detail to the big-picture context. By providing the facts people need to reach their own conclusions, we achieve our mission to create a more informed public, one better able to recognize false claims and avoid being misled. Through WABE's in-depth coverage of local issues, original podcasts, innovative digital content, and broad television line-up, our programming reflects the people and culture of Atlanta.

LOCAL IMPACT

Currently reaching over 665,000 diverse residents weekly in metro Atlanta, we broadcast to 23 of Georgia's most populated counties, reaching more than half of the population of our state, and some of the most influential decision makers in the area. Through community events, forums and speaking engagements we connect with audiences where they live. We educate and entertain our audiences, resulting in better-informed citizens and an improved quality of life. Through these endeavors and others, WABE is connecting our community in ways that are essential to a healthy democracy.

WABE

HIGHLIGHTS: JULY 2020-JUNE 2021

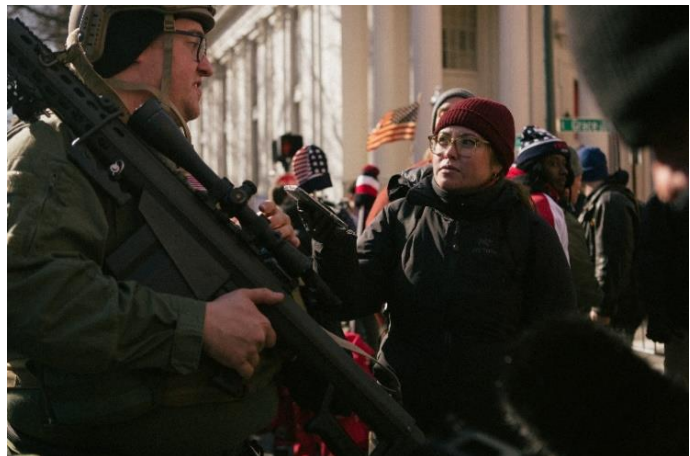
- Former Turner executive, [Jennifer Dorian](#) was appointed WABE's CEO in December 2020. "I think what I would want the community to know as I enter this job is I am very motivated to help defend the free press and local news, but I am also very motivated to double down on Atlanta," she said.



- Under Dorian's leadership, the board and staff developed a new strategic plan to guide our organization through this period of rapid change in media. Our plan is focused on finding new audiences, shifting our content mix to better serve and reflect metro Atlanta, and providing access to our content via multiple platforms.
- As part of the new strategic plan, WABE launched a rigorous and comprehensive DE&I plan in 2021. Every area of our organization, from HR and finance to the newsroom and content development, has developed DE&I strategies and action points. These include enhanced staff and board training, new efforts to support minority and women-owned vendors, and new content and programming initiatives.

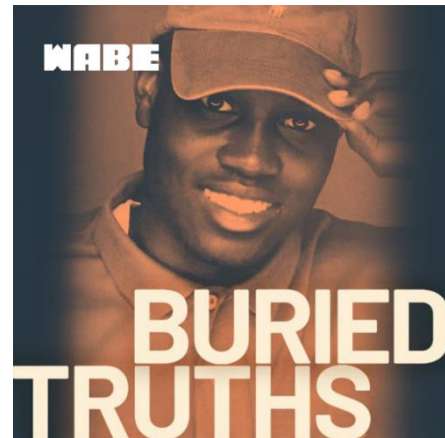
- WABE criminal justice reporter Lisa Hagen (pictured at right) won NPR's first-ever Pulitzer Prize in Audio Reporting for the podcast [No Compromise](#), a collaboration with NPR, KCUR in Kansas City, and the Guns & America project. The six-episode podcast was released in September 2020.

Photo by Maura Friedman.



- The WABE team won four regional Edward R. Murrow awards and five Atlanta Press Club awards. Our TV station earned nominations for two 2021 Southeast Emmy Awards: one for Politics/Government–Short Form Content for our series Georgia Votes 2020 and another for Documentary–Historical for *Building Atlanta: The Story of Herman J. Russell*.

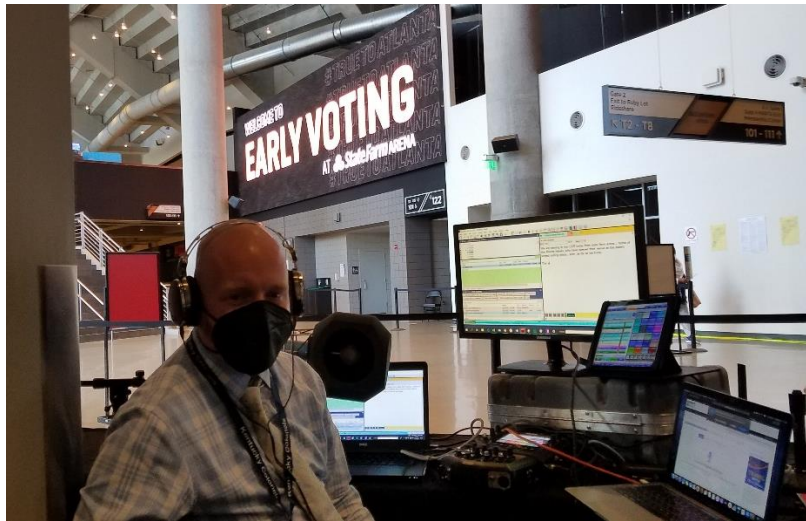
- Season three of WABE's Peabody award-winning podcast [*Buried Truths*](#), hosted by Emory University Professor Hank Klibanoff, was released in September 2020 to critical acclaim. The podcast chronicles injustice in the American South -- and the third season highlighted the killing of Ahmaud Arbery, a case that brought worldwide attention to Georgia. Season three has been downloaded 625,000 times since it was released.



- WABE remains committed to increasing the diversity of types of voices we hear from, aiming for a healthy balance of elected officials, experts, spokespeople and the public. The addition of a new source tracking tool has enabled our newsroom to track this balance and measure the diversity of voices on our air, ensuring we are inclusive and equitable in the sources we choose and the perspectives we share. In addition to monitoring the tracker internally, we publish quarterly reports on our website.
- To grow our audience and reach, we developed a new brand strategy which unites all our content channels (radio, television, and digital) under one brand. Because our WABE brand is already known to generations of Atlanta radio listeners, we are extending that halo of trust and connection across television and digital. Work on this initiative began in 2020-2021, and our new brand was launched in January 2022.

STORIES OF IMPACT

Through the year, WABE's newsroom provided continued coverage of the COVID-19 pandemic, the 2020 elections, the January 6th Capitol attack, Georgia's 2021 legislative session, the introduction and passage of Georgia's new voting laws, the roll-out of COVID-19 vaccinations, and many other issues and events.



Jim Burrell, local host of All Things Considered on WABE broadcasting live from State Farm Arena during early voting in October 2020.

Some of WABE's most noteworthy stories, series, and collaborations from FY2021 include:

- Extensive coverage of the tributes and memorials, following the deaths of two of Atlanta's civil rights icons – Rep. John Lewis and C.T. Vivian – in July 2020. We shared reflections from those who knew and worked with these men, and created a [special section of our website](#) dedicated to “Remembering John Lewis.” Our team produced WABE's first live remote broadcast from the Georgia State Capitol when John Lewis was brought to Atlanta to lie in state.
- A [four-part series](#) that explored how predatory homebuying led to the loss of black wealth in Atlanta neighborhoods, produced as part of a multi-year investigative journalism initiative. WABE reporter Stephannie Stokes collaborated with American Public Media data reporter Geoff Hing on this investigation into equity theft, the practice of stealing wealth from low-income, typically black homeowners. The series aired on WABE in September 2020 and was produced and shared digitally. In response to the series, the Atlanta City Council passed legislation aimed at predatory investor practices.

- [Continued in-depth reporting](#) on the years-long fight over the future of the old Chattahoochee Brick Factory site. The City of Atlanta cited Molly Samuels' 2020 reporting on the site's history of convict leasing and labor when it moved to block the development of the site in February 2021, [causing the project to be canceled](#).
- [Coverage of the Atlanta spa shootings](#) that left eight people dead in March 2021 followed by a virtual conversation series focused on giving voice to Atlanta's Asian-American communities. More than 400 attended "Asian in Atlanta: A WABE Community Conversation" on March 30, 2021; and 147 attended "Beyond Stereotypes: Asian American Women in Atlanta" on May 27.
- Coverage of the death of Hank Aaron in January 2021, including tributes and remembrances, past interviews and photos, and his funeral at Atlanta's Friendship Baptist Church. We created another [special section on our website](#) dedicated to remembering Hank Aaron.

In fall 2020, Rose Scott, host of WABE's weekday community affairs program [Closer Look](#), was tapped to host America Amplified: Election 2020, a six-part weekly talk show co-created by WABE that aired on more than 50 NPR affiliates throughout the US. The show dove into the challenges facing America before and after Election Day, exploring local community perspectives with a mission to foster dialogue, not debate; share experiences; and elevate diverse community perspectives. [America Amplified](#) is a collaboration with KCUR and several other public media organizations.

Scott sat down for an [exclusive interview](#) with outgoing Atlanta mayor Keisha Lance Bottoms (pictured at right) in late May 2021, following Bottoms' surprising announcement that she would not run for re-election. The interview aired in two parts on *Closer Look*, and was produced as a special for our TV station.



As Atlanta begins to see a return to in-person events in 2021, the team of WABE's weekday arts and culture program, [City Lights](#), worked to maximize our reach and influence to reinvigorate the city's arts and culture. Host Lois Reitzes elevates smaller, emerging, and minority-led arts organizations that might not otherwise find a metro-wide platform alongside Atlanta's high-

profile and establishment institutions, providing a broad and eclectic mix of guests and features. Actors LaKeith Stanfield and Daniel Kaluuya from the film *Judas and the Black Messiah* were among the nationally known guests last year.

In an effort to create a true Atlanta-focused public television station, we partnered with local arts organizations to repurpose and create programming for broadcast. Among the collaborations were the airing on WABE-TV of an animated adaptation of *SIT-IN* by Pearl Cleage created by the Alliance Theatre, and the broadcast of the one-woman show *NEAT*, from Actor's Express, both in early 2021. We also worked with Georgia State University's School of Film, Media, and Theatre to broadcast *artscape 2021*, a collection of student performances reflecting the impact of the pandemic and social justice movement on their lives. Additional partnerships are in development.

WABE has continued to offer TutorATL, an online, on-demand tutoring service for students in metro Atlanta.

Working closely with Atlanta Public Schools and other school system partners, we provided area students

with more than 7,000 free tutoring sessions in FY2021,

making special efforts to reach those in low-income households. Massive challenges remain for students who have struggled academically during the pandemic, and high-quality tutoring will be key to students' recovery from learning loss during the pandemic. Student feedback on TutorATL remains overwhelmingly positive:



"He was really nice and made me feel confident in my work." – 6th grade student

"These tutors are like my lifesavers!!" – 10th grade student

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

WABE's events in 2020-2021 complemented our reporting and programming, expanded our reach with audiences, and strengthened relationships in the community.

Even while challenged by the limitations on in-person gatherings, we found tremendous success with virtual events in 2021, most notably our efforts around the Henry Louis Gates documentary *The Black Church*. To promote and celebrate the premiere of this program, we hosted a virtual screening and discussion and produced a series of locally focused interstitials on the Black church experience in Atlanta. We saw an overwhelming response to this event, with nearly 1,500 in attendance. Audiences provided extensive feedback:



WABE producer Jaime Green on set of our local interstitial filming with Mrs. Billye Aaron (widow of the late Hank Aaron) at the historic Friendship Baptist Church near downtown Atlanta.
Photo by Brianna Carr.

"I'm intrigued with the comprehensive look at the Black Church experience. I didn't expect to be so deeply moved, but I shed tears during the preview."

"Thank you so much for engaging us in such a powerful history lesson!"

We held a similar event for Season 7 of *Finding Your Roots* and received more positive feedback:

"I'm a 72-year-old African-American Female who had little to no Black American History until adulthood thru my daughters' Black History classes & PBS broadcasts."

"It was a great peek into the inner workings of the program!"

Our community engagement work on *The Black Church* and *Finding Your Roots* was done in partnership with WETA.



In spring 2021, WABE partnered with ATL Collective and Georgia Tech Arts for a pair of outdoor concerts at Georgia Tech. City Lights Live: The Soul of Georgia (April 27) and City Lights Live: Georgia Blues (May 11) were hosted by Lois Reitzes, with a special appearance from H. Johnson, host of [Blues Classics](#) on WABE. The concerts featured blues and soul music from Georgia's past.

In September 2020, WABE partnered with the Atlanta University Center Consortium (an association of Atlanta's HBCUs) to host VOTING MATTERS, a virtual discussion with student leaders from each of the AUC schools hosted by WABE's Lisa Rayam.



Other WABE events in 2020-2021 included virtual community conversations on Asian American life and culture in Atlanta; virtual podcast events for *Gold Dome Scramble*, *Political Breakfast*, and *Did You Wash Your Hands*; and a series of virtual Coffee Conversations hosted by Rose Scott. Attendance at all 2020-2021 community events, both in-person and virtual, reached nearly 3,000.

Mission & Vision

WABE seeks to inform, inspire, reflect and empower our greater Atlanta community. Our vision is to be the most trusted, independent source of news and local storytelling, furthering community and civic participation.

"I listen to WABE daily! Love NPR but love our local team even more. Thanks WABE for providing real, honest news!" -Luthuli

"You keep me informed and uplifted at the same time, and that is not easy." -Amanda

"It's really special to have such a great local station. It's part of what makes Atlanta such a wonderful town." -Dylan



WABE

740 Bismark Rd. NE
Atlanta, GA 30324
678-686-0321
www.wabe.org