
Times Facts

Curtis joined the *Times* in 1987 as a reporter covering the city of Tarpon Springs and later covered city government in Clearwater. He has been the Pinellas County political reporter and served a stint in the *Times'* Tallahassee bureau. In 1999 he became the *Times'* lead social services reporter and in 2002 he joined the metro staff's general assignment team. In 2006, he added the Science beat to his responsibilities.

Talking Points

• Child Abuse • The Child Welfare System • Juvenile Justice • Mental Health

Curtis has spoken publicly at numerous forums and on media panels and has been a guest on both TV and radio programs.

Education

Curtis graduated from Indiana University with a bachelor's degree in journalism and a minor in philosophy. He also studied at Stanford University on a one-year fellowship.

Background

Since 1990, Curtis has covered numerous legislative and local elections in the Tampa Bay area. For nearly as long, he also has written about social issues, focusing on people that newspaper readers might otherwise not see, such as: a 13-year-old girl who made a living dancing in topless nightclubs; and a 36-year-old man who lived in a hole in the woods. In 1996 he wrote *About Face*, a four-part narrative about a year in the life of two teenage gang members sent to Pinellas County's juvenile boot camp. In 2000 he completed *Under 12/Under Arrest*, a two-part series that showed how grade school children in Florida are increasingly being arrested. Curtis also has written extensively about Florida's often-controversial Department of Children and Families, including the story of Rilya Wilson, the Miami girl who disappeared while supposedly under the state's supervision. A 2002 story told of Versena Phillips, a 2-year-old girl whose death might have been prevented if not for a botched state investigation.

Awards

In 1997 Curtis was among 12 U.S. journalists selected for a John S. Knight Fellowship. As a fellow, he was able to study creative writing, Spanish and other subjects during the 1997-98 academic year at Stanford University. His series *Under 12/Under Arrest* was a runner-up for the Casey Medal for Meritorious Journalism. He has received awards from the Florida Society of Newspaper Editors for both investigative and feature reporting as well as several regional journalism awards.

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