

James Marshal Crotty Biography

James Marshall Crotty (a.k.a. “Crotty,” “The Mad Monk,” or “Monk”) has written about culture, travel, and politics for over three decades and through various media incarnations—from *Frommer’s* to *Playboy* to *Forbes* to *HuffPost*. He is best known as co-founder of *Monk: The Mobile Magazine*, which, from 1986-2000, he peripatetically published from the dashboard of his 26-foot Fleetwood Bounder “Monkmobile.” Crotty and fellow “Monk” Michael Lane “pioneered the mobile office” and invented “dashboard publishing,” becoming do-it-yourself folk heroes featured in media around the world.

With Lane, Crotty co-authored *Mad Monks on the Road* (Simon & Schuster), *The Mad Monks’ Guide to California* (Macmillan), *The Mad Monks’ Guide to New York City* (Macmillan), and *The Mad Monks’ Guide to New York CD-ROM* (Voyager/Monk Media). Separately, Crotty penned *How to Talk American* (Houghton Mifflin) and was the principal author of *USA Phrasebook* (Lonely Planet). He also helped launch the blog and video blog revolution via *The Crotty Farm Report*.

In 2002, after earning a Master’s in Liberal Arts from St. John’s College Santa Fe (“The Great Books School”), Crotty left the media world to pursue a new passion: ending the U.S. dropout epidemic. A two-time national qualifier in policy debate at Omaha Creighton Prep, Crotty became the Director of Forensics at New York’s prestigious Stuyvesant High School and then the Bronx High School of Science—qualifying teams for nationals each year—before launching the speech and debate program at the Eagle Academy for Young Men in the South Bronx.

Crotty’s trailblazing work in transforming young men of color into what he termed “academic athletes” led to his “Crotty on Education” column at *Forbes*. Trained in the acclaimed *Forbes* Publishing Model, from 2011-2015 Crotty emerged as a widely followed thought leader in the rapidly evolving fields of online education and ed-tech. Crotty was one of the first journalists to write about Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs). He exposed marketing abuses at for-profit colleges and cheating scandals in school districts. Most notably, Crotty was an

articulate evangelist for liberal arts education—grounded in a deep reading and discussion of the classics—as the best preparation for a high-tech, innovation-driven global economy. From 2011-2016, Crotty was also the independent politics, travel, and culture columnist for *The Huffington Post* (a rare voice of moderation on the platform).

In 2016, Crotty was recruited to become Director of Communications and Senior Advisor to U.S. Congressman Jeff Fortenberry (NE-1), Ranking Member of the House Appropriations Committee. In close concert with the Congressman, Crotty wrote Fortenberry's columns, speeches, releases, statements, talking points, and social media. He oversaw all media relations and prep, as well as communications planning, strategy, and metrics. In this senior leadership role, Crotty helped advance critical Fortenberry initiatives to preserve wildlife habitat, lower prescription drug prices, advance farmers markets and local foods, secure cutting-edge care for our veterans, and protect endangered religious minorities in the Middle East. Major Fortenberry bills passed during Crotty's tenure included *ACT for ALS*, the *Middle East Partnership for Peace Act (MEPPA)*, and the *Defending Economic Livelihoods and Threatened Animals (DELTA) Act*.

In addition to his St. John's studies, Crotty earned a Bachelor of Science in Speech from Northwestern University, spending his Junior Year Abroad at England's University of Sussex studying media theory and international relations. Crotty currently leads great books discussion groups around the world and gives speeches for hire around the themes of *Creating a Life Worth Living*, *Building Your Own Media Empire*, *Be a Traveler Not a Tourist*, and *From Monk to Trump: My Five Years Inside the Metaphysical Boot Camp of Congressman Jeffrey Lane Fortenberry*.

Crotty remains a silent partner in L.A.-based Monk, which has grown to include the design and production company Monk Media, Monk Web Hosting, and the film, TV, and art production warehouse Monk Space. Through Crotty Communications, he provides high-level content and consulting to corporations, nonprofits, and individuals with business before the U.S. federal government.

Please visit www.jamescrotty.com for links to Crotty's books, magazines, and other creative work, including his fun, inspiring feature documentary about debate, mentorship, and surrogate family, *Crotty's Kids*, and his two documentary shorts: *Apryl Miller: Color and Soul* (about New York City's inimitable psychedelic folk artist) and *Master Debaters*, a critique of the nihilistic world of high-speed policy debate.