

Gallup Sun's picks for top 10 national stories of 2018

Written by Gallupsun Staff
Friday, 28 December 2018 07:49



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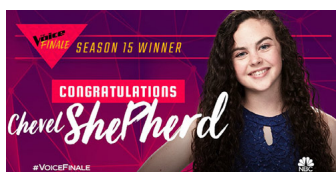
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Big issues, trends, changes from coast to coast

Kavanaugh's confirmation

“Will he be confirmed?” “Is he guilty?” “Can we allow a stain into the Supreme Court?” “Well, it was

30-some years ago...” Such were sentiments floating through the air and internet waves in the face of the sexual assault allegations against Supreme Court nominee Brett Kavanaugh dating back to his high school years in the '80s. Ultimately, after an investigation that had the nation riveted, Kavanaugh was confirmed into the lifetime seat Oct. 6 by a 50-48 vote.

#MeToo Movement

The social-media tag spread like wildfire toward the end of 2017, taking 2018 by storm in the realm of hashtags, protests, controversies and beyond. The movement aims to spread awareness about sexual harassment, assault and abuse, and hit full-force in the wake of allegations against Harvey Weinstein. Many female celebrities took the tag on, inspiring a community of women to speak up and demand change.

Democrats take the House

The blue tidal wave splashed across the country, bringing with it rising numbers of women in big seats — Democrats net 40 in the House. The nation ain't seen nothing like this since the post-Watergate election.

Women rule the midterms

A record number of women ran and won the midterm elections in 2018. That's to say, more than 120 women will serve in Congress in the New Year. Not to mention, a record number of ladies will serve in state legislatures across the country — up to 29 percent from 25 percent. And New Mexico is sending the first Native woman to Congress — Deb Haaland.

Mass shootings

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From Florida to California, from schools to bars, mass shootings shook the nation in '18. The Thousand Oaks nightclub shooting in November left 12 dead, including the gunman, along with a nation in mourning. Earlier in the year, the Parkland, Fla. tragedy at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School left 17 dead, but rising from the rubble, many students took a stand against guns, gun laws and guns in schools — Florida ultimately passed gun-control measures, and the Trump administration banned bump stocks.

Russian investigation

In 2016, the FBI opened an investigation to determine whether President Donald Trump's ties helped Russia to influence the outcome of the election, in which Trump beat out Hillary Clinton for the seat in the Oval Office. Robert S. Mueller III was appointed in 2017 as special counsel to take over the investigation, which has so far resulted in 19 people (five pleaded guilty) and three companies indicted in the case. As they say, it's not over until it's over; many questions yet remain unanswered as 2018 comes to a close.

Camp Fire

The deadliest wildfire in California history is also among the world's most deadly. The Camp Fire, which started Nov. 8, left a community reeling from the devastation, left 86 civilians dead, and 12 civilians and five firefighters injured. The fire was ultimately contained more than two weeks after it started and damage is estimated at nearly \$10 billion.

The Trump Turnover

According to the Brookings Institute, as of Dec. 14, the turnover on the president's "A team" (members of the executive office) is as high as 65 percent. Here are just a few who resigned under pressure: Secretary of Interior Ryan Zinke; Chief of Staff John F. Kelly; Attorney General Jeff Sessions; Chief of Staff Reince Priebus.

The Voice...of New Mexico

Congratulations to New Mexico's own Chevel Shepherd, of Farmington, who won *the Voice* for her, well, killer voice. The 16-year-old wowed the audience and took the win Dec. 18 for the 15th season of NBC-TV's popular show.

Government Shutdown

As of press time, the partial government shutdown, which began Dec. 22 and resulted from disagreements over fiscal year 2019 funding for a U.S.-Mexico border wall, is still in full swing, with hundreds of thousands of federal workers affected.