

# The Calling

At its best, journalism combines the thrill of the hunt with nobility of purpose. Through journalism, wrongs can be righted, brilliance celebrated, the powerful held accountable. But journalism isn't always at its best. Remorseless deadlines, cantankerous colleagues, bitter budgets — all can see to that. So what are the enduring pleasures and the peak experiences of the calling?

## Jay Harris

There is something about being in a calling that makes a difference in the lives of people and that I find enormously exciting. At the root of journalism and its importance in American society is the power of information ... (given) in a timely and appropriate fashion to citizens in a democracy that enables them to lead their own lives. (It's) an essential part of what makes the democracy work.

## William Hearst III

If pace and urgency appeal to you, then the news business is a great place to be. Sometimes it's a hurry-up-and-wait business. ... And then the fire bell rings. Adrenaline is very much a part of the business.

Another satisfaction is that there is, in the best practitioners, a fiber of integrity that I think is, if not unique, then special.

## Tom Johnson

Journalism really matters. There is a major public service side to what we do. We often shine the spotlight in the darkest corners of the world. We uncover many of the people's plights, as well as some of the serious problems of government.

## Neal Shapiro

For a lot of people in my generation, Watergate was a crystallizing experience. We realized that reporting could really have huge consequences.

There is something very honorable about finding the truth and doing the best you can to eliminate your own prejudices and biases, and say wherever the story is going to take me is where I am going to go.

## Ben Bradlee

I had an office in the newsroom with a plate glass window. I could see reporters, and it drove me crazy when I saw them talking and I didn't know what it was about. For the excitement of the day, you have to have that (urge to know).

You've also got to be interested in everything. You've got to be interested in government, in foreign policy, and you've got to be interested in Gary Condit. You've got to be interested in the guy who lost his private part in a marital dispute.

## Jack Fuller

(Eventually,) I really didn't have the legs for [reporting]. I understood finally what [others] meant when they said, "I don't have the legs for this." I got the hat-and-coat call one evening. It was a murder. So I ran downstairs, jumped in the pool car and

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went racing up Lakeshore Drive. And going through my head was, I hope they don't let me in there. You know, I really don't want to see another (murder) scene. I've seen enough of them. That's what losing your legs is called.

So the things that bring you into journalism at the beginning turn out to be very different than the things that intrigue you later. (Still) it's an entrée to worlds and subjects and people and events that I simply would not have had access to in any other circumstance.



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## Monica Lozano

My calling was somewhat unusual.

*La Opinion* [has] been a family-owned and -operated newspaper for 75 years. The mission of the newspaper when it was founded by my grandfather was to provide news and information to a population that found itself outside its own borders. It focused on providing quality information that allowed for an immigrant community to really improve their lives and to begin to participate more decisively in life in the United States.

Interestingly enough, 75 years later, that same mission guides our work at *La Opinion*. My participation with the newspaper really came about when I was in

college — working in community newspapers, being involved in my college newspaper. (I thought) about ways in which you could build community — not just inform communities, but use information as a way for people to progress and to clearly improve their lives. And that sense of mission so clearly connects to the role of journalist and the role that we play as information providers.

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### **Sandy Rowe**

I feel like a conductor of a symphony orchestra. It really is stunning to see so many talented people come together and do their best work.

### **Burl Osborne**

As a reporter, which was my first and abiding love in the business, my greatest satisfaction was that occasional phone call from someone who said, “Thank you for doing that. It really helped me.”

As an editor, and later in management, I was slightly removed from that. Then my reward was more the chance to see really good people do really good work and succeed on their own and to help them, in a small way, to achieve that success.

### **Matt Storin**

The great thing about journalism is that you have to stay up with everything. You have to be aware of everything going on in the world — changes in technology, changes in government. And you participate in democracy.

### **Karen Jurgensen**

For me, it’s all about service. I grew up in the idealistic ’60s and ’70s and thought that we were supposed to give something back to our communities and to do something for the people around you. And so, for me, working for a newspaper is a way to serve the country, to serve democracy.

The other thing about it is that I love the challenge of the blank page. You come in every day and you think: I don’t know what am I going to do today. You’re simultaneously terrified of it and exhilarated by it.

### **Dick Wald**

The first and most enduring pleasure is that [journalism] allows you to ask anybody anything. Sometimes we carry it to extremes and we ask people truly embarrassing questions. But if you are a curious person, this is the business for you.