Dear KCCI Colleagues,

When you write about a writer, you tend to be self-conscious about what you write knowing the individual you're writing about would say it much better than you. Such is the case with Dana Cardin.

For 40 years, Dana has used his incredible gift of writing to help craft stories that help Iowans make sense of the world. He's not just good at it, he's great. Which makes this email so difficult to write. Dana has decided four decades is about the perfect length of time. He is retiring at the end of this year. Between now and then we'll have a lot of time to celebrate Dana, but in the meantime, let me share a few thoughts about Dana's career. And what a career it's been.

Dana started at KCCI on April Fool's Day, 1981. But it wasn't a bad omen. Quite the contrary. Two years later, Dana turned his part-time, one-man-band reporting gig, into full-time reporting work. He eventually was able to specialize in features which was a perfect fit for someone with his curiosity, way with words, and empathy. Before there was "This is Iowa" there was "Eye on Iowa" and it featured Dana Cardin's reporting. Ask him how many awards he's won for his work, and he doesn't know. Maybe hasn't even kept count. For him, it's not the awards that matter. He will tell you, "You're only as good as your next story."

In 1996, he was promoted to Assistant News Director where he applied his skills mentoring other writers and reporters (and producers, photographers, assignment editors – you get the point). Dana had a major impact on our operation at every level. Notably, in 2016, Dana led KCCI's coverage of the brutal ambush and murder of two police officers including that morning's live coverage all the way through KCCI's live coverage of the funerals and processions. He also led the coverage of our station the day of the derecho. By no coincidence, both efforts led to National Murrow Awards.

Dana's had journalism in his blood starting with his first job as a photographer for the Sheldon Mail Sun prior to joining the Navy where he spent his five years as a Navy journalist. When he retires, Dana says he will have more time to explore his photography. To give you some idea of Dana's perspective, there was a time in our business when getting aerial footage meant you had to have a helicopter. A few years ago, Dana was one of the founding members what has been affectionately dubbed KCCI's "Drone Club".

On a personal note, I will miss Dana's contributions to our weekly editorials. It's not uncommon after the dust has settled on an idea, for Dana to send me his version of how he thinks we should say something and it's, no exaggeration, a thousand percent better than anything I could write. I will also miss Dana's leadership, sense of purpose and strong moral compass. It has been a joy to work with him.

Please join me in congratulating Dana for four decades of helping us make KCCI, Iowa's News Leader. A note from Dana follows this. Dana will wrap up his career at the end of this year.

Brian

Brian Sather
President and General Manager
KCCI

From Dana:

Dear KCCI Friends,

It has been an extraordinary 40 years. I have interviewed thousands of Iowans. I have traveled to hundreds of Iowa towns and nearly every Iowa county. I have followed Iowans around the world to tell their stories in places like California, Arizona, Florida, Virginia, Puerto Rico, Moscow, St. Petersburg and... Disney World.

I have talked with presidents, movie stars and American heroes like John Glenn. I have helped cover disasters like the Floods of '93, Hurricane Andrew, the USS Iowa explosion, the ambush of metro police officers and September 11, 2001. I've been shot at, kicked and threatened. I've been hugged, thanked and honored.

I did a lot of fun things like race elephants down the streets of Des Moines, bungee jump, go barnstorming in bi-planes, dogfight in planes in the skies over Iowa. The list goes on and on.

I am thankful for two things. First, I am thankful for all of the Iowans who allowed me to tell their stories. Sometimes through laughter, sometimes though tears, they help us all understand who we are as a people and a state. Second, and most important to me, I am thankful for the people I have worked with every day for the past 40 years. You have made it fun. You have made it meaningful. You have made me want to do better and to be better.

The only two things left to do is wrap up the ending to this story and figure out the beginning of the next. After all, you're only as good as your next story.

Best wishes,

Dana