A paycheck from January 1985 has been on my desk for most of the last year.

It's for $9.32 from CBS Radio – my first full time paycheck in journalism.

The uncashed check has been a constant reminder there is a beginning and an end to everything. To use a broadcast concept, I'm signing off after 40 years at the end of June - with three quick thoughts.

- **I am thankful to those who taught me the how but, most importantly, the why of journalism.**
- **I am honored to have the chance to tell the stories of many people and places around the country and world.**
- **I am lucky since so few people get to do what they love for so long with such good company.**

In four decades, I've worked with a dozen station groups, nine networks, plus some of the best newspapers, radio, and digital newsrooms – from the early days of digital journalism when we had to hand-code websites to the rise of social media, to the explosion of streaming, and now the inevitable impact of AI.

The one constant has been the journalists I've worked with who are the most passionate, purposeful and plain (good) crazy people you could ever hope to have in your life. Most everything else pales compared to getting a big breaker on air when working with a first rate broadcast team. I could call out dozens of NDs, ANDs, EPs, producers, anchors, camera people, editors and my favorites - the desk - thanks for helping me make slot and get off on time.

I'm heading towards my last professional deadlines with a few more projects to wrap up and/or hand over the next two months - then it is time to let the next generation of journalists and media researchers take over.

When I talked to Dave and Seth last year about retiring in 2025, I suggested we aim at June 30th, which will mark exactly 15 years to the day I started at SmithGeiger (and that to hold myself to it I had already bought my first nonrefundable plane tickets for the morning of July 1st).

Again, I'm thankful, honored, and very lucky to have worked with so many journalists and researchers who will continue to tell the stories needed in these challenging times.

I look forward to connecting with you in the weeks ahead to share my appreciation for your work and your passion for supporting journalism.