

# OPINION



## Our news team pledges to observe the highest of ethics

Public enlightenment is the foundation of democracy.

We strive to serve the public with thoroughness, accuracy and honesty.

Professional integrity is the cornerstone of our credibility.

### Seek Truth and Report It

Journalists should:

- ▶ Verify the accuracy of information from all sources and exercise care to avoid error.
- ▶ Remember that neither speed nor format excuses inaccuracy.
- ▶ Gather, update and correct information throughout the life of a story.
- ▶ Strive to report balanced news.
- ▶ Seek out subjects of news stories to give them the opportunity to respond.
- ▶ Identify sources whenever feasible. Rarely grant anonymity, and clarify conditions attached to any promises made.
- ▶ Make certain that headlines and promotional material, photos, graphics and quotations do not misrepresent.
- ▶ Never distort the content of news photos.
- ▶ Label photo illustrations and re-enactments.
- ▶ Avoid undercover methods of gathering information. Use of such methods should be explained as part of the story.
- ▶ Never plagiarize — always credit the source.
- ▶ Avoid stereotyping by race, gender, age, religion, ethnicity, geography, sexual orientation, gender identification, disability, physical appearance or social status.
- ▶ Support the open exchange of views, even views they find repugnant.
- ▶ Give voice to the voiceless; official and unofficial sources of information can be equally valid.
- ▶ Distinguish between advocacy and news reporting. Analysis and commentary should be labeled.
- ▶ Recognize a special obligation to ensure that the public's business is conducted in the open and that government records are open to inspection.

### Minimize Harm

Journalists should:

- ▶ Treat sources, subjects and the public with respect

▶ Balance the public's need for information against potential harm or discomfort. Pursuit of the news is not a license for arrogance or undue intrusiveness.

▶ Show compassion for those who may be affected adversely by news coverage. Use special sensitivity when dealing with children.

▶ Be sensitive when seeking or using interviews or photographs of those affected by tragedy or grief.

▶ Recognize that private people have a greater right to control information about themselves than do public officials and others who seek power, influence or attention.

▶ Balance a criminal suspect's fair trial rights with the public's right to be informed.

### Act Independently

Journalists should:

- ▶ Avoid conflicts of interest, real or perceived. Disclose when unavoidable conflicts occur.
- ▶ Remain free of associations, activities and secondary employment that may compromise integrity or damage credibility.
- ▶ Decline gifts, favors, fees, free travel and special treatment that compromise journalistic integrity.
- ▶ Be vigilant and courageous about holding those with power accountable.
- ▶ Distinguish news from advertising.
- ▶ Deny favored treatment and resist pressure to influence news coverage.

### Be Accountable

Journalists should:

- ▶ Clarify and explain news coverage and invite dialogue with the public about journalistic conduct.
- ▶ Encourage the public to voice grievances against the news media.
- ▶ Admit mistakes and correct them promptly. Put a timestamp on corrected online stories.
- ▶ Expose unethical practices of the news media.
- ▶ Abide by the same high standards to which journalists hold others.

Signed,

Samantha Bengs, Joe Brown, Michael Brun, Bob Burrows, Katie Davidson, Alec Hamilton, Sarah Hansen, Anne Jacobson, Thomas Lindfors, William Loeffler, Mike Longaecker, Rebecca Mariscal, Maureen McMullen, Katie Nelson, Dave Newman, Sarah Nigbor, Jake Pfeifer, Youssef Rddad, John Russett, Gretta Stark, Kyle Stevens, Sara Tischauser, Jordan Willi and Michelle Wirth.