

Resolution #1: A Resolution Honoring Jerry Ceppos

Submitted by: Louisiana State University Manship School of Mass Communication by Interim Dean Josh Grimm and the Manship School faculty, staff, students and alumni; LSU SPJ student chapter with officers Josh Archote, president; Gabrielle Jimenez, vice president; Piper Hutchinson, secretary; Domenic Purdy, treasurer; Claire Sullivan, social media coordinator; and Freda Yarbrough Dunne, LSU faculty adviser.

Resolutions Committee Recommendation: Positive

WHEREAS Jerome “Jerry” Merle Ceppos was born in Washington, D.C., on October 14, 1946, and died in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, on July 29, 2022;

WHEREAS In a career spanning more than 50 years, Ceppos was a top editor at one of the nation’s foremost newspaper companies, dean of two major journalism schools and a 2016 fellow of the Society of Professional Journalists. As an editor and later an educator, he drove a focus on the new technology and its remaking of society. He also championed diversity in the newsroom and the classroom;

WHEREAS Ceppos is a graduate of the University of Maryland, edited the school paper “The Diamondback” and graduated in 1969 with a degree in journalism;

WHEREAS Ceppos led the "San Jose Mercury News" when digital media was exploding with innovation, winning two Pulitzer Prizes as its managing editor. He would rise to be the top news officer of Knight Ridder newspapers, including the "Mercury News," "Miami Herald," "The Philadelphia Inquirer," "Detroit Free Press," "The Charlotte Observer," "The Kansas City Star" and 26 other daily papers;

WHEREAS as a self-described "geeky" student at Northwood High School in Silver Spring, Ceppos edited the school paper, "The Red and Black." At the University of Maryland, he edited "The Diamondback" and graduated in 1969 with a degree in journalism. After college, Ceppos was a reporter and editor at the "Rochester Democrat and Chronicle" in New York for three years. In 1972, he moved south to become an editor at "The Miami Herald," the beginning of a long career with Knight Newspapers, later Knight Ridder;

WHEREAS In 1981, Ceppos moved to San Jose, where he quickly rose through the editing ranks. The "Mercury News" Pulitzer Prizes when he was managing editor were for reporting on massive transfers of personal wealth by President Ferdinand Marcos of the Philippines out of his country, and for coverage of the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake;

WHEREAS In 1996, a year after Ceppos became executive editor, the "Mercury News" published a three-

part investigative series, "Dark Alliance," which made the sensational charge that the crack epidemic raging in Los Angeles was largely sparked by two Nicaraguan emigres selling large amounts of cocaine to raise funds for a CIA-backed rebel army in their home country. An illustration accompanying the stories showed a person smoking crack, superimposed over the logo of the CIA;

WHEREAS When three newspapers, "The New York Times," "The Washington Post" and "The Los Angeles Times," published major pieces calling into question the reporting in "Dark Alliance," Ceppos assigned a reporter and editors uninvolved in the original stories to re-report them;

WHEREAS On May 11, 1997, he published a front-page column, saying that the Dark Alliance series had "oversimplified the complex issues of how the crack epidemic in America grew" and "did not include information that contradicted a central assertion of the series." He took personal responsibility for the flawed work, saying, "Few things in life are harder than owning up to one's shortcomings." He said the paper had failed to meet its own high standards and would overhaul some of its editing processes;

WHEREAS Though Ceppos faced complaints he had caved to pressure, he was widely praised for accepting criticism and acting transparently. "His candor and self-criticism set a high standard for cases in which journalists

make egregious errors," said "The New York Times" in an editorial. He would later receive an award from the Society for his "superior ethical conduct" in handling the aftermath of the series;

WHEREAS In 1999, Ceppos was promoted to vice president for news of Knight Ridder, a role in which, for six years, he identified and recruited top editors, set quality and ethical standards, oversaw the company's Washington and foreign bureaus and, as he put it, "led sometimes recalcitrant newsrooms into the digital age."

WHEREAS Ceppos left Knight Ridder in 2005, just before the publicly-traded company was sold and broken up. After consulting for several years, he began a new career as an educator, telling friends he always failed at retirement;

WHEREAS Appointed dean of the Reynolds School of Journalism at the University of Nevada/Reno in 2008, Ceppos raised the funds to renovate the school's building and update its technology for the future;

WHEREAS After three years at Reynolds, Ceppos moved in 2011 to the Manship School, where he was dean for seven years before transitioning into a full-time teaching role, giving courses on media ethics, American media history and a seminar on fairness in journalism;

WHEREAS Ceppos diversified the faculty and found the resources to endow a chair in race, media and cultural literacy;

WHEREAS As dean of the Manship School, Ceppos started a news service to help fill a void left by declining mainstream news outlets, assigning student journalists to cover state government and undertake investigative projects. He urged them to dig into unsolved murders by Ku Klux Klansmen during the civil rights era, and 90 news sites in Louisiana and Mississippi have run stories by Manship students;

WHEREAS Ceppos' last published piece of work appeared several weeks before his death in the "Inter Mountain," a newspaper in Elkins, West Virginia. It was an appreciation of his high school newspaper adviser, Mary Lee Ruddle, a West Virginia native who died at 95 in June 2022. She had recently told Ceppos how proud she was of his accomplishments. "That's how Miss Ruddle — to this day, none of us dares call her anything other than '*Miss Ruddle*' — was, an unrelenting coach who demanded high standards but, importantly, assured us that we could meet her requirements. Her confidence was important for a geeky high-school boy."

WHEREAS Friends and family gathered on October 20 at LSU to celebrate Ceppos' life, leadership, public service and friendship, The Manship School and the LSU SPJ

chapter resolve to honor Jerry Ceppos with this resolution marking his remarkable career and life that was foremost led by his kindness, compassion and attention to details. As Ceppos would say to any student, entry level or seasoned journalist – “Make Your Words Count”;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Society, meeting in convention on October 29, 2022, in Washington, D.C., honors Ceppos’ service and commitment to the field of journalism and the example he set;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this resolution be presented to Ceppos’ family.

**Resolution #2: Congratulating the Voice of America
on Its 80th Anniversary**

Submitted by the International Community

Resolutions Committee Recommendation: Positive

WHEREAS the Voice of America began broadcasting February 1, 1942 with the pledge “Today, and every day from now on, we will be with you from America to talk about the war ... The news may be good or bad. We will always tell you the truth”;

WHEREAS the charter of the VOA signed into law in 1976 by President Gerald Ford guaranteed VOA editorial independence;

WHEREAS this protection of the news service from political interference was restated in the Foreign Affairs Reform and Restructuring Act of 1998;

WHEREAS the Society of Professional Journalists has regularly spoken out on behalf of our

colleagues at VOA when they faced threats to their independence from political forces;

WHEREAS this year the Society of Professional Journalists has declared the headquarters of the Voice of America in Washington, D.C., as an Historic Journalism Site;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Society of Professional Journalists, meeting in

convention on October 29, 2022, in Washington, D.C., sends its congratulations to the Voice of America on its 80th

anniversary with the expectations of many more years of editorial independence;

BE IT FURTHERMORE RESOLVED that a copy of this resolution be sent to the director of

VOA and to Amanda Bennett, CEO of the U.S. Agency for Global Media, the VOA parent

agency.

**Resolution #3: Tabling One-Member, One-Vote
Amendments to the Bylaws of the Society of
Professional Journalists**

Sponsors: Lauren Bartlett; Al Cross, Bluegrass Pro Chapter; East Tennessee Pro Chapter; Jennifer Ellis, Region 12 Coordinator; Kathryn Jones Malone, Region 8 Coordinator; Amy Merrick, Region 5 Coordinator; Donald W. Meyers, Region 10 Coordinator; Andrew Seaman

Resolution Committee Recommendation: Positive

WHEREAS the Society of Professional Journalists bylaws state that “The convention shall be the supreme legislative body of the organization”;

WHEREAS the Society bylaws have, for decades, defined the convention as “composed of delegates or representatives from each chapter”;

WHEREAS this delegate system has drawn increasing criticism in recent years;

WHEREAS that criticism has included the failure of many chapters to qualify for delegates, and a recent change to apportion delegates to members not in a chapter has failed to achieve its purpose;

WHEREAS there continues to be controversy over how, or even whether “communities” in the Society should be involved in Society governance;

WHEREAS other national journalism organizations have a one-member, one-vote system in place for amending bylaws and approving resolutions;

WHEREAS the Society has used a one-member, one-vote system since 2012 to elect its leaders;

WHEREAS a set of amendments drafted by the Bylaws Committee, based on recommendations of a recent task force, seeks to replace the delegate system with a one-

member, one-vote system for approving resolutions, amending bylaws, and making changes to the Society's Code of Ethics;

WHEREAS these changes appear unnecessarily complex, vest too much authority in the the Society board of directors, with members reduced to "ratifying" proposals drafted by the board or its appointed bylaws and ethics committees, and abolish the convention's important legislative function;

WHEREAS the alternative amendments proposed below would provide for one-member, one-vote for all Society resolutions, bylaws amendments and changes to the Society's Code of Ethics;

WHEREAS use of modern public engagement technology could preserve the "Convention," re-defined as all Society members who wish to take part, as "the supreme legislative body of the organization";

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Society of Professional Journalists, meeting in convention on October 29, 2022 in Washington, D.C, directs that the proposals drafted by the Bylaws Committee in response to recommendations of the recent task force — Addendum "A" and Addendum "B" that were published to the membership in late August — be tabled, whether in whole or as part;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED the Society directs the Executive Director to immediately begin a search for a public engagement platform that is capable, at a reasonable cost, of hosting business meetings attended by members who are physically present at the convention and members wishing to participate in debate and voting from remote locations, and to bring to the board for approval, no later than April 1, 2023 recommendations for acquiring necessary systems and equipment;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED the Society directs the Board of Directors to bring the alternate bylaws amendments below to the 2023 Society Convention in Las Vegas for consideration and a vote;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED the Society thanks the Board for instigating this much-needed review of the delegate system and extends thanks to the task force for its recommendations, and to the Bylaws Committee for its efforts to craft bylaws amendments that would provide all Society members with a vote in governance matters.

-----**Alternate bylaws**
proposal

ARTICLE FIVE

Establishment and Operation of Chapters & Communities

Section Sixteen. Each member of the Society in good standing who is a member of at least one chapter shall have a designated home chapter. The member's home chapter shall be determined based on the postal address used by the Society to communicate with the member. A member of the Society who is a member of two or more chapters and/or communities may elect among those chapters and communities the one that will be the member's home chapter or community by notifying the Society at least 60 days before the convention in writing of the election.

Section Seventeen. The national headquarters annually shall determine the status of all SPJ chapters and communities, with the assistance of the national board of directors. Chapters and communities shall be notified of their status at least 60 days prior to the convention and shall have 30 days to bring themselves into active good standing status.

ARTICLE TEN

Convention

Section One. The convention shall be the supreme legislative body of the organization. It shall be held at least biennially at a time and place designated by the board of directors.

Section Two. All members of the Society in good standing seven days before the opening business meeting may participate in convention business meetings and vote on all matters pending on the convention floor.

Section Three. To be eligible to vote, a member must be present at a business meeting either in person or by electronic means, using a platform chosen by the executive director with approval from the board of directors. Members cannot vote by proxy.

Section Four. A convention quorum is present when at least ____ members eligible to vote are present, as defined in the preceding Section.

Section Five. All enactments of the convention shall become effective immediately unless otherwise specified.

Section Six. Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised shall be the parliamentary authority for all matters of

procedure not specifically covered by these bylaws and standing rules of the convention.

ARTICLE FOURTEEN

Amendment

Section One. These bylaws may be amended by referendum or at convention as hereinafter provided. Proposed amendments may originate by vote of a majority of members in convention, the board of directors, or by a minimum of ten chapters and/or communities in the manner set forth in Section Two hereof.

a. Enactment in convention. By a two-thirds majority of votes cast, provided that the proposal to amend and the exact wording of the amendment shall have been submitted to all members not less than sixty days prior to the opening date of the convention, The convention may amend proposed bylaw amendments, provided that (1) such convention amendment is approved by two-thirds of members voting, and (2) the convention amendment does not change or add to the general subject matter of the proposed bylaw amendment. The provisions of (2) shall be enforced by the presiding officer, whose ruling may be appealed to the convention and may be overturned by a two-thirds majority of votes cast.

b. Enactment by referendum. By a two-thirds majority of votes cast, provided that the number of votes cast in the referendum equals or exceeds the number of members required to be present in convention to constitute a quorum under Article Ten, Section Five. The board of directors shall specify the time limits during which ballots may be cast and counted, except that this period shall not be less than sixty days.

Section Two. A proposal to amend in convention originated by a minimum of ten chapters and/or communities must be accompanied by certification to the executive director of the Society that such proposal has been endorsed by the board of each chapter or community in accordance with the bylaws of the chapter or community.

Section Three. Amendments become effective immediately, unless otherwise specified.

Resolution #4: Protecting Journalists in the United States

Submitted by: Rafael Olmeda

Resolutions Committee Recommendation: Positive

WHEREAS the press is the only profession explicitly named and protected in the U.S. Constitution;

WHEREAS founding father Thomas Jefferson found the press so necessary to the survival of our nation that he wrote "Our liberty cannot be guarded but by the freedom of the press," and that limiting freedom of the press is a threat to our liberty;

WHEREAS President Ronald Reagan in 1985 declared freedom of the press as "one of our most important freedoms" as a nation;

WHEREAS according to the U.S. Press Freedom Tracker, there have been at least 17 reported assaults on journalists nationwide in 2022 committed by private citizens, not including encounters between members of the media and law enforcement;

WHEREAS in addition to the 17 assaults, "Las Vegas Review-Journal" reporter Jeff German was stabbed to

death, allegedly by a disgruntled political figure in retaliation for German's ongoing coverage of valid issues of public concern;

WHEREAS despite the crucial role of journalism and a free press in American society, there are no specific laws addressing the violent, criminal targeting of journalists;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Society of Professional Journalists meeting in convention on October 29, 2022, in Washington, D.C., calls on Congress to make it a federal offense for anyone to target a working journalist with intimidation or violence, up to and including murder;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED the Society calls on every state legislature to enhance penalties for crimes that target journalists in the performance of their duties.

Resolution #5: Condemning Threats to Journalists in Central America

Submitted By: International Community

Resolutions Committee Recommendation: Positive

WHEREAS journalists in Central America remain under threat from government and paramilitary organizations;

WHEREAS a free press is the cornerstone of democracy and a civic society;

WHEREAS the people of Central America have expressed their desire for more equitable societies and freedom of expression;

WHEREAS dire threats remain against press freedom in Central America;

WHEREAS at least 15 journalists have been killed in El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and

Nicaragua in the past 20 years;

WHEREAS the governments of these four countries are also taking actions that restrict the ability of journalists to carry out their job;

WHEREAS the Guatemalan government has regularly engaged in actions to prevent media outlets from reporting on corruption;

WHEREAS a primary focus of the Guatemalan government efforts are aimed at elPeriodico, including arresting its founder on financial violation charges and four of its reporters for “violence against women” because of a story that linked the daughter of the president of the Constitutional Court to corrupt practices;

WHEREAS a growing number of journalists in El Salvador are finding that their mobile phones

have been infected with the Pegasus spyware, which is only available to government agencies;

WHEREAS a proposed law in El Salvador includes a prison sentence of up to 15 years if a news organization reports on gang activity in the country;

WHEREAS Honduras has the largest numbers of journalists killed in Central America with no progress on arresting their murderers;

WHEREAS the court system is being used by major landowners to prevent journalists from covering indigenous affairs;

WHEREAS the Nicaraguan government has continued its long-time feud with La Prensa, the oldest newspaper in the country, including charging reporters with conspiracy against the state because of their reporting on a group of nuns deported by the government;

WHEREAS the Nicaraguan government arrested, charged and convicted the publisher of La

Prensa of money laundering and “fake news” without allowing the public access to the

proceedings;

WHEREAS this year alone the Nicaraguan government has closed independent news

outlets, accusing the operators of disrupting society;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Society of Professional Journalists, meeting in convention on October 29, 2022, in Washington, D.C., calls on the governments in Central America to immediately order prosecutors to move with all due haste to identify, charge and try the murderers of our colleagues;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED the Society calls on these governments to respect their

obligations under the U.N. Declaration of Human Rights and the Declaration of Chapultepec by

releasing any and all journalists being held for exercising their rights and duties as journalists;

and by desisting from further arrests of journalists, from police raids on media organizations and

from engaging in acts of intimidation and repression against journalists and their organizations;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this resolution be sent to Brian A. Nichols,

Assistant Secretary of State for Western Hemispheric Affairs, the Secretary-General of the

Organization of American States and to Michelle Bachelet, the United Nations high

commissioner for human rights.

Resolution #6: Supporting Press Freedom in Iran

Submitted By: International Community

Resolutions Committee Recommendation: Positive

WHEREAS following the outbreak in Iran of demonstrations protesting the death of 22-year-old Mahsa Amini while in police custody, more than 20 journalists were arrested merely because they covered those demonstrations;

WHEREAS the Iranian government also arrested journalists covering Amini's funeral;

WHEREAS many of the journalists who were arrested were also placed in solitary confinement

and forcefully interrogated at Evin Prison, considered one of the worst prisons in the world;

WHEREAS threats have been made against Iranian journalists in the United States and against

organizations hosting those journalists;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Society of Professional Journalists, meeting in convention on October 29, 2022 in Washington, D.C., repeats its call of September 30, 2022 that journalists in Iran must be allowed to report freely and do their job to keep people around the world informed of what is happening in Iran. All journalists who have been arrested must be released without charges, their equipment should be returned and they should not face further persecution;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Society also condemns efforts to silence

journalists speaking out on behalf of those arrested in Iran.

Resolution #7: Supporting Journalists in Mexico

Submitted By: International Community

Resolutions Committee Recommendation: Positive

WHEREAS press freedom and independent media are the cornerstones of democratic societies;

WHEREAS at least 139 journalists and media workers in Mexico have been murdered or gone missing in the past 20 years, making Mexico one of the deadliest places in the world for journalists, including war zones;

WHEREAS according to the Committee to Protect Journalists at least 13 more Mexican

journalists have been killed just during the first eight months of 2022;

WHEREAS the threats to the journalists come from not only gangs and cartels, but also from the indifference of the Mexican government;

WHEREAS even as the current president weekly calls out the killings of figures in law, education and charity work, he too often ignores the murders of journalists;

WHEREAS the mobile telephones of more Mexican journalists were found to have been infected with the Pegasus spyware despite the Mexican government's statement that the practice had ended in the previous administration;

WHEREAS despite the threats to them, journalists in Mexico continue their work to find the truth and report it;

WHEREAS these efforts have provided support to the families and friends of the victims of gang wars when local and national government institutions have failed;

WHEREAS the United Association for the Disappeared of Baja California said “We didn’t have any type of support from state or federal officials to look for our missing kids, but with time and support from reporters and media, we were able to create more awareness of the work we were doing”;

WHEREAS the Association added that media attention also ensures the cases of the missing victims do not fade away;

WHEREAS many Mexican journalists work on a contract basis with U.S. news agencies,

providing vital reporting and context to stories these agencies would not normally be able to

secure on their own and often without any credit or byline;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Society of Professional Journalists, meeting in

convention on October 29, 2022, in Washington, D.C., renews its call to the Mexican government to vigorously investigate the murders of our colleagues;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED the Society calls on the Mexican government to cease the

use of the Pegasus software against journalists, civil rights organizations or the political

opposition;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Society praises our Mexican colleagues for their

hard work in difficult and dangerous circumstances. At the same time, we call on U.S. news

organizations to treat these journalists with the respect they are due and to recognize their

contributions to the reporting process.

Resolution 8: A Resolution Thanking the Staff of the Society of Professional Journalists

Submitted by:Resolutions committee

Resolutions Committee Recommendation: Positive

WHEREAS the Society of Professional Journalists dominates the media organization landscape through its ongoing work in the areas of professional development, public access, ethics, diversity and First Amendment advocacy and;

WHEREAS significant contributors to that effort are members of the SPJ headquarters staff and;

WHEREAS no more important display of “talent, truth and energy” exists than the work done by the staff during the Society’s annual national journalism conference and;

WHEREAS during the MediaFest2022 national conference the SPJ staff again demonstrated high levels of professionalism, skill, ingenuity, nimbleness (when not on crutches) and a “can do” attitude and;

WHEREAS the Society relies heavily on the staff’s vast knowledge, high levels of patience, high thresholds for pain and friends in low places;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Society of Professional Journalists, meeting in convention on October 29, 2022, in Washington, D.C. thanks the staff for all its work and gives the staff a hearty “well done.”