Resolution 1: A Resolution Recognizing Ginny Frizzi

Submitted by: Donald W. Meyers, SPJ Region 10 Coordinator and Rebecca Tallent, University of Idaho chapter advisor.

Cosponsors: Matt Hall, SPJ president-elect; Robert Leger, past SPJ national president; Steve Geimann, past SPJ national president; Kevin Z. Smith, past SPJ national president; Rebecca Baker, past SPJ national president; Gordon “Mac” McKerrall, past SPJ national president; Sonny Albarado, past SPJ national president; Howard Dubin, past SPJ national president; Hagit Limor, past SPJ national president; Kelly Hawes, former SPJ national president; Dave Aeikens, past SPJ National president; Al Cross, past SPJ national president; Patti Cross; Jay Evensen, SPJ Foundation Board Member; Sue Kopen Katcef, former SPJ vice president for campus chapter affairs; Bill McCloskey, former SPJ at-large director; Deb Krol, SPJ Region 11 coordinator; Jane Primerano, SPJ Region 1 coordinator; Nerissa Young, Ohio University chapter advisor; Joel Campbell, Brigham Young University chapter advisor; Kym Fox, Texas State University chapter co-advisor; Linda Hall, SPJ headquarters office manager; Deb Hurley Brobst, SPJ Colorado board member and former SPJ Region 9 Director; Jim Parker, director of digital content, News-Press & Gazette Co.; and Jennifer Royer, SPJ Director of Communications and Marketing

Resolutions Committee Recommendation: Positive

WHEREAS Virginia A. “Ginny” Frizzi, a longtime member of the Society of Professional Journalists and former national board member, died June 1, 2020, of complications of COVID-19;

WHEREAS for more than 40 years Ginny has been an advocate for journalists, journalism and SPJ. It has been said that there was not a communications or journalism-related event in Western Pennsylvania that Ginny was not somehow involved in;

WHEREAS Ginny freely gave of her time, experience and resources to promote journalism and, specifically, SPJ;

WHEREAS as a regional director from 1994 to 2000, a member of SPJ’s Executive Committee and a chapter leader, Ginny could always be counted on to help out with contest judging or any other task that needed to be done for the good of the Society;
**WHEREAS** Ginny was recognized as regional director of the year for three of the four years she served, setting a record and raising the bar for her fellow leaders;

**WHEREAS** Ginny quickly made friends with whom she developed lifetime bonds;

**WHEREAS** Ginny was well known as a kind soul with an enormous stubborn streak and a bull-headed attitude for making sure SPJ was always on the right side of history who would often lecture leaders or anyone who would listen about history or procedure;

**WHEREAS** Ginny was a fixture at SPJ conventions, even as she experienced health challenges, regularly bidding on items at the Legal Defense Fund’s silent auction — often engaging in a lively bidding war with numerous people — and offering her experience and insights on journalism and SPJ’s mission to both SPJ members and leaders alike; and

**WHEREAS** Because Ginny’s selfless nature led her to encourage more people to attend conferences, she annually hosted the “Frizzi Flop House” for women attending SPJ/EIJ conferences. These rooms held between three to 10 occupants, depending on the year, with Ginny rigorously discussing issues of the day with all participants;

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** the Society of Professional Journalists, meeting in convention virtually September 12, 2020, do offer our condolences to Ginny’s family and her many friends, journalists or not;

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** the Society honor her 40-plus years of service to the Society and the example she has set for all of us; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that a copy of this resolution be presented to Ginny’s family.
Resolution 2: A Resolution Honoring Jim Lehrer
Submitted by Alex Veeneman, Member, Ethics and Awards Committees

Resolutions Committee Recommendation: Positive

WHEREAS Jim Lehrer was born on May 19, 1934, in Wichita, Kansas;

WHEREAS Lehrer is a graduate of Victoria College in Texas and the journalism school of the University of Missouri;

WHEREAS After serving in the United States Marine Corps, Lehrer began his journalism career in 1959 at the Dallas Morning News, followed by the Dallas Times-Herald in 1961, including covering the assassination of President John F. Kennedy;

WHEREAS Lehrer joined PBS member station KERA-TV Dallas/Fort Worth in 1970 to anchor and oversee public affairs output, including its program “Newsroom”; 

WHEREAS Lehrer joined PBS in 1972 as Coordinator of Public Affairs programming;

WHEREAS Lehrer joined PBS member station WETA-TV Washington in 1973, co-anchoring coverage of the Watergate hearings with Robert MacNeil;


WHEREAS “The MacNeil/Lehrer Report” became the 60-minute “MacNeil/Lehrer Newshour” in 1983;

WHEREAS Lehrer became sole anchor and executive editor of the “Newshour” in 1995, after MacNeil’s retirement;

WHEREAS Lehrer stepped down full time from the “Newshour” in 2011;

WHEREAS Lehrer served as moderator of presidential debates between 1988 and 2012, and served on the board of the Committee on Presidential Debates;

WHEREAS Lehrer was a prolific author, writing 20 novels, three memoirs and several plays; and
WHEREAS Lehrer died on January 23, 2020, in Washington, at the age of 85;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Society of Professional Journalists, meeting in convention virtually on September 12, 2020, recognizes the contributions that Jim Lehrer has made to journalism;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Society expresses its sorrow at the passing of Lehrer, and extends its deepest condolences to Lehrer’s family, friends and colleagues;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Society believes that Lehrer’s work has strengthened public broadcasting’s ability to inform and engage audiences; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Society salutes the work of the current staff at the “PBS Newshour,” based at WETA-TV Washington, and at the Walter Cronkite School of Journalism and Mass Communication at Arizona State University, who are carrying on the work and values Lehrer put forward and the dedication to service through journalism for the benefit of the nation.
Resolution 3: A Resolution on the SPJ Sponsorship Policy

Submitted by SPJ Sponsorship Task Force

Cosponsor: Deadline Club of New York; Los Angeles Pro Chapter; Washington DC Pro Chapter; The Chicago Headline Club; Northern California (SPJ NorCal or San Francisco Bay Area, Sacramento); Detroit Pro Chapter; Bluegrass Pro Chapter (Kentucky); Indiana Pro Chapter; Oregon Pro Chapter; East Tennessee SPJ; Northwest Arkansas Pro; San Diego Pro Chapter; SPJ Virginia Pro; SPJ Florida Pro; and the Louisville Pro Chapter

Resolutions Committee Recommendation: Positive

WHEREAS some members of the Society of Professional Journalists have raised concerns about certain sponsors of the Excellence in Journalism Conference dating back to at least 2018;

WHEREAS the Society’s pillars and core values include ethics, freedom of information and diversity;

WHEREAS the Society seeks to cultivate sponsorship relationships with organizations that do not oppose those pillars and core values;

WHEREAS concerned members say the actions and affiliations of certain Conference sponsors may run counter to the Society’s Code of Ethics and mission;

WHEREAS the Society, meeting in convention on September 7, 2019, in San Antonio, Texas, called on the Board of Directors to appoint a joint task force of chapter leaders and unaffiliated members to study this issue and recommend changes to SPJ’s sponsorship policy. And those recommendations were considered by the board and shared with all SPJ members at least 120 days before the SPJ 2020 Journalism Conference, with an opportunity for feedback and suggestions. A proposal will be brought before the delegates at the next closing business meeting;

WHEREAS the task force in January proposed a new sponsorship policy; and
WHEREAS the Board of Directors voted in April to accept the policy and advance it to delegates for a vote;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the delegates of the Society of Professional Journalists, meeting in convention virtually on September 12, 2020, adopt the revised sponsorship policy as proposed by the task force.
Resolution 4: A resolution condemning violence toward and arrests of reporters in Belarus
Submitted by: International Community

Resolutions Committee Recommendation: Positive

WHEREAS Belarus is a charter member of the United Nations and as such is signatory to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 19, which states: “Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers”;

WHEREAS, Belarus is one of only three countries on the European continent, besides Russia and Turkey, rated by Freedom House as having a press that is “not free,”

WHEREAS dozens of Belarussian and foreign journalists have been beaten or arrested while performing their duty to report on the ongoing protests in Belarus; and

WHEREAS several foreign journalists have been deported from Belarus and Belarussian journalists have had their press credentials revoked;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Society of Professional Journalists, meeting in convention virtually on September 12, 2020, condemns the acts of violence against, and the arrests and deportation of Belarussian and international journalists by Belarussian authorities and calls on President Alexander Lukashenko to desist from further such violations of press freedom, to adhere to the principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and to permit Belarussian and foreign journalists to carry out their professional duties; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Society of Professional Journalists communicate this resolution to the Belarussian ambassador to the United States and to the appropriate officials of the U.S. Department of State.
Resolution 5: A Resolution calling for Press Freedom in Hong Kong
Submitted by: International Community

Resolutions Committee Recommendation: Positive

WHEREAS when Hong Kong was handed over to China in 1999 the people of Hong Kong were promised the civil rights enjoyed under British rule would be continued through 2049;

WHEREAS recent actions by the Chinese government in enacting new so-called “security laws” are in direct violation of the spirit and the word of those treaties;

WHEREAS in August 2020 newspaper publisher Jimmy Lai and several editors from Apple Daily were arrested under provisions of the new security laws;

WHEREAS the claims by the Chinese central government and Hong Kong government that the criticism of these governments by Lai and his news outlets justified the arrests have sent a clear and undisputed message that any journalist questioning government policy could face a similar fate;

WHEREAS the central government of China is using this law to deny visa extensions for Western journalists whose publications have criticized the law and other human rights violations by the Chinese government;

WHEREAS the new security laws may also be used as models by other governments anywhere in the world against their citizens, thereby throwing a pall on individuals’ rights to assemble, speak and publish freely; and

WHEREAS international law experts have repeatedly said these laws contravene international human rights standards;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Society of Professional Journalists meeting in convention virtually on September 12, 2020, expresses in no uncertain terms its shock at the abhorrent actions taken by Hong Kong and Chinese government officials to stifle press and speech freedom in Hong Kong;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED the Society calls on the Chinese government to live up to its commitments to allow Hong Kong residents to enjoy the rights of speech, press and assembly as guaranteed in the 1997 handover agreement;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED the Society calls on the U.S. government to regard potential persecution by the Hong Kong or Chinese government as a
legitimate reason for journalists to apply for and receive asylum in the United States; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED copies of this resolution be forwarded to the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office, the embassy of the People’s Republic of China and appropriate U.S. government officials.
Resolution 6: A Resolution in support of Maria Ressa and the staff of the Rappler
Submitted by: International Community

Resolutions Committee Recommendation: Positive

WHEREAS the Philippines is a signatory to the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 19, which states: “Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers”;

WHEREAS Article III, Section 4 of the Philippine Constitution of 1987 states, “No law shall be passed abridging the freedom of speech, of expression, or of the press, or the right of the people peaceably to assemble and petition the government for redress of grievances”;

WHEREAS Article III, Section 7 of the Philippine Constitution states, “The right of the people to information on matters of public concern shall be recognized. Access to official records; to documents and papers pertaining to official acts, transactions, or decisions, as well as to government research data used as basis for policy development, shall be afforded the citizen, subject to such limitations as may be provided by law”;

WHEREAS Article III, Section 18 (1) of the Philippine Constitution states, “No person shall be detained solely by reason of his political beliefs and aspirations”;

WHEREAS Founder and Editor in Chief Maria Ressa and her publication, Rappler, have provided the Philippine people with truthful and accurate “information on matters of public concern” in a journalistically professional manner;

WHEREAS the arbitrary arrest and conviction of Maria Ressa on the specious charge of criminal libel was engineered solely to silence a news medium protected under the Philippine Constitution;
WHEREAS the prosecution in the Maria Ressa trial never disputed that the allegedly “libelous” information reported by the Rappler was true;

WHEREAS the arbitrary arrest and conviction of Maria Ressa will have a chilling effect on other Philippine journalists seeking to exercise their constitutional right to report “information on matters of public concern,”;

WHEREAS the right to report on and to criticize government officials or actions without retribution is a universally acknowledged requisite for a free and democratic society, which the Philippines has been since the fall of the Marcos dictatorship in 1986; and

WHEREAS Freedom House, in its most recent annual report in 2019, rated the Philippine press as only “partly free” because, according to its report: “Impunity remains the norm for violent crimes against activists and journalists.”;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Society of Professional Journalists, meeting in convention virtually on September 12, 2020, expresses its earnest solidarity with Maria Ressa and the staff of the Rappler and other Philippine media facing legal and extralegal intimidation and retaliation for performing their journalistic duties;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Society of Professional Journalists calls upon President Rodrigo Duterte to grant a full, free and absolute pardon to Maria Ressa; to allow her to return to her duties; and to refrain from further legal and extralegal intimidation of her and other law-abiding Philippine journalists exercising their professional duties in accordance with the Constitution, so that by 2020 Freedom House can rate the Philippine press as “free”; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that copies of this resolution be sent to appropriate officials of the governments of the Philippines and the United States as well as the United Nations and appropriate human rights organizations also working for press freedom in the Philippines.
Resolution 7: A Resolution in Support of the Journalists of Voice of America
Submitted by: International Community

Resolution Committee Recommendation: Positive

WHEREAS for almost 80 years the Voice of America has been an example of objective and honest reporting in more than 47 languages to the world

WHEREAS presidential executive orders and federal legislation guarantee the editorial independence of the journalism practiced by VOA from political forces, and

WHEREAS despite these guarantees, numerous past administrations have attempted to influence the work of VOA reporters and editors, and

WHEREAS despite these attempts, the professional journalists have stood firm against the political winds, often winning numerous awards for excellence in journalism, including some from the Society of Professional Journalists, and

WHEREAS the staff of the VOA is composed of journalists from around the world, many of whom barely escaped capture by forces in their home countries opposed to the concept of press freedom, and

WHEREAS this venerable organization is now facing its most severe attack not only against its independence but also against individual journalists

WHEREAS the new CEO of the US Agency for Global Media, Michael Pack, has engaged in a wholesale gutting of the VOA and its sister broadcast organizations

WHEREAS actions taken by Pack include refusing to sign renewals for J-1 visas for foreign journalists employed by VOA, already forcing at least two to return to countries with government leaders hostile to their work, and

WHEREAS no justifiable cause has been given for refusing to renew these visas, thus depriving these USAGM staffers the right to due process
WHEREAS the employees of the VOA have stepped forward issuing an open letter to VOA acting director Elez Biberaj denouncing the massive forced departures of the frontline VOA editors and managers, and

WHEREAS the Society of Professional Journalists repeatedly stands up to defend free and independent journalism, and we do so again;

WHEREAS the credibility of Voice of America, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, Middle East Broadcasting Networks and Radio Martí would be seriously undermined by converting these editorially independent media into politicized mouthpieces of one presidential administration, thus setting a dangerous precedent;

WHEREAS the undermining of that credibility would in turn seriously undermine the ability of USAGM to fulfill its statutory mission;

WHEREAS the mission of USAGM is dependent on a competent staff of native speakers of almost 50 languages; and

WHEREAS one of the core American principles that USAGM seeks to project to the world is that of a free and independent press;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Society of Professional Journalists meeting in convention virtually on September 12, 2020, expresses in our most strident voice that we oppose the actions being taken by CEO Michael Pack, which appear to threaten the legal and moral editorial independence of the VOA journalists, and urges him to show just cause why the remaining J-1 visas of VOA journalists should not be renewed;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED the SPJ expresses its solidarity with those journalists in VOA who continue to exemplify the finest qualities of fair and accurate journalism while under intense pressure from the country’s political leadership;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this resolution be widely distributed to other journalism organizations so that we can stand together in unison to defend our colleagues in the VOA; and
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this resolution be sent to the Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives, Majority Leader of the U.S. Senate, USAGM CEO Michael Pack and President Donald J. Trump.
Resolution 8: A Resolution Condemning Law Enforcement Targeting Journalists in Oregon
Submitted by: Donald W. Meyers, Region 10 coordinator, SPJ Oregon Chapter.

Resolutions Committee Recommendation: Positive

WHEREAS Portland, Ore., has been the scene of clashes between protesters and law enforcement since the death of George Floyd on May 25, 2020, in Minneapolis;

WHEREAS during these protests, both officers with the Portland Police Bureau and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security targeted journalists for attacks with pepper spray, batons and so-called “less lethal” projectile weapons, requiring surgery and leaving permanent injury in some cases;

WHEREAS Portland Mayor Ted Wheeler has called for people via Twitter to file complaints about police misconduct and issued an order barring the police from targeting journalists, but these measures have not stopped police from targeting journalists;

WHEREAS a U.S. District Court judge issued two orders directing both Portland police and federal agents to not target journalists, but these orders continue to be flouted;

WHEREAS journalists serve as independent observers of actions on the street by all sides, and help provide accountability for police and ensure that the public’s right to free expression and peaceful assembly are guaranteed; and

WHEREAS physically attacking journalists and threatening them with arrest is a trademark of a despotic dictatorship and not that of a country where press freedom is enshrined in the nation’s founding documents;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED the Society of Professional Journalists, assembled in convention virtually on September 12, 2020, strongly and in no uncertain terms, decry the violence that federal, state and local law enforcement have directed against journalists covering unrest in Portland; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED the Society calls upon that the municipal government of Portland, the Portland Police Bureau and the U.S. Department
of Justice commit to protecting journalists who are acting as lawful, independent observers, as well as identify officers who engaged in such unlawful activity and prosecute them to the fullest extent of the law.
**Resolution 9: A Resolution Condemning Attacks on Press Freedom by the Seattle Police**

Submitted by: Donald W. Meyers, SPJ Region 10 Coordinator

**Resolutions Committee Recommendation:** Positive

**WHEREAS** one of the four foundational tenets of the Society of Professional Journalists is the call to “act independently”;

**WHEREAS** journalists do their best work when they are seen as independent observers rather than as agents or propagandists for the government or other interests;

**WHEREAS** many states, including the state of Washington, have enacted shield laws and rules that protect this independence by prohibiting the courts or other entities from forcing journalists to turn over notes, photos, recordings or other work products except for limited circumstances;

**WHEREAS** on July 31, 2020, King County (Washington) Superior Court Judge Nelson Lee granted a request from Seattle Police Department for a subpoena for all photos and video taken of protests in Seattle by the Seattle Times, KOMO-TV, KIRO-TV, KING-TV and KCPQ to identify potential suspects in the thefts of firearms from a police vehicle;

**WHEREAS** Washington’s shield law requires police to demonstrate that they have exhausted every other possible avenue for obtaining evidence before requesting a subpoena;

**WHEREAS** the police department’s reason for the request is a claim that media pictures are of an “excellent quality” compared with the video obtained from cameras at a nearby business;

**WHEREAS** this matter is presently before the Washington Supreme Court, where the media outlets have argued that the police have not sufficiently demonstrated that they have exhausted all other possible avenues for identifying the suspects;

**WHEREAS** allowing this subpoena to go through would erode the state’s shield law;
WHEREAS if the police were to successfully obtain the raw video and unpublished photos from the media outlets, it would tarnish journalists’ reputations with the public as an independent check on the government; and

WHEREAS journalists would be endangered covering protests and demonstrations if participants believed that the photographers, reporters and videographers were going to turn over their photos and footage to government agents seeking to identify protesters, many of whom are exercising their First Amendment rights of assembly and free speech;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED the Society of Professional Journalists, meeting in convention virtually on September 12, 2020, condemn this attack on the ability of journalists to act independently and beseech Seattle, Washington, Mayor Jenny Durkan to direct the Seattle Police Department to withdraw its request for a subpoena, and instruct its officers to seek the information through other avenues; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED the Society calls upon the Seattle Police Department to seek training for its officers in the shield law and First Amendment rights from groups such as the Society of Professional Journalists, the National Press Photographers Association and the Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press.
Resolution 10: A Resolution Opposing Restrictions on Speech that Could Worsen a Pandemic

Submitted by: Kathryn Foxhall, Member, Freedom of Information Committee

Cosponsors: SPJ Freedom of Information Committee; Randy Showstack, president, Washington, D.C., SPJ Pro Chapter,

Resolutions Committee Recommendation: Positive

WHEREAS the Society of Professional Journalists has long spoken out against controls on speech that pressure people to not to speak to journalists without notifying authorities, often through public information officers;

WHEREAS the Society has called the restrictions censorship and authoritarian;

WHEREAS the COVID-19 pandemic has now killed nearly 200,000 people in the United States and no one knows when there will be relief;

WHEREAS the Society believes the secrecy caused by these controls on speech has led to agencies severely limiting public scrutiny of themselves; to inevitable incidents of government dysfunction; and therefore, to a significantly higher death toll from COVID-19 than would otherwise happened;

WHEREAS the Society decries in particular the tragedy that the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has employed this oversight, delay and blockage of reporters for many years, including in its daughter agencies such as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Food and Drug Administration, and the National Institutes of Health;

WHEREAS the Society further notes evidence that HHS and its agencies continue to entrench these controls, for example with:

--- instructions from the current Assistant Secretary of Public Affairs that all press releases and press inquiries for the 80,000-person department go through the ASPA office;

--- a CDC memo telling staff who deal with reporters asking to talk to someone: “Just because there are outstanding requests or folks keep getting asked to do a particular interview does not mean it has to be fulfilled.”
WHEREAS these controls in effect silence or inhibit the great majority of people in HHS who have something important to say about the pandemic;

WHEREAS there have been many other incidents of blockage and controls on journalism before and during the pandemic in many agencies and parts of the nation;

WHEREAS the continuation of this censorship will also exacerbate future crises; and

WHEREAS the Society has congratulated Brechner Center for Freedom of Information Director Frank LoMonte on his extensive legal analysis that finds such controls on speech are unconstitutional and many courts have said so;

THEREFORE LET IT BE RESOLVED that the Society of Professional Journalists, meeting in convention virtually on September 14, 2020, calls on the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to explain why controls on the speech of its employees are safer for the public than is free speech and why that department has the right to decide this under the U.S. Constitution.
Resolution 11: Thanking SPJ’s 2019-20 Board of Directors
Submitted By: Patricia Gallagher Newberry, 2019-20 president

Resolution Committee Recommendation: Positive

WHEREAS departing at-large members of the Society of Professional Journalists’ board, Mike Reilley and Tess Fox, served the board with distinction during their 2019-20 terms;

WHEREAS one-year board appointees Erica Carbajal and Taylor Mirfendereski brought new energy and new insights to the Society in their 2019-20 terms;

WHEREAS President-elect Matt Hall, Secretary-Treasurer Rebecca Aguilar; and continuing at-large members Lauren Bartlett and Yvette Walker made consistently valuable contributions to the board during their 2019-20 terms;

WHEREAS all board members took seriously their fiduciary duty and duty of care as members of the 2019-20 Board of Directors;

WHEREAS all board members endured six official (open-to-all) board meetings; one official exec-session-only meeting; and dozens and dozens of emails and phone calls in between; and

WHEREAS all board members assisted in moving the Society forward in multiple, meaningful ways, including but not limited to the completion of our Strategic Planning Task Force work; the staging of #SPJ2020; and the welcoming of Executive Director John Shertzer;

THEREFORE LET IT BE RESOLVED the Society of Professional Journalists meeting in convention virtually on September 12, 2020, offers sincere and lasting thanks to departing board members Mike Reilley, Tess Fox, Erica Carbajal and Taylor Mirfendereski for their work on behalf of members;

LET IT BE FURTHER RESOLVED the Society of Professional Journalists offers most deserved gratitude to Matt Hall, Rebecca Aguilar, Lauren Bartlett and Yvette Walker for their continued dedication to the Society;

LET IT BE FURTHER RESOLVED that the Society of Professional Journalists offers a heartfelt wish for much success in the year ahead to Matt Hall; and equal good cheer to the successful candidates for president-elect, secretary-treasurer and at-large board positions; and

FINALLY, LET IT BE RESOLVED that outgoing president Patricia Gallagher Newberry offers the Society and all of its staff; and all of its board members;
and all of the chairs of its committees and communities; and all of its regional coordinators; and all of its leaders and members, in chapters or not affiliated, across the 50 states of the United States (and beyond), sincere and lasting thanks for entrusting her with the position of president in this most unusual and challenging and yet ultimately rewarding of the Society years, in the 40th (or so) she has marked as a Society member.
Resolution 12: Thanking Outgoing SPJ President Patricia Gallagher Newberry  
Submitted by: President-Elect Matthew T. Hall and Board of Director members Rebecca Aguilar, Lauren Bartlett, Erica Carbajal, Tess Fox, Taylor Mirfendereski, Mike Reilley and Yvette Walker

Resolutions Committee Recommendation: Positive

WHEREAS Patricia Gallagher Newberry is completing her one-year term as the 103rd president of the Society of Professional Journalists and the 12th woman president in Society history;

WHEREAS President Newberry promised at her swearing-in ceremony in San Antonio that she wanted “a pretty boring” year, and then the exact opposite happened;

WHEREAS the COVID-19 pandemic upended so many people’s lives in so many ways and posed an existential threat to the Society as it forced cancellations of regional conferences, the SDX Awards in Washington, D.C., and the 2020 convention, also in Washington, D.C.;

WHEREAS an unfazed President Newberry served with skill, distinction, energy and inclusiveness, and kept the Society (and herself with daily walks through dog-friendly parks) moving forward from her homebase of Cincinnati;

WHEREAS she helped the Society quickly pivot to a virtual reality in three important ways, including raising more than $142,000 in SPJ’s rebranded Day of Giving BACK in April; planning and appearing on a large number of Zoom journalism panels and meetings; and organizing an all-star virtual conference in place of an in-person national conference;

WHEREAS her steady leadership is helping the Society erase a budget deficit that needed more than a pandemic-related clampdown on staff and board travel to get out of the red;

WHEREAS the Society accomplished a great deal this past year, including hiring a new executive director who got off to a fast start, finally replacing its outdated and much-maligned database, and helping to craft a strategic plan that can help the Society continue on an upward trajectory; and
WHEREAS she fought for a free press, open government and ethical journalism every day, all while juggling a family (husband Doug, grown children Frances, Arthur and Beatrice, and dogs J.J. Magoo and Sir Winston) and the work of her 23rd year as a Miami University professor;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Society of Professional Journalists, meeting at a convention virtually on September 12, 2020, from locations all across the United States, thanks President Newberry for serving with such dedication this year and every year since her first in 2013 on the national board, praises her especially for failing to make this a boring year, and for leaving the organization better than she found it upon her swearing in a year ago.
Resolution 13: Thanking SPJ Staff for Their Tremendous Work for the Society and SPJ2020
Submitted By: Patricia Gallagher Newberry

Resolution Committee Recommendation: Positive

WHEREAS the headquarters staff of the Society of Professional Journalists makes it possible for the Society to provide strong professional development programs, defend the First Amendment and the public’s right to know; and guide journalists to act ethically;

WHEREAS the Society headquarters staff has risen to every challenge of the last two ever-changing years, with the loss of one executive director and the hiring of another; with the change from one database management system to another and then (finally!) another; with the unexpected end of an in-person EIJ2020 and the pivot to a virtual SPJ2020; and with the embrace of all-digital, all-the-time programming, planning and everyday business;

WHEREAS every staff member contributed, in ways big and small, to the success of the Society and SPJ2020 in the past year, with Zoe Berg and Ashlynn Neumeyer providing vital support to our stellar Comm Chief Jennifer Royer; with Caroline Escobar providing superior service to our members day in and day out; with Jake Koenig playing a key role in transitioning to a calendar fiscal year and an “in-the-black” bottom line; with Matt Kent running our contests and elections like a seasoned pro; with Rod Hicks embracing online programming, particularly for college journalists; with Tony Peterson ensuring always on-point and polished Society branding; with Billy O’Keefe providing innovative (and always fast!) design and support of our web presence, including our super-cool SPJ2020 site; with Lou Harry bringing quality Google training to our members and top-notch Quill (print and online) content to our members; with Larry Messing expertly chasing down SPJ2020 guests and concurrently securing needed sponsor dollars; with Karyn Sneath joining our happy crew at 3909 N. Meridian St. (eventually in person!) as our new and much-needed director of education; and with Linda Hall keeping the trains running on time, 3909 in good working order and everyone up to speed all the time on what’s going on in Society World;

WHEREAS John Shertzer stepped into the role of executive director Dec. 2, 2019, bringing a resume with deep expertise in managing membership associations; proving himself an exceptionally quick study of all-things-Society; and playing key roles in every Society plan, program or problem of the last nine months, including, but not limited to a successful Day of Giving Back, a virtual SDX Awards event, a reimagined Society landing page, an innovative strategic plan, a new membership database and a return to a sound financial position; and
WHEREAS John Shertzer, along with Development Director Larry Messing and the most-excellent staff of the Society of Professional Journalists (and a committee of dedicated Society volunteers) delivered a high-level, interactive, rich-in-learning and impressive-in-bookings virtual conference, in the 111th year of the Society, just two months and two weeks after determining an in-person EIJ in Washington, D.C., was not feasible;

THEREFORE LET IT BE RESOLVED that the Society of Professional Journalists meeting in convention virtually on September 12, 2020, offers its most sincere and heartfelt thanks to the Society staff for its commitment to excellence for the Society and its marquee annual event.