

**USC Annenberg School of Journalism**

**Syllabus  
REPORTING (Journalism-302 Print)**

Spring 2008

**Mondays, 9 - 11:40 a.m.**

GFS 207

Bernard Caughey

Office Hours: by appointment only

**COURSE OBJECTIVE:** This is a practical “how to” course. How to report while covering a news story. You will learn the basic skills needed to become a reporter. How to find a news story, where to look, who to talk to, how to interview, what questions to ask and how to ask them. If you want to learn how to report and write and if you plan to earn your bread and butter working with words, you must, like other craftsmen/craftswomen, be familiar with the tools and the materials. This course will acquaint you with the basic reporting skills you need for a career in the news media, Internet or any other field that requires critical thinking and factual writing. We will discuss and learn how to report and convey facts clearly, cleanly and accurately. By the end of this course you should be able to report and write a publishable, well-researched, comprehensive news story clearly, concisely, accurately and fairly. You will leave this class with the necessary skills to work in any small newspaper in the country.

**COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OUTCOMES:** This class treats you as a reporter and expects you to act professionally. It will be run as much as possible like a newsroom of a small, regional newspaper. This course will focus on learning by doing. Your weekly assignments will usually revolve around coverage of Pasadena. I will be your City Editor. You will be reporters. Your assignments will give you exposure to many different aspects of the profession. The idea is to become very knowledgeable about Pasadena by covering its government, courts, the City Council, crime, schools, features and other things.

You will work alongside your colleagues in class, helping them, criticizing their work in a constructive way to improve each story. Just as editors and reporters do at newspapers, we will discuss story ideas and share our successes and failures from previous assignments. Part of your final grade will be based on this class participation.

Journalism 302 (Reporting) is really an extension of Newswriting. That means it is as much about writing as it is about reporting. You cannot write a good news story without good reporting. Poor reporting results in poor news stories. Most of your time will be spent reporting stories -- gathering information. By the end of the semester, you will know what kind of information is needed for various types of stories, where to track down that information, how to hone your interviewing skills, how to find good sources, and how to turn the information you collect into a clear, complete, interesting story. You will learn how to think on your feet, develop your critical thinking skills and overcome fears.

With each assignment, you must provide a complete source list, with phone numbers, so your stories can be checked for accuracy. Make sure you have included information for all quoted

sources. A sample form for your source list is attached. Fabricating quotes or sources is unacceptable, as is copying quotes from other publications without attribution.

There will not be an official mid-term test or project. The final project will be a 1,200 to 1,500-word hard news story about a topic of your choice. The topics for the final – and for as many other weekly writing assignments as possible -- must be approved by me beforehand. You will get story approval by submitting a budget line.

Come to class on time, prepared, having done your readings and homework assignments. Be ready to talk about what is happening in Pasadena and to participate in discussions about other news-related and ethical issues.

Typing skills are essential in this course. You must be able to write on a personal computer. When working on a computer, save often, make a back-up copy of your work on a flash drive or CD, and print it out at various stages of the writing process. Always keep a hard copy for yourself. Claims that the computer lost the story or the computer crashed will not be accepted as an excuse.

### **ONE-ON-ONE CONFERENCES**

Journalism is hard work. It is not for everyone. All of you have the potential to excel, if you are diligent, passionate and tireless. It is normal to get discouraged or feel you are behind. I will be available for private talks and discussions regarding class work and homework before and after class. If you need additional help or have questions, I am available on the phone or via email. In an emergency, call my cell phone. Every student must schedule at least one meeting with me sometime around the semester's mid-point.

**PROFESSIONAL DRESS CODE:** For the purposes of this class, you are a bona fide member of the working press. You should expect to be treated with all of the normal courtesies and privileges afforded to the press. In return, you are expected to represent the profession in a dignified and appropriate manner. If you do not take yourself seriously, no one else will. While conducting interviews and field research for this class you are expected to dress in proper business attire. That means when you conduct interviews do not dress like you are going to a nightclub or to the beach. You don't have to wear business suits, but dress appropriately.

**E-MAIL:** You should use your USC e-mail address rather than a personal e-mail address, which is usually not that professional, when corresponding with sources via the Internet.

### **TEXTS/READINGS:**

#### **Required:**

-- The Los Angeles Times. Read it every day. Be ready to discuss the news in class at any time. If you are not a regular newspaper reader, you must become one to do well in this class.

- Inside Reporting. A Practical Guide To the Craft of Journalism." First Edition. Author: Tim Harrower.
- Creative Interviewing, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition, Ken Metzler, ISBN: 0205262589, Allyn & Bacon
- Associated Press Stylebook." Author: Norm Goldstein, Editor, ISBN: 0465004881

**Dictionary:** The following online dictionary will be the official reference for in-class assignments, homework assignments, midterms and finals: Merriam-Webster Dictionary, [www.m-w.com](http://www.m-w.com)

**WRITING COACHES:** Writing coaches are available in ASC 227 during posted times and by appointment. They will review graded papers only, not help you write assigned stories. They are:

**Bob Berger**, Print: rberger@usc.edu  
**Ed Boyer**, Print: edjboyer@ca.rr.com  
**Brad Hanson**, Print: brad.hanson@latimes.com

**QUIZZES:** There will be weekly quizzes on current events. Occasional quizzes on topics covered in class and related reading assignments may be given at any time without notice.

Reporters must know what is happening in the world. Expect to discuss in class news developments and how they are covered by the media. For the aspiring reporter, reading the newspaper thoroughly every day and watching television newscasts are essential and strengthen your writing skills. You should keep up to date on major regional, national and international news by reading the Los Angeles Times every day, as well as magazines. For news Web sites, try MSNBC.com and CNN.com For radio, listen to KNX (1070 AM) or KFWB (980 AM).

News quizzes will include 10 questions about the week's major news. These will include major news in sports, business and entertainment. The results of these quizzes will be factored into your class participation grade. News quizzes will be given at the start of class. They cannot be made up if you are late or miss class.

**ASSIGNMENTS:** There will be few in-class assignments. Much of your time for this class will be spent outside the classroom. During the semester you will write about 12 stories, most from Pasadena: City Council, Planning Commission, School Board, Redevelopment Agency, business development, police and fire departments. Unless otherwise noted, stories should be hard-news topics and be in the 500-750-word range. If you do not have a car, become friends with someone who does, or learn the train and bus schedules between USC and Pasadena. Class time will be reserved for lectures and discussion of current events and assignments. Class participation is important. Reporters cannot be shy about asking questions or expressing opinions.

With each assignment, you must provide a list of your sources so I can spot fact-check your stories for accuracy. This includes people, web sites, articles or reference books. A sample form for your source list is attached.

### **Beat Notes**

Each week you will turn in a beat note. A beat note should include at least two story ideas, that include the names of new sources (including phone numbers and email addresses) and a detailed description of how you spent your week. A beat note should give me a complete picture of how you spent your week in Pasadena, including who you talked to, who you plan to talk to, what sort of research you are developing and what stories are emerging on your beat. All stories you set out to report must first be spelled out in your beat note and be approved by me before you begin. Beat notes are crucial in your development as a reporter. Take them seriously. You should plan to spend at least six hours in Pasadena each week, and your beat note will reflect this commitment. This estimate includes time spent at meetings, but not travel time from USC. Your beat note should serve as evidence of how much time you are dedicating to your job as a cub reporter in Pasadena.

**HOMEWORK FORMAT:** All assignments should be in 12-point Times New Roman, double-spaced. In most cases, assignments should be handed to me at the beginning of class. Unless otherwise stated, they should not be e-mailed to me. This means you must arrive at class with your assignment in hand. Do not come to class expecting to print it out. Staple your assignment pages together.

In the upper left-hand corner of the first page, type your name, course title, word count, due date and type of assignment, like this:

Your name

Journalism 302

Page number.

Word count: 500 (Omit this line for beat notes and most on-line assignments)

Date assignment is due

Title of assignment: For example, City Council story, police story or Beat Note.

Don't bother typing your name or other headings on any page other than the first one.

### **GRADES:**

**Assignments:** All assignments will be edited on a professional basis -- as though they were turned in to me by a reporter at a newspaper. Each story will be returned with a grade and written comments and explanations of any editing that is more than routine. Our style guide is "The Associated Press Stylebook and Libel Manual." You may copy edit your assignments by hand prior to turning them in provided it is readable and neat. **Do not use red ink.**

Grades will be based on overall contents and construction of the story. Did you get the lead correct? Is it well written? Your copy should not contain any errors in spelling, style, grammar and facts. There should not be any omissions, either. **In fact, after the first week, any misspelled proper word (even if it's due to a typographical error) will drop the grade one-half grade on that assignment. A factual error will result in an automatic "F" on that**

**assignment.** Accuracy is the first law of journalism. Professional journalists are expected to get their facts right, to spell and punctuate correctly, and to respect grammar and syntax.

All assignments will be graded on clarity, organization, accuracy, fairness/balance, completeness/omissions, AP style, grammar, punctuation, spelling and ability to meet deadlines.

All stories must include a complete source list (people must have title, organization, phone number and e-mail address; web sites must have URLs; printed sources must have bibliographic information). Stories without source lists will get an F. Stories with only partial source lists will be graded down. All stories may be randomly fact-checked.

Please don't be discouraged if your stories receive low grades at the outset. Your work will improve. Reporting and writing are hard work, but the only way to get better is to keep at it, regardless of the difficulties.

**Course:** Your course grade will be determined as follows:

Weekly Writing Assignments	55 percent
Quizzes	10 percent
Final story	35 percent

Generally speaking,

“A” stories are accurate, clear, comprehensive stories that are well written and require only minor editing (i.e., they are publishable).

“B” stories require more than minor editing, and have a few style or spelling errors or one significant error of omission.

“C” stories are stories that need considerable editing or rewriting and/or have spelling, style or omission errors.

“D” stories require excessive rewriting and have numerous errors, and should not have been submitted.

“F” stories have failed to meet the major criteria of the assignment, stories have one proper name misspelled or a factual error.

**ATTENDANCE:** Attendance is required for all classes. If you expect to miss class due to a family emergency, a medical problem, or a religious holiday, you should contact me beforehand by sending me an e-mail, give the reason for your absence and attach any assignments. If that is impossible telephone me.

You must not miss any USC classes (including this one) to cover a story.

**PUNCTUALITY:** Tardiness is unacceptable. It reflects on your credibility, not only with me but also with your sources. In the real world, it's crucial that you show up on time to work, to press conferences, to court hearings, to council meetings. Class is no different. Students are responsible for getting class notes from other students in the class.

**LATE WORK:** No late assignments will be accepted. You also must turn in assignments on the day they are due even if you know you will miss class and have contacted me beforehand. You can either give it to another student to hand in for you, leave it in my mailbox with a time stamp from Student Services, or send it to me via e-mail attachment.

Late assignments will not be accepted and an “F” will be given to any missed assignments. Students cannot make up in-class assignments or quizzes with extra credit assignments.

**REWRITING ASSIGNMENTS:** You may rewrite a homework assignment, especially those that received an “F” for factual errors, to achieve a higher grade. Such rewrites must be completed by 5 p.m. Friday of the week graded stories are returned. The old grade and the new grade will be averaged for the recorded grade for that assignment. Rewritten stories should be sent via e-mail. This policy does not apply to the final story.

**PLAGIARISM:/FABRICATION:** Plagiarism is defined as taking ideas or writings from another and passing them off as one’s own. In journalism, this includes appropriating the reporting of another without clear attribution.

Plagiarism is stealing. Fabrication is a betrayal of readers and sources. In the newspaper world, professional journalists who are caught fabricating or plagiarizing are deservedly fired.

**As you know, fabricating quotes or sources is unacceptable and will result in an "F" for the course and possibly expulsion from the Annenberg School of Journalism and the University.**

The following is the School of Journalism’s policy on academic integrity as published in the University catalog: *“Since its founding, the USC School of Journalism has maintained a commitment to the highest standards of ethical conduct and academic excellence. Any student found guilty of plagiarism, fabrication, cheating on examinations, or purchasing papers or other assignments will receive a failing grade in the course and will be dismissed as a major from the School of Journalism. There are no exceptions to this policy.”*

### **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

USC seeks to maintain an optimal learning environment. General principles of academic honesty include the concept of respect for the intellectual property of others, the expectation that individual work will be submitted unless otherwise allowed by an instructor, and the obligations both to protect one’s own academic work from misuse by others as well as to avoid using another’s work as one’s own. All students are expected to understand and abide by these principles. Scampus, the Student Guidebook, contains the Student Conduct Code in Section 11.00, while the recommended sanctions are located in Appendix A. Students will be referred to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs and Community Standards for further review, should there be any suspicion of academic dishonesty.

**ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS:** The following is the University’s policy regarding students with disabilities:

“Students requesting academic accommodations based on a disability are required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP when adequate documentation is filed.”

Please be sure the letter is delivered to me as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in the Student Union room 301 and is open 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. The phone number for DSP is 213-740-0776.

**STRESS AND ANGST:** I realize that today’s students are under a lot of pressure. If you start to feel overwhelmed, it is important that you reach out for help. A good place to start is USC Student Counseling Services at 213-740-7711. The service is confidential, and there is no charge.

**INTERNSHIPS:** The value of professional internships as part of the overall educational experience of our students has long been recognized by the School of Journalism. Accordingly, while internships are not required for successful completion of this course, any student enrolled in this course who undertakes and completes an approved, non-paid internship during this semester shall earn academic extra credit herein of an amount equal to one percent of the total available semester points for this course.

### **COURSE OUTLINE:**

Readings are to be done prior to the class on the date shown. The syllabus is subject to change.

Each class will start promptly at 9 a.m. with a news quiz.

### **Week 1 (Jan. 14): Course Overview/Syllabus Review**

Let’s get to know each other and start with the basics. What is reporting? We also will talk about ethics, sourcing and covering a beat. We will discuss the art of observing and interviewing and then put into practice what we learn in class before taking our knowledge on the road.

**What is reporting?** How it differs from Newswriting.

**What is a beat?** How we’ll use beats.

**Developing story ideas.**

**Building a complete Rolodex.**

**Student reporter rights.**

**Shoe leather/telephones vs. e-mail.**  
**Professional dress, conduct, safety.**  
**Tape recorder requirements.**

**Fact-checking**

**Writing budget lines, story proposals** A budget line/story proposal is required for the Final. I must approve the story idea before you complete the assignment.

**Homework writing assignment:** Write a 750-word news story about yourself. Tell who you are. Where you are from. What makes you tick. What you want to do – hopes, wishes, ambitions – short term and years down the road – even dreams. What you like and dislike. Tell other things about yourself. Things I would not know from your resume. Surprise me, the reader. **E-mail the story to me by Thursday, Jan. 17, 5 p.m.**

**Readings:** Harrower, Chapter 4. Pages 66-75.

Read “Oregon Pays Tribute To Its Vietnam Vets” in The Morgue.

Note the author’s comments in the margins. Be prepared to discuss the way the author uses what he observed to tell the story to his readers.

“Creative Interviewing,” Chapters 1, 2.

**Week 2 (Jan. 21): Martin Luther King, Jr. Day – University Holiday. **NO CLASS****

**Homework:** Watch “Meet the Press” and write a 500-word story. Email by Wednesday, January 23, 3 p.m.

**Readings:** Harrower, Chapter 4. Pages 76-91.

Read “Rampaging Rooster Attacks Girl” in The Morgue.

“Creative Interviewing,” Chapter 17.

**Week 3 (Jan. 28): Developing a Beat- U.S. Census**

**Building a coverage area is an important skill.**

**Where to look for stories.**

**Researching U.S. Census/American Fact Finder.** We look at ways in which stories are affected by race, gender, sexual orientation, class and age. We also look at how to use U.S. census information to mine our city for news stories about communities often overlooked in news coverage.

**Preparing for a story.**

**Interviewing Skills.** Basic techniques, attribution.

**Hard news vs. soft news.** Deciding when to use a hard or soft lead.

**Finding helpful sources; newsworthy people**

**Diversity/Inclusion.** Including people who don’t look like you in your stories

**Using tape recorders**

**Homework:**

Find demographics and ten story ideas for Pasadena. Due next class.

Interview a newsworthy resident or business owner on your beat in Pasadena.

Tape the interview if you want to and can. Note: You cannot interview someone you know or are related to. Write a 500-word story (Due next class).

**Readings:** Harrower, Chapter 5. Pages 92-93 and Chapter 7. Pages 140-149.

“Creative Interviewing,” Chapters 3 and 20 .

**Week 4 (Feb. 4): Libel, Privacy and Ethics**

We will focus on the legal and ethical issues facing journalists and the trouble journalists can face if they write and publish inaccurate information. We will discuss the rights of the press, the open meeting law, libel, invasion of privacy, copyright, plagiarism, fabrication, taste, decency and journalistic ethics.

**Homework:** Take the Ethics Survey on Pages 150-151. Explain the reasons for your answers. We will discuss the answers in next class.

Write a 500-word obituary of a person assigned to you. Due next class.

**Readings:** Harrower, Chapter 5. Pages 104-107.  
“Creative Interviewing,” Chapters 4.

**Week 5 (Feb. 11) Covering City Hall and City Council Meetings, Part 1**

The press is the watchdog of government and nowhere is this role more important than at the local level. This class looks at forms of local government and will discuss local politics.

**Discussion of City Council**

**Making dull material interesting**

**Homework:** Attend the Pasadena City Council meeting and write a 500-word news story.

**Readings:** “Creative Interviewing,” Chapter 5.

**Week 6 (Feb. 18): Presidents’ Day Holiday - NO CLASS**

**Homework:** Email the City Council story to me by 5 p.m. Tuesday Feb. 19

**Readings:** Read “Family Loses all In House Fire” in The Morgue.

Read “The Four Crime Briefs” and “Rampaging Rooster Attacks Girl” in The Morgue.

“Creative Interviewing,” Chapter 6.

**Week 7 (Feb. 25): Covering Local Government, Part II**

**Expanding beyond agenda items.**

**Analysis and Interpretation**

**Homework:** Write an analysis/interpretation or follow-up story on Council action. 500 to 1,000 words.

**Readings:** Harrower, Chapter 5. Pages 102-103.  
“Creative Interviewing,” Chapter 7.

## **Week 8 (March 3):: Covering Press Conferences, Speeches**

### **Covering speeches and news conferences**

#### **Determining what the story is**

#### **How to write non-chronological stories.**

**Homework:** Cover a speech or news conference in Pasadena (If you can't find one, cover one on campus, perhaps a student government meeting for example.) Write a 500 word news story. Focus on the most important issue. If it is a city or county conference or meeting, briefly educate the reader on how this branch of local government works.

**Readings:** Harroner, Chapter 6. Pages 94-99.

Read "Church Bus Crash on Turnpike Kills 3" and "For Those Cut Off, A Life Primeval" in The Morgue. Compare and contrast the stories. Do you note that the stories have a different feel to them?

Read "This One's For Real" in The Morgue. Note and count the number of anecdotes and stories in this story.

Read "Check Writer Sets Off Clerk's Internal Alarm" and "Murderer Caught In Texas After Escape" in The Morgue

"Creative Interviewing," Chapter 8.

## **Week 9 (March 10): Covering Law Enforcement, Part I**

Many young journalists find themselves working first as police reporters. We will discuss the relationship between journalists, police and the public. Students will explore the relationship for themselves.

### **Accessing public crime records – local police, LAPD, Sheriff, CHP.**

#### **Preparing for crime stories (misdemeanors and felonies)**

#### **How to cultivate police sources.**

**Homework:** Visit the Pasadena Police Station and write a crime story from a police report or from interviewing a police officer. Write a 300 to 500-word story and email to me by Wed., March 12.

Cover a felony and write a 500-word story. Email to me by Wed., March 12.

#### **Readings:**

Harroner, Chapter 6. Pages 120-129

"Creative Interviewing," Chapters 9.

## **Week 10 (March 17-22): SPRING BREAK**

Assignment: Begin thinking about possible subjects for your final story.

## **Week 11 (March 24): Covering Law Enforcement, Part II**

This class focuses on our experiences in the previous assignment and what we can learn as we prepare for more in-depths police stories. We examine where to get crime data and how to use this data in trend stories. We also review how to cover a homicide. We learn how to ask police about sensitive investigations while treating friends and relatives of victims with dignity and compassion.

**Daily vs. second-day, trend crime stories**

**Analysis and interpretation**

**Homework:** Write a crime trend story or follow-up story. 500 –750 words.

**Readings:** Harroner, Chapter 6. Pages 130-134.

“Creative Interviewing,” Chapter 10.

**Story proposal, outline, rough draft of 1,500-word story about an issue Pasadena, due next Monday. Discuss proposals for finals—a 1,500-word hard news story, with a minimum of six quoted sources. Proposals due April 14.** . Ideally, these topics should overlap with the beat that they cover for their newspaper, so that their reporting can help them develop sources and knowledge useful for their final story.

**Week 12 (March 31): Covering Education**

Keeping an eye on the teachers and the administrators. The quality of our schools and what is being taught are among the most important issues for anyone who is a student, parent or taxpayer. Education accounts for a huge amount of government spending. Tracking the quality of schools while reporting on waste, illiteracy and education trends is important.

**How is the Board of Education similar/different than the City Council?**

**How schools, school districts are managed at local and state levels.**

**Current education issues.**

**Covering school board meetings.**

**Homework:** Cover a Pasadena board of education meeting and write a story about an action item taken by the board. 500-750 words

**Readings:** Harroner, Chapter 5. Pages 100-101 and Chapter 7, Pages 136-139.

Read “The Michael Jackson Verdict” in The Morgue. Next class we will discuss such questions as: Which do you prefer and why? Compare and contrast the versions. Are some phrases too sensational? Do some stories seem more accurate? Should the victim be named?

“Creative Interviewing,” Chapter 11.

**Week 13 (April 7): Courts**

**Discuss proposals for finals – a 1,500-word hard news story with a minimum of six quoted sources. Proposal due April 14.**

Suspects who are arrested usually become defendants in our court system. This class prepares students for their first excursion into the courts. As well as looking at criminal courts, we will look at how to cover civil courts.

**Criminal procedure; judicial system**

**Criminal vs. civil courts**

**Preparing to cover a trial**

**Homework:** Cover a full day of testimony in a criminal trial from your beat. Write a 500-word story. Due next class.

**Readings:** "Creative Interviewing," Chapter 12.

**FRIDAY APRIL 11 IS THE LAST DAY TO DROP A CLASS WITH A MARK OF A "W."**

**Week 14 (April 14): Covering a multicultural community.**

**Final proposals due today.**

How do race, gender, geography, class and age affect how stories are written and how they are perceived by society?

**Homework:** Write a 500-word story regarding diversity in Pasadena. Due next class.

Work on Final project.

**Readings:** Harrorer, Chapter 6. Pages 108-119. And Harrorer, Chapter 7. Pages 164-174.

"Creative Interviewing," Chapter 13.

**Work on Final project.**

**Week 15 (April 21): Writing the long story; Feature and Specialty Reporting**

Organization and approach to writing the long story.

How is writing for a newspaper different from writing for radio and TV? How does writing for radio differ from writing for TV?

Feature reporting. Entertainment, sports, consumer affairs are all specialty reporting. How are they different from hard news stories?

**Homework:** Write a rough top of about 300 words for your final project. This should clearly describe what the central theme of your final project will be and how you intend to present it. Due next class.

"Creative Interviewing," Chapter 14.

Work on Final project

**Week 16 (April 28): ) Review**

We look back on our journalistic triumphs and failures this last semester and what we can learn from them. Anyone with questions or concerns about their final project can talk to me. Students may turn in a rough draft for me to provide feedback and rough editing.

**Homework: Work on Final project.**

**FINAL (Friday, May 9) -- Turn in your Final story via e-mail by 10 a.m.**

Story may be turned in sooner if completed earlier.

1-1-1-1-1

**SOURCE LIST**

**J-302**

**Name**

**Date**

INTERVIEWS

Name

Title & Organization

Telephone Number

E-mail Address

WEB SITES

URLs

BACKGROUND MATERIAL

Name and date of publication; story headline; byline.

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### **Bernard Caughey Background**

Bernie Caughey is a veteran journalist, news executive and journalism educator.

His first fulltime job for a daily newspaper in Connecticut was as a proof reader, a job that doesn't exist at papers anymore. Caughey was a general assignment and police reporter for the Springfield Union and Sunday Republican in Massachusetts before joining United Press International. As bureau chief in New Hampshire, he covered news for the entire state, including presidential candidates and the first-in-the-nation presidential primary. He held a series of jobs for UPI as reporter in New England, bureau chief in Boston, New England News Editor and was in charge of the Caribbean news with headquarters in San Juan, Puerto Rico. He was the Superintendent of Bureaus nationwide for UPI, based in New York City.

Caughey was associate editor and writing coach for 20 years at The Patriot Ledger, at that time a 90,000-circulation daily newspaper in Quincy, Massachusetts.

At the New England Newspaper Association and the New England Society of Newspaper Editors, two organizations for publishers and editors, he ran workshops on virtually every newspaper subject, such as writing, reporting, editing, libel, credibility, covering a beat, cops and courts, photography, management, etc. He has participated in writing workshops at Poynter Institute at St. Petersburg, Florida and has been a consultant for daily newspapers.

At UPI and The Patriot Ledger, he was chief negotiator for labor contracts.

A member of the Pulitzer Prize jury at Columbia University, Caughey is a recipient of the New England Academy of Journalists "Yankee Quill Award" for outstanding contributions to New England journalism.

A freelance travel writer, Caughey teaches newswriting and reporting at Glendale Community College. He has taught newswriting and reporting at Boston University and Citrus College and lectured at Northeastern University in Boston.

He has been member of American Society of Newspaper Editors, Associated Press Managing Editors, National Association of Black Journalists, National Association of Hispanic Journalists, Asian-American Journalist Association, Native American Journalist Association and other regional press associations.

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