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Geneva Overholser to Lead USC Annenberg's School of Journalism

LOS ANGELES, April 14, 2008—**Geneva Overholser**, the award-winning journalist, educator and scholar, will become director of the School of Journalism at the University of Southern California's Annenberg School for Communication, Dean Ernest J. Wilson III announced today.

"Geneva Overholser is a visionary leader with unparalleled professional experience whose scholarship and public advocacy are providing a roadmap for the future during this profound period of transformation," said Wilson. "No one has more effectively articulated the central role of journalism to our democracy and the need for change in both journalism education and the profession. She is the right leader at the right time for our students, faculty and the industry. I am delighted she is coming to USC Annenberg."

"I am thrilled to join a community that I believe is singularly well-situated to lead at this critically important time," Overholser said. "Ensuring that the essential values of journalism are carried forward into the unsettling but enormously promising new world of media is a challenge that all of us in the craft, the journalism academy and the concerned public share. USC Annenberg is blessed with extraordinary resources, from its setting in Los Angeles, to its exceptional faculty and students, to the innovative leadership of Dean Wilson. I can't wait to begin."

Overholser currently holds the Curtis B. Hurley Chair in Public Affairs Reporting for the Missouri School of Journalism, where she is based in the school's Washington bureau. She was editor of The Des Moines Register from 1988 to 1995. Under her leadership, the paper won the Pulitzer Prize for Public Service and she earned recognition as Editor of the Year by the National Press Foundation and was named "The Best in the Business" by American Journalism Review.

She has been ombudsman of the Washington Post, a New York Times editorial board member, a syndicated columnist for the Washington Post Writers Group, and a reporter for the Colorado Springs Sun. She has been a columnist for the Columbia Journalism Review and frequent contributor to Poynter.org. She spent five years overseas, working and writing in Paris and Kinshasa.

Through the Annenberg Public Policy Center, in 2006 she published a manifesto on the future of journalism, *On Behalf of Journalism: A Manifesto for Change*, and is co-editor of the Oxford University Press *Institutions of American Democracy* volume on The Press with Kathleen Hall Jamieson.

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She chairs the board of the Center for Public Integrity. In addition, she serves on the Journalism Advisory Committee of the Knight Foundation and on the boards of the John S. Knight Fellowships at Stanford University, the Committee of Concerned Journalists, the Fund for Independence in Journalism and the Academy of American Poets. She was for nine years a member of the Pulitzer Prize Board, the final year as chair, and is a former officer of the American Society of Newspaper Editors.

Overholser holds a Master's degree in journalism from Northwestern University's Medill School of Journalism and a Bachelor's degree in history from Wellesley College. She is married to **David Westphal**, McClatchy Newspapers Washington editor. Westphal will be joining USC Annenberg as executive in residence beginning Fall 2008. They have three children.

Overholser's appointment is the culmination of a national search to succeed **Michael Parks**, the Pulitzer Prize-winning former Los Angeles Times editor who has led the school since 2001 and will conclude his term as director in June 2008.

About USC Annenberg's School of Journalism

A pioneer in the field of journalism education, the University of Southern California has offered journalism instruction for nearly 100 years and established the School of Journalism in 1933. Based at the USC Annenberg School for Communication, the journalism school is accredited by the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communication and offers graduate degrees in print, broadcast, online and specialized journalism and strategic public relations and undergraduate degrees in print and broadcast journalism and public relations. In addition, the school offers a broad variety of programs for working journalists through its professional education centers, including the Knight Digital Media Center, the California Endowment Health Journalism Fellowships, the USC Annenberg/Getty Arts Journalism Fellowship Program, and the Institute for Justice and Journalism. It is home to the Selden Ring Award for Investigative Reporting and the Walter Cronkite Awards for Excellence in Television Political Journalism.