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## Connecting

November 02, 2021

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Colleagues,

Good Tuesday morning on this Nov. 2, 2021,

Our colleague **John Wright** has completed a 46-year career in journalism and shares his thoughts in today's lead article.

In the AP, that career took him to New York, Albany and Mexico City and then on to Brazil with AP-Dow Jones. For the last 20 years he has worked at Energy News Today and retired at the end of October.

We congratulate him on his contributions to our profession.

Today is Election Day across the nation. And for those viewers who are fans of NBC's Steve Kornacki, it's Show Time! Tom Jones of Poynter tells more in his story that can be found [here](#) – and which includes:

“By now, you know Kornacki — wearing his tie and shirt with the rolled-up sleeves and khakis, standing in front of a U.S. map while fueled on Diet Cokes and frantically spouting off and analyzing election results. He has something of a cult following, and not just among political junkies. He landed on the list of People magazine's “Sexiest Men Alive,” right alongside the likes of Michael B. Jordan and Chris Evans.”

### **AUTHORS ALERT! DEADLINE APPROACHING:**

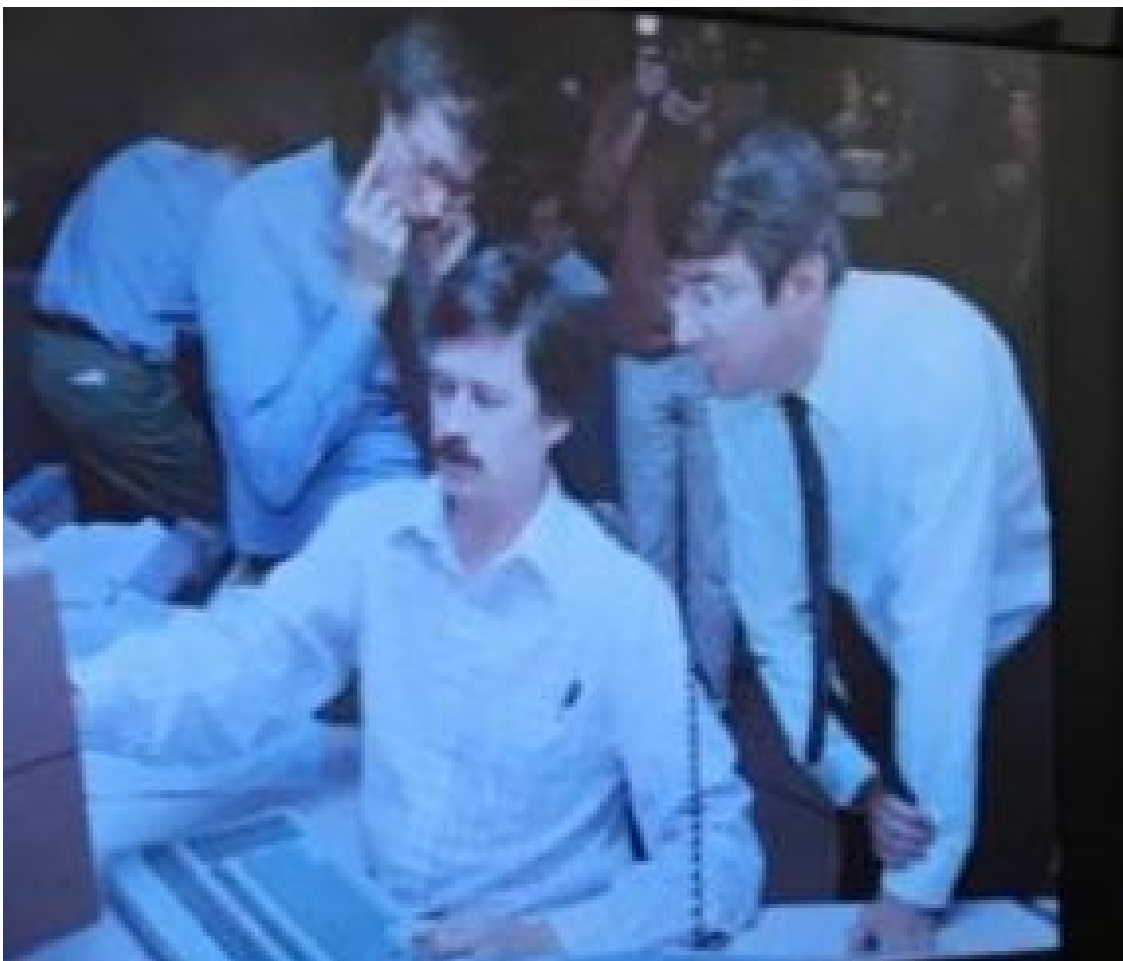
If you have written a book in the past year, Connecting would like to feature it in our annual listing of books authored by Connecting colleagues. The book issue will appear in November – so this is an invitation to send me the following: Name of book, jpg

image of the cover and your headshot, and 300 words on the book including where it can be purchased. Also, if you have a book in the works for near-future publication, include it. Send along the information soon.

Have a great day – be safe, stay healthy!

Paul

## Ending a career: ‘My AP experience prepared me to confidently and capably handle anything and everything’



**John Wright at the keyboard in 50 Rock, flanked by Tom Kent (right) and (he believes) Executive Editor Bill Ahearn; “I believe the event was Terry Anderson's release from captivity in 1991,” Wright said.**

**John Wright** ([Email](#)) - When I first walked into AP headquarters in August 1985, I was as thrilled as a kid on his first day of kindergarten or college. The energy and excitement of New York City and Rockefeller Center was contagious. I marveled at the stunning murals when I emerged from the subway. I arrived early enough to wander around outside to take in the spectacular scenery: the Prometheus Statue, fountain and gardens. I peered skyward at the elegant art deco buildings that housed the AP and NBC. I had arrived literally and figuratively. I was embarking on a career at the

most important news organization in the world after toiling nearly a decade in the minor leagues at small-town and suburban newspapers (I pounded out stories on a typewriter at my first newspaper job in 1975), along with the Daily Journal in Caracas.

After my final day of work at the end of October, I can't help but look back on my long career. My AP experience prepared me to confidently and capably handle anything and everything that came my way as a correspondent, editor and bureau chief. Furthermore, I was blessed to have worked alongside some of the most talented, capable colleagues at AP, many of whom remain life-long friends.

At the world desk, where I was hired by Tom Kent, I worked on stories from across the globe. To this day, when I meet people from just about anywhere, I have at least a basic understanding of their region after editing stories from every conceivable dateline. And, after working in AP's foreign service, I have friends around the world I hope to visit during my retirement. After serving my apprenticeship at AP headquarters and Albany, I was posted to the Mexico City-Central America bureau, where I covered immigration, crime, corruption, drug cartels, regional wars and peace talks.

My next foreign assignment came when AP-Dow Jones sent me to open a new bureau in Brazil, where I had lived previously when I met my wife. I worked together with AP correspondents and hired my own staff of about a dozen in São Paulo, Rio and Brasilia to cover business and economic news. We won numerous awards and in most months were the No. 1 bureau worldwide in competitive timeoffs against our rivals. Our biggest continuing story was the economy, when Brazil tamed runaway inflation and created economic stability for the first time in decades.

After that, I was recruited by Knight-Ridder Financial/Bridge News to open a bureau back home in Seattle. I covered Boeing, Microsoft, Starbucks and a quirky startup named Amazon.com (I wrote a column calling it a risky investment). But that job imploded when the parent company went bankrupt. A couple of colleagues invited me to join their startup, Energy News Today, as their first employee. The Internet tsunami washed away many newspapers, magazines and other traditional publications, but it also created space for little startups which could effectively compete with bigger rivals online. At Energy News Today, I covered Latin America myself by phone, traveled to the region and hired correspondents in Mexico, Brazil, Argentina, and Venezuela. I never imagined I would work there 20 years until my retirement today.



Christmas pic with wife Maria, daughter Juliana, son-in-law Tyler, granddaughter Gracie and grandson Luke. And the snake? **“I wish I could brag I plucked that big fellow from the Amazon jungle when I lived in Brazil, but it was quite benign. While vacationing in Baja California, I toured El Serpentario in La Paz. My wife was squeamish and thought I was nuts, but it was jolly fun.”**

Now I plan to spend more time reading, hiking, bicycling, kayaking, attending music and film festivals (I am a volunteer pre-screener at the Seattle International Film Festival), traveling in my motor home, playing with my grandkids, and learning new languages. A great irony is that throughout my career, Reuters has always been the rival, yet my financial adviser has put my money into investments that include Reuters stock.

Along the way, I have authored three books and co-wrote a fourth, as well as dozens of travel articles, the most recent published last year by PerceptiveTravel about Croatia, and I intend to energetically devote more time to travel writing.

As I reflect on 46 years in journalism, many career highlights flash across my mind: Covering a White House press conference in which Clinton, Gore and most of the Cabinet attended. I later interviewed Gore in Seattle. Being jabbed repeatedly in my





breastplate by Daniel Ortega's thumb and forefinger when I dared ask about political prisoners in Nicaragua; I still ached the next day. Choking on tear gas at the 1999 WTO riots in Seattle, worse than any I ever covered in Latin America. Interviewing literary luminaries Gabriel Garcia Marquez and Jorge Luis Borges, as well as music legends Mercedes Sosa, Ella Fitzgerald and Ruben Blades. Boeing CEOs trusted me enough to grant me exclusives. But the story that gets the most laughs is when I describe a petulant Bill Gates spraying spittle in my face on an escalator, saying my question (about Microsoft earnings) was "the stupidest thing you could even ask me."

Old friends and colleagues who have lost touch are encouraged to email me:  
[john\\_wright@comcast.net](mailto:john_wright@comcast.net)

## Ron Jenkins – He got it right and he got it first

**Joseph Carter (Email)** - The late Jim Kukar, then city editor of the Oklahoma Journal, lured his colleague Ron Jenkins from Arkansas to Oklahoma City in the late 1960s. Both of these long-time buddies obviously were reared in rather primitive Ozark Mountains environments but it never was reflected their journalism.

As associate editor of the Journal, I quickly recognized both owned genius-level minds and stern dedication to unbiased news reporting. Although they were a dozen years behind me in years, Ron Jenkins was absolutely gifted as a scribe and reporter with gentle investigative skills. Jim Kukar was skilled as a quick-study editor who excelled in lay-out, headlines and meticulous editing. They were a rock-solid team for an upstart, off-set struggling daily newspaper.

Shortly after Jenkins arrived, I quit the news business moving into politics: Oklahoma to D. C.—another transit dude from primitive environs. Later, I returned to Oklahoma as a press secretary to a governor. Ron Jenkins had been elevated into the Associated Press and was Capitol reporter. As a subject of his journalism, I found Jenkins was always balanced, fair but cut the governor nor me any slack for negligence nor plain old B.S.

I knew several great journalists who were Oklahoma Capitol Reporter for the AP, but none exceeded Ron Jenkins for integrity, tough questioning and fine writing under deadline. Jenkins got it right and he got it first.

## Ely Antar will be missed by many



**Members of the Cairo bureau on the balcony at 33 Kasr El Nil street in 1980. Left to right: COB Ely Antar, photographer Bill Foley, Incoming Cairo COB Alexander Higgins, News Editor Nick Tatro, Cairo bureau accountant Talaat Shafik, Cairo photographer Ahmed Tayeb. Foreground, writers Magda El-Sanga and Lisette Balouney.**

**William Foley** ([Email](#)) - I was very sad to read about the death of Ely Antar in Connecting. He was the Cairo COB when I arrived in Cairo in September of 1978. He was a wonderful guy to work with and had a wry sense of humor.

We traveled together on a Sadat train trip through the Nile Delta in early 1979. On that trip, Ely presented Sadat with a little portfolio of photographs I had made of Sadat, his grandson and daughter on Dec. 17, 1978, at his barrage rest house.

He and I also traveled to the gulf before there were ski resorts in shopping malls in Dubai, and he managed to get us visas to visit Oman. That too was an amazing adventure.

Ely and I exchanged a number of emails over the past few years, about the Shah coming to Cairo in 1979, the chaos of Brexit and of course the pandemic and vaccines, etc.

He will be missed by many.

## Connecting mailbox

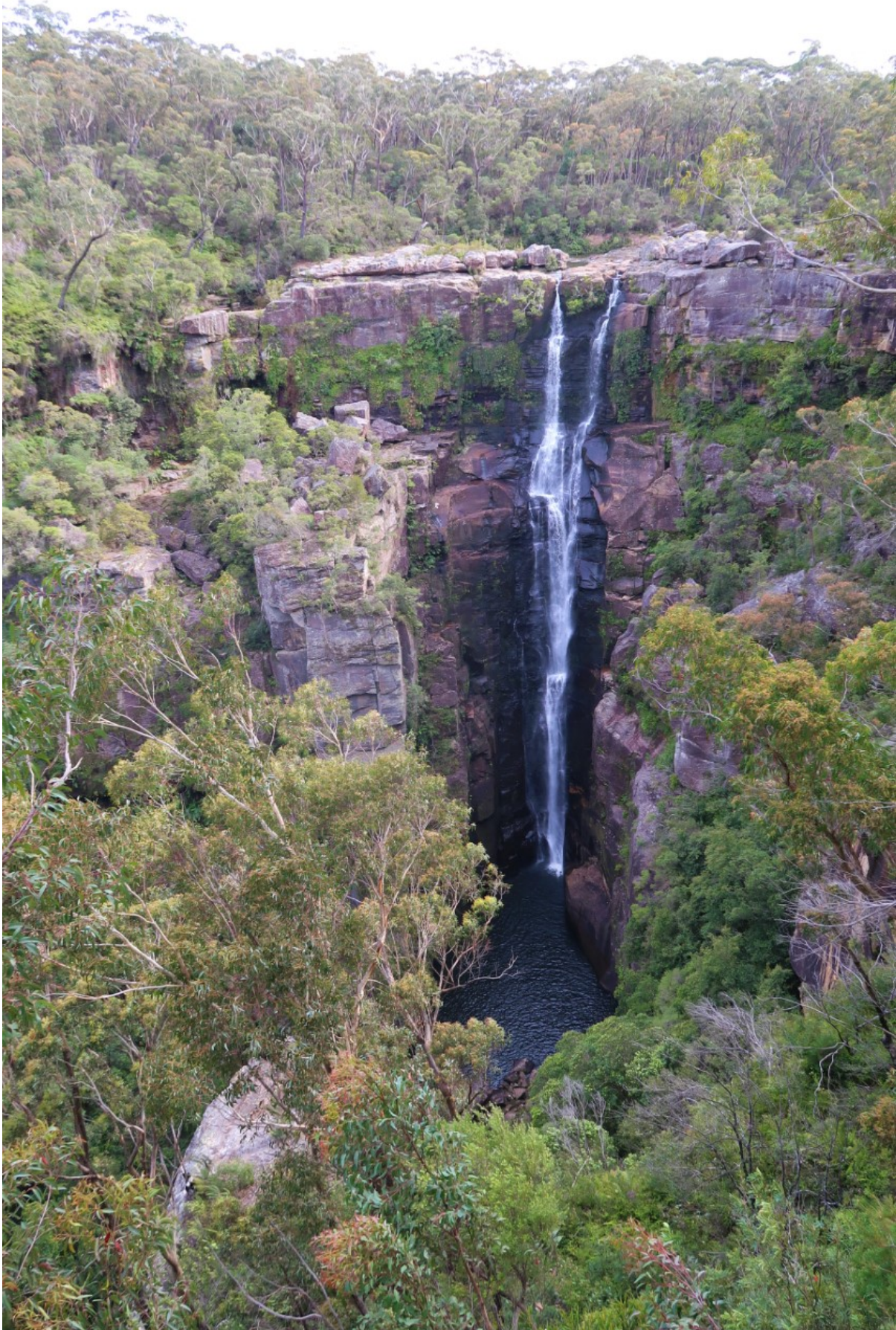
## ***Make a visit to Caro Archive***

**Francesca Pitaro** ([Email](#)) - New Yorkers and those visiting the city should swing by the NY Historical Society to have a look at The Robert Caro Archive at the New York Historical Society. There's a slide show for those who can't make it to the museum. Click [here](#) for more information.

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***Wonderful to be back in nature again***





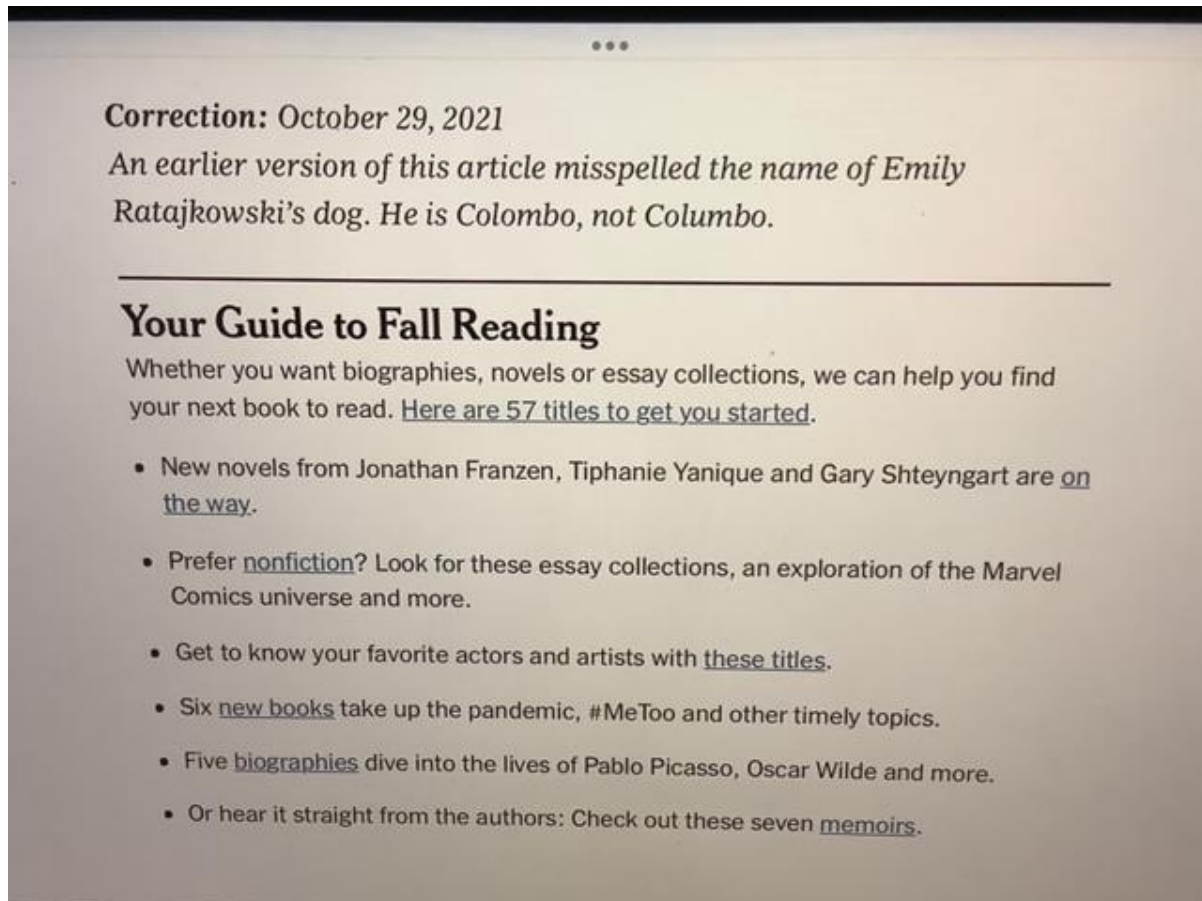
**Carl Robinson (Email)** - Yesterday, 1 Nov, after more than four months of COVID Lockdown in Greater Sydney, 100 kms to our north, we were finally allowed visit Regional NSW (New South Wales), but only if you're double-vaxxed, of



course. (Aussies are such compliant creatures.) My first escape was up the nearby Illawarra Escarpment, straight-up sandstone at 500 metres, and to my favourite waterfall, Carrington Falls. Wonderful back in nature again -- and all by myself. Springtime too.

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## *Correction from The New York Times*



Shared by Dennis Conrad.

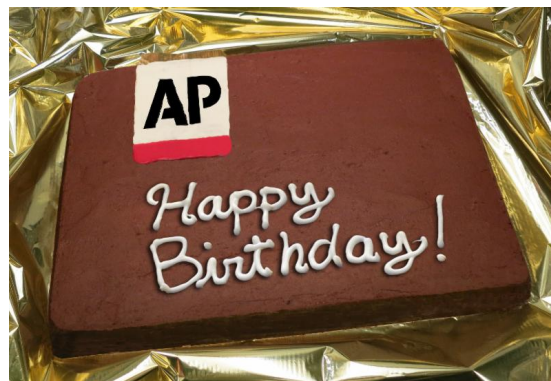
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## *A Beatle sighting?*



At the College Football Playoff office Halloween event in Dallas, they saw him standing there....a Beatle! Well, it could have been our colleague Bill Hancock ([Email](#)). He will be a busy man tonight as this season's first CFP rankings are to be released.

## Connecting wishes Happy Birthday



Peter Leabo – [peter.leabo@gmail.com](mailto:peter.leabo@gmail.com)

## Stories of interest

### ***Iraq court sentences man to death for killing 2 journalists*** (AP)

BAGHDAD (AP) — Iraq's supreme court has sentenced a man to death by hanging for the killing of two prominent Iraqi journalists last year, known for their coverage of anti-government protests in the southern city of Basra.

Ahmed Abdul Samad, a Dijlah TV reporter, and Safaa Ghali, his cameraman, were found shot and killed in a car parked near a police station on January 10, 2020. Their deaths were part of a wave of targeted killings against activists and journalists covering the protest movement that erupted in late October 2019.

For months, tens of thousands of protesters in the Iraqi capital of Baghdad and the predominantly Shiite southern provinces had taken to the streets to rally against endemic corruption and call for reforms. Over 600 people died as security forces used live ammunition and tear gas to disperse crowds."

Read more [here](#). Shared by Adolphe Bernotas.

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### ***Chuck Todd: Journalists and news outlets must value fact over opinion, strengthen local news to build their credibility*** (IRJC, The Rural Blog)

By AL CROSS

Journalism needs to rebuild its credibility, valuing fact more than opinion, and part of that depends on connections between local media and national media, Chuck Todd of NBC News told a largely non-journalist audience Thursday night at the national awards dinner for rural journalism.

"The credibility of national media depends on the credibility of local media, and local media give us a lot more credibility," Todd said at the Al Smith Awards Dinner of the University of Kentucky's Institute for Rural Journalism and Community Issues (which publishes The Rural Blog).

The decline of local journalism has been bad for national journalism, Todd said: "Even if people in the community disagreed with a point of view, maybe they didn't like the national news – my father was one of those guys; he'd say, 'Ah, The New York Times,



they think they're better than us – but if a local paper reported something they did, you know, it gave it credibility. And I do think the loss of local news, if the newspaper on the doorstep, the fact that we were all reading the same thing . . . led to more respectful debate.”

Read more [here](#). Shared by Al Cross.



## Celebrating AP's 175th

AP store for 175th, vintage merchandise



The AP has created a store with 175th anniversary merchandise available for purchase, as well as items branded with some of AP's most historic logos.

Click [Here](#).

**AP Through Time: A Photographic History**



AP Through Time: A Photographic History” - created by Director of Corporate Archives, Valerie Komor, is a keepsake commemorating AP’s 175th year. Small in size (6 ¾ x 6 ¾ in.), it is organized chronologically in eight segments that trace the broad outlines of AP’s development from 1846 to the present: Beginnings, Evolution, New Century, Modernity, Expansion, One World, Speed, and Transformation. Click [here](#) to view and make an order.

## Today in History - Nov. 2, 2021



### By The Associated Press

Today is Tuesday, Nov. 2, the 306th day of 2021. There are 59 days left in the year.

#### Today’s Highlight in History:

On Nov. 2, 2000, American astronaut Bill Shepherd and two Russian cosmonauts, Yuri Gidzenko (gihd-ZEENG’-koh) and Sergei Krikalev (SUR’-gay KREE’-kuh-lev), became the first residents of the international space station.

#### On this date:

In 1783, General George Washington issued his Farewell Address to the Army near Princeton, New Jersey.

In 1889, North Dakota and South Dakota became the 39th and 40th states with the signing of proclamations by President Benjamin Harrison.

In 1917, British Foreign Secretary Arthur Balfour issued a declaration expressing support for a “national home” for the Jews in Palestine.

In 1920, white mobs rampaged through the Florida citrus town of Ocoee, setting fire to Black-owned homes and businesses, after a Black man, Mose Norman, showed up at the polls to vote on Election Day; some historians estimate as many as 60 people were killed.

In 1947, Howard Hughes piloted his huge wooden flying boat, the Hughes H-4 Hercules (derisively dubbed the “Spruce Goose” by detractors), on its only flight, which lasted about a minute over Long Beach Harbor in California.

In 1963, South Vietnamese President Ngo Dinh Diem (noh ding ZEE’-em) was assassinated in a military coup.

In 1976, former Georgia Gov. Jimmy Carter became the first candidate from the Deep South since the Civil War to be elected president as he defeated incumbent Gerald R. Ford.

In 1994, a jury in Pensacola, Florida, convicted Paul Hill of murder for the shotgun slayings of an abortion provider and his escort; Hill was executed in September 2003.

In 2003, in Iraq, insurgents shot down a Chinook helicopter carrying dozens of U.S. soldiers, killing 16. In Durham, New Hampshire, V. Gene Robinson was consecrated as the first openly gay bishop in the Episcopal Church.

In 2004, President George W. Bush was elected to a second term as Republicans strengthened their grip on Congress. Dutch filmmaker Theo van Gogh was slain in Amsterdam after receiving death threats over his movie “Submission,” which criticized the treatment of women under Islam.

In 2007, British college student Meredith Kercher, 21, was found slain in her bedroom in Perugia, Italy; her roommate, American Amanda Knox and Knox’s Italian boyfriend, Raffaele Sollecito (rah-fy-EHL’-ay soh-LEH’-chee-toh), were convicted of killing Kercher, but both were later exonerated. (Rudy Guede (GAY’-day), a petty criminal who was convicted separately in the case, is serving a 16-year sentence.)

In 2010, Republicans won control of the House of Representatives, picking up 63 seats in midterm elections, while Democrats retained a majority in the Senate; Republican governors outnumbered Democrats after gaining six states. Californians rejected a ballot measure that would have made their state the first to legalize marijuana for recreational use.

Ten years ago: The Congressional Gold Medal was awarded to some 19,000 Japanese-Americans who’d served in the 100th Infantry Battalion, the 442nd Regimental Combat Team and the Military Intelligence Service.



Five years ago: Ending a championship drought that had lasted since 1908, the Chicago Cubs won the World Series, defeating the Cleveland Indians 8-7 in extra innings. In Iowa, Des Moines Police Sgt. Anthony Beminio and Urbandale Officer Justin Martin were shot and killed while sitting in their patrol cars in separate attacks about 2 miles apart; suspect Scott Michael Greene later pleaded guilty to two counts of first-degree murder and was sentenced to consecutive life prison terms. Garth Brooks was named entertainer of the year at the Country Music Association Awards.

One year ago: In the closing hours of the presidential campaign, President Donald Trump charged across the nation delivering an incendiary but false allegation that the election was rigged, while Democrat Joe Biden pushed to claim states that were once seen as safely Republican. Even as Trump insisted that the nation was “rounding the turn” on the coronavirus, Dr. Deborah Birx, the coordinator of the White House coronavirus task force, broke with the president and joined a chorus of Trump administration scientists sounding alarm about a spike in infections.

Today’s Birthdays: Political commentator Patrick Buchanan is 83. Actor Stefanie Powers is 79. Country-rock singer-songwriter J.D. Souther is 76. Actor Kate Linder is 74. Rock musician Carter Beauford (The Dave Matthews Band) is 63. Actor Peter Mullan is 62. Singer-songwriter k.d. lang is 60. Rock musician Bobby Dall (Poison) is 58. Actor Jenny Robertson (“Bull Durham”) is 58. Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright Lynn Nottage is 57. Actor Lauren Velez is 57. Actor Sean Kanan is 55. Actor David Schwimmer is 55. Christian/jazz singer Alvin Chea (Take 6) is 54. Jazz singer Kurt Elling is 54. Former Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker is 54. Rock musician Fieldy is 52. Actor Meta Golding is 50. Rock singer-musician John Hampson (Nine Days) is 50. Actor Marisol Nichols is 50. Rapper Nelly is 47. Actor Danny Cooksey is 46. Rock musician Chris Walla is 46. Actor Reshma Shetty is 44. TV personality Karamo Brown (“Queer Eye,” “Dancing With the Stars”) is 41. Country singer Erika Jo is 35. Actor-singer Kendall Schmidt is 31.

## Got a story or photos to share?

Got a story to share? A favorite memory of your AP days? Don't keep them to yourself. Share with your colleagues by sending to Ye Olde Connecting Editor. And don't forget to include photos!

Here are some suggestions:

- **Second chapters** - You finished a great career. Now tell us about your second (and third and fourth?) chapters of life.
- **Spousal support** - How your spouse helped in supporting your work during your AP career.
- **My most unusual story** - tell us about an unusual, off the wall story that you covered.



- **"A silly mistake that you make"**- a chance to 'fess up with a memorable mistake in your journalistic career.
  
- **Multigenerational AP families** - profiles of families whose service spanned two or more generations.
  
- **Volunteering** - benefit your colleagues by sharing volunteer stories - with ideas on such work they can do themselves.
  
- **First job** - How did you get your first job in journalism?
  
- **Connecting "selfies"** - a word and photo self-profile of you and your career, and what you are doing today. Both for new members and those who have been with us a while.
  
- **Most unusual** place a story assignment took you.

**Paul Stevens**  
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