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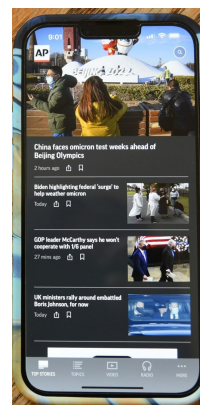
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Connecting

Feb. 1, 2023

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Colleagues,

Good Wednesday morning on this Feb. 1, 2023,

As **Mark Gillispie** is remembered following his death Sunday at the age of 63, the story that the AP journalist wrote for the wire about the death of his wife **Mary Lou** tells much about the kind of husband and journalist he was.

Mark worked with Mary Lou, a copy and design editor, at The Plain Dealer in Cleveland before he joined the AP's Cleveland bureau. He wrote lovingly about their marriage and about grieving her after she died of cancer in 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic.



“Mary Lou and I were the quintessential journalist couple. We met at a small paper

outside Cleveland and snagged the big-city newspaper jobs we dreamed about," he wrote.

Click [here](#) to read the story he wrote about her.

Today's issue brings first response to our call for your stories of quitting a job in a huff. If you've got your own tale to share, please send it along.

We bring you the monthly listing of colleagues in Connecting's 100/90s/80s Club, and one of the newest members of our 80s Club, **Rich Oppel**, shares a story on becoming a lifeguard as he became an octogenarian. Rich worked 11 years for the AP, including service as Detroit chief of bureau, early in his career and made his mark as one of the country's top newspaper editors.

Here's to the new month of February – have a great day, be safe and stay healthy!

Paul

Veteran AP, Plain Dealer reporter Mark Gillispie dies at 63



Associated Press Cleveland reporter Mark Gillispie takes a selfie with his AP colleagues videojournalist Angie Wang, left, and reporter Julie Carr Smyth, right, who were visiting the city on assignment on Oct. 29, 2019, in Cleveland. Gillispie, a veteran journalist who wrote about many of Ohio's biggest stories and characters during a four-decade career primarily with AP and The Plain Dealer, died Sunday, Jan. 29, 2023, at age 63, according to his family. (AP Photo/Mark Gillispie)

By JOHN SEEWER

Mark Gillispie, a veteran journalist who wrote about many of Ohio's biggest stories and characters during a four-decade career primarily with The Associated Press and The Plain Dealer in Cleveland, has died. He was 63.

Gillispie, who was diagnosed with cancer last fall, died Sunday while in hospice care, his children, Sam Gillispie and Martha Hanna Gillispie, said Monday.

After joining the AP in 2014 as a reporter in its Cleveland bureau, he wrote about the police shooting of 12-year-old Tamir Rice, a breakaway Amish group that carried out beard-cutting attacks, and a statehouse bribery investigation involving Akron-based FirstEnergy Corp. He was sent to the scenes of several major breaking stories, including the 2018 massacre at a Pittsburgh synagogue. He was one of the AP's leading reporters on the opioid crisis and its legal aftermath for communities in Ohio and beyond.

Gillispie previously worked at The Plain Dealer for 24 years, writing investigative stories that included reporting on mortgage fraud and questionable overtime practices by Cleveland police. He also covered police, courts and local government, including the corruption case of former U.S. Rep. James Traficant.

He could put up a gruff exterior but just as easily show sensitivity to people dealt bad news. In the newsroom, he enjoyed offering guidance to young reporters.

"Journalism was Mark's passion — poring over complicated documents, digging deep into stories, sharing sage advice to new reporters. But it was his family he was most passionate about," said Christina Paciolla, AP's deputy director for text and former Ohio state news editor. "We'd often swap stories of our families, and bond over everything from baseball to living with grief. We will all miss Mark terribly as a colleague but more importantly, as a friend."

At The Plain Dealer, he worked with his wife, Mary Lou Gillispie, a copy and design editor. He wrote lovingly about their marriage and about grieving her after she died of cancer in 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic.

They were married in a Las Vegas chapel by a "man in a green leisure suit and a bad pompadour," he wrote.

"Mary Lou and I were the quintessential journalist couple. We met at a small paper outside Cleveland and snagged the big-city newspaper jobs we dreamed about," he wrote.

The personal essay was a departure for someone who built a reputation as a tough but fair reporter who held public officials and institutions accountable.

"The pain endures, yet the darkness is slowly lifting," Gillispie wrote two months after his wife's death. "I comfort myself with thoughts of how our final weeks in isolation were the most poignant of our 30 years together."

"The pandemic helped teach me the meaning of abiding love in all its guises. For that, I will be forever grateful."

Gillispie grew up in Perry, Ohio, along Lake Erie. He was an avid cook, golfer, poker player and Cleveland sports fan, dreaming of the day when the city would celebrate a World Series championship.

He studied theater for a while at Wright State University, performed in community theater and enjoyed singing, though, he rarely shared his talent.

He surprised his daughter at her wedding last year, serenading her with "Sunrise, Sunset" from "Fiddler on the Roof."

Gillispie served in the U.S. Army as a finance and accounting specialist, a time in his life that he said was transformative. He began his journalism career near his hometown at The News-Herald in Willoughby, where he was a reporter and editor. He met his wife there.

In addition to his two children, survivors include a brother and two sisters.

Click [here](#) for link to this story. Shared by Josh Hoffner.

Quitting in a huff...

[Terry Spencer](#) - I can't say I quit in a huff, but I once quit without notice. In 1990 I had taken a job at the Los Angeles Daily News so I could move back home to take care of my terminally ill father after my mother died suddenly of a stroke. I had heard that the Daily News was a sweatshop, but I thought how bad could it be? I had worked in a factory and on a loading dock before going to college -- this could not be worse than those jobs. Wrong.

At the Daily News we were required to write two stories every day and three weekenders every week -- 13 stories every five days. Overtime was not allowed. And they better be good. If one of them fell through at the last-minute, you had to figure out how to replace it. I was covering education and courts in a suburban bureau -- and if something happened at a trial at the same time something happened at a school, whichever one I missed was going to be what I got yelled at for.

After four months, I was miserable. So I looked around the bureau at my 10 colleagues to see who was happiest. I would emulate that person. Nope, not him. Nope, not her. He's often happy but only because we all know he's snorting coke in the bathroom several times a day. When I got to the end, it dawned on me -- "Shit Spencer -- your mom just died, your dad is dying, your girlfriend dumped you ... and you are the happiest person here."

That night I went home and called a friend I had met when I was a trainee at the LA Times. She had been appointed editor of community news in the paper's Orange County edition and I knew they had been looking for reporters. "Mary Lou, I need a job. I'll do anything." She said the only job she still had was covering a couple school districts, but they were 40 miles from my house -- she didn't think I would want that. I

told her I'd take it. I went into the Daily News bureau the next morning, told the editor I was quitting and why and walked out.

If I hadn't done that, I would have burned out before my career ever went anywhere.

Craig Ammerman was 'crucial to my career'

[Mike Precker](#) - So sad to hear of Craig Ammerman's passing. I'm sure it's a big club, but he was crucial to my career, and I'm still grateful.

I worked for him in the New York City bureau for four months in 1977 (blackout, Son of Sam, among other amazing experiences) before shipping out to the AP internship in Tel Aviv. He was smart, funny and a great mentor. After three years as a local hire, I wanted to migrate to the stringer world and came to see him at the Philadelphia Bulletin.

We're pretty locally oriented, he told me, but Burl Osborne just landed in Dallas with a whole different set of ambitions. Let's give him a call. We did, he got my foot in the door, and I wound up the Morning News' Middle East correspondent. It simply wouldn't have happened otherwise.

I had thanked him over the years, but not recently and not enough. Gosh, I hope he and Arnie are strolling down a heavenly fairway.

Turning 80 – and becoming a lifeguard



ABOVE: Rich and Carol.
RIGHT: Newest lifeguard.

Rich Oppel - I retired at age 65 in 2008 from my job as editor of the Austin American-Statesman, and served a year as chair of the Pulitzer Board. I had no plans then to do anything beyond traveling and fishing. But several interesting job offers came my way and I took short-term assignments as vice president of Hill & Knowlton, vice president of Huston-Tillotson University, and editor-in-chief of Texas Monthly.

For most of my adult life, I had been a runner. When my knees failed in my 60s, I took up lap swimming, and still swim 350-400 miles a year. My wife Carol and I have a little condo in Port Aransas, Tex., and I'm a regular at the town's community pool. The pool manager—hard up for new hires—offered me a job as a lifeguard. I accepted. First, I had to pass Red Cross knowledge, swimming and lifesaving examinations.

The toughest part of the course was swimming to the surface with a 10-pound weight from the bottom of 8 feet of water. It is easier, I found, to lift an unconscious 200-



pound person from the same depth—if you know how to use a rescue tube like the one I'm holding in that picture.

Because we are off-season and I need to re-qualify in the spring, I've yet to work a shift. My pay will be \$15.05 an hour, or \$605 weekly if I were to work full time, which I won't. That compares with the \$106 a week we were paid when my class of rookies began working for AP in 1965.

Life is good as Carol, my beautiful and wonderful wife of 55 years, and I enter our ninth decade. We are generally healthy and looking forward to taking our family of seven to Italy in June and July.

I remain grateful for the lessons I learned from AP greats including Paul Hansell, Reid Miller, Strat Douthat, Howard Benedict, Jack Cappon, Jules Loh, Lou Boccardi, Conrad Fink and Keith Fuller, who taught me most of what I know today about accuracy, fairness and clarity in writing, as well as editing and leading teams.

Celebrating Joe Young's 90th



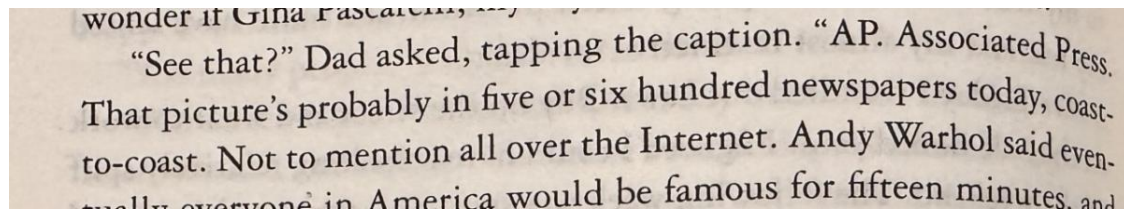
Connecting member and retired Indianapolis News/Star photographer Joe Young (Center) celebrated his 90th birthday last Saturday by hosting a luncheon for friends and colleagues. Shared by Bob Daugherty.

AP Stylebook recommends woke changes - YouTube

Fox & Friends Weekend' co-hosts blast the AP Stylebook for suggesting the removal of "the" labels from writing due to concerns it dehumanizes people. Click [here](#) to view.

(Shared by Robert Reid)

AP Sighting



[Michael Weinfeld](#) - Here's an AP sighting on page 66 of Stephen King's new book Fairy Tale.

An arresting predicament

[Jim Willis](#) - When I was a journalism student at Memphis State University (now the University of Memphis), James Meredith was shot shortly after beginning his march through Mississippi in 1966. Network news outlets scrambled to assemble journalists and support personnel and I was hired as a film runner.

After the march was over, I'd often be called by the NBC film desk in NYC to rent a car and meet a crew at the airport and then take them to the location of a civil rights event in Mississippi.

As it turned out, I got a call to meet a film crew from Tampa at the Memphis airport and take them to Grenada, where there was to be an effort to integrate the First Baptist Church. I collected the crew, took them to Grenada and they set up across the street from the church to film the results of the integration attempt.

Before anybody else showed up, a police car arrived and arrested all of us for "taking pictures on Sunday." We were driven several blocks away, where the police officer parked his cruiser. The cameraman, Earl Wells, kept insisting the officer take us to jail so he could make a phone call.

Finally, after being held past the time of the event at the church, the officer proclaimed he understood we were just doing our jobs and he was going to release us. Wells insisted the officer didn't have the authority to "unarrest" us and demanded we be taken to jail.

When the officer called for backup, I feared we would be beaten with rubber hoses. Instead, when backup arrived, the arresting officer left us alone in the patrol car and departed. We decided he wasn't going to come back until we got out of his car and walked back to our rental car, so I guess the unarrest was successful.

I can laugh about it now, but it was an unsettling experience at the time.

BTW, we'd run into the AP's Jack Thornell from time to time in Mississippi. On one occasion, he was shooting a group of Grenada civil rights workers outside the Belle Flower Church. After he had taken several frames, one of the workers said, "You photographers always say, 'let me get just one more picture.'" Jack responded, "I didn't tell that to James Meredith when he was shot." Jack later won the Pulitzer for the photo of Meredith, of course.

From disguised sources to courageous patients: My 30 years on the health care beat

Lindy Washburn
NorthJersey.com

Many years ago, I walked into The Record's newsroom on River Street in Hackensack to try out for a job. I was young, two years into my journalism career and newly arrived from the Associated Press bureau in Honolulu.

I got the job.

A few years later, after covering municipal beats in Bergen and Passaic counties, I moved up to the health care beat, which had been vacated by a reporter who went on maternity leave and didn't come back.

It has been the perfect fit for me.

Now, after more than 30 years covering health care in New Jersey, I've taken a buyout. The time has come for me to say goodbye to daily journalism at NorthJersey.com and to the readers whose feedback and ideas have helped shape my reporting.

Read more [here](#). Shared by Paul Albright.

Connecting wishes Happy Birthday



[Regan Morris](#)

Connecting '80s/'90s/100 Club

(EDITOR'S NOTE: Connecting publishes this list at the beginning of each month. If you are qualified for one of the age groups and would like to be listed, drop me a note. Please let me know of any errors.)

100s:

Fred Hoffman

90s:

Norm Abelson

Henry Bradsher

Hal Buell

Joseph Carter

Albert Habhab

George Hanna

Hoyt Harwell

Gene Herrick

Gene LaHammer

Joe McGowan

Charlie Monzella

Bob Petsche

Arlon Southall

Sal Veder

Doris Webster

Joe Young

Arnold Zeitlin

80s:

Paul Albright
Rachel Ambrose
Peter Arnett
Harry Atkins
Frank Aukofer
Malcolm Barr
Myron Belkind
Ed Bell
Dan Berger
Adolphe Bernotas
Brian Bland
Lou Boccardi
Hal Bock
William Roy Bolch Jr.
Ben Brown
Charles Bruce
Ford Burkhart
Harry Cabluck
Sibby Christensen
Shirley Christian
Norm Clarke
Steve Crowley
Don Dashiell
Bob Daugherty
Don Deibler
Mike Doan
Bob Dobkin
Otto Doelling
Phil Dopoulos
Harry Dunphy
John Eagan

**Claude Erbsen
Mike Feinsilber
Dodi Fromson
Joe Galu
Bill Gillen
Steve Graham
Bob Greene
Paul Harrington
Chick Harrity
Merrill Hartson
Lee Jones
Doug Kienitz
Dean Lee
Pierce Lehmbeck
Warren Lerude
Carl Leubsdorf
Bruce Lowitt
David Liu
Jim Luther
John Marlow
Dave Mazarella
Chuck McFadden
Yvette Mercourt
Reid Miller
Peggy Mooney
Harry Moskos
Ray Newton
Greg Nokes
Rich Oppel
Jay Perkins
Lyle Price
Charles Richards
Bruce Richardson
Denis Searles
Richard Shafer
Mike Short
Rick Spratling**

Ed Staats
Karol Stonger
Marty Thompson
Hilmi Toros
Kernan Turner
Jeffrey Ulbrich
Jack Walker
Mike Waller
Bob Walsh
Dean Wariner
Don Waters
Lew Wheaton
Jeff Williams
Byron Yake
Johnny Yost
Kent Zimmerman

Stories of interest

Child welfare algorithm faces Justice Department scrutiny^(AP)

By SALLY HO and GARANCE BURKE

PITTSBURGH (AP) — The Justice Department has been scrutinizing a controversial artificial intelligence tool used by a Pittsburgh-area child protective services agency following concerns that the tool could lead to discrimination against families with disabilities, The Associated Press has learned.

The interest from federal civil rights attorneys comes after an AP investigation revealed potential bias and transparency issues surrounding the increasing use of algorithms within the troubled child welfare system in the U.S. While some see such opaque tools as a promising way to help overwhelmed social workers predict which children may face harm, others say their reliance on historical data risks automating past inequalities.

Several civil rights complaints were filed in the fall about the Allegheny Family Screening Tool, which is used to help social workers decide which families to investigate, AP has learned. The pioneering AI program is designed to assess a family's risk level when they are reported for child welfare concerns in Allegheny County.

Two sources said that attorneys in the Justice Department's Civil Rights Division cited the AP investigation when urging them to submit formal complaints detailing their concerns about how the algorithm could harden bias against people with disabilities, including families with mental health issues.

Read more [here](#). Shared by Peg Coughlin.

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Ralph Nader's Latest Targets: News Deserts (Local News Initiative)

By GREG BURNS

Ralph Nader is starting a newspaper. Yes, that Ralph Nader, the consumer advocate, former presidential candidate and scourge of corporate interests.

At age 88, Nader is still going strong and, beginning with his hometown in northwest Connecticut, he's determined to do something about the "news desert" crisis in local journalism.

The Winsted Citizen is launching its inaugural edition this week, and, in some ways, it is following a familiar playbook. It is forming a 501(c)3 non-profit, enabling it to collect tax-deductible donations in addition to subscription and advertising revenue. Nader expects each pillar of the business model to contribute about one-third of revenues once the paper gets going—a business plan not out of the ordinary among start-up local-news publications.

Also, like other media entrepreneurs, Nader is drawing on the pool of journalists who left traditional news outlets as job prospects fizzled. His well-connected editor and publisher, Andy Thibault, who served for decades as an editor at local publications in Connecticut, has lined up a roster of eager contributors for the Nader-backed venture. Together, Thibault and his colleagues have rallied support and laid plans for ambitious local stories befitting a highly experienced newsroom.

Read more [here](#). Shared by Mike Holmes.

-0-

Why Do We Still Need Humans, Anyway? | Opinion (Newsweek)

DAN PERRY

The past four decades or so have seen spectacular technological advances that have vastly disrupted industries, brought unimaginable convenience and efficiencies, and scrambled our brains in ways we may come to regret.

So tremendous are the changes that it is remarkable that the journey felt mostly incremental. Rare were the moments when it was clear something spectacular had

been unleashed. But we are certainly experiencing such a moment with the arrival of ChatGPT, the hyper-bot cooked up by an outfit called OpenAI.

There have been other seminal moments over the years of the digital revolution. One was the arrival of the personal computer, available in the 1970s in the form of the Commodore VIC-20 and TI-99.

Read more [here](#).

The Final Woof



Guess who Ollie is woofing for in this year's Super Bowl? In the interests of fair play, the Eagles fans among us are invited to submit their own thoughts.

Today in History - Feb. 1, 2023



Today is Wednesday, Feb. 1, the 32nd day of 2023. There are 333 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

In Feb. 1, 2003, the space shuttle Columbia broke up during re-entry, killing all seven of its crew members: commander Rick Husband; pilot William McCool; payload commander Michael Anderson; mission specialists Kalpana Chawla, David Brown and Laurel Clark; and payload specialist Ilan Ramon, the first Israeli in space.

On this date:

In 1790, the U.S. Supreme Court convened for the first time in New York. (However, since only three of the six justices were present, the court recessed until the next day.)

In 1862, "The Battle Hymn of the Republic," a poem by Julia Ward Howe, was published in the Atlantic Monthly.

In 1865, abolitionist John S. Rock became the first Black lawyer admitted to the bar of the U.S. Supreme Court.

In 1943, during World War II, one of America's most highly decorated military units, the 442nd Regimental Combat Team, made up almost exclusively of Japanese-Americans, was authorized.

In 1959, men in Switzerland rejected giving women the right to vote by a more than 2-1 referendum margin. (Swiss women gained the right to vote in 1971.)

In 1960, four Black college students began a sit-in protest at a Woolworth's lunch counter in Greensboro, North Carolina, where they'd been refused service.

In 1979, Iranian religious leader Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini (hoh-MAY'-nee) received a tumultuous welcome in Tehran as he ended nearly 15 years of exile.

In 1991, 34 people were killed when an arriving USAir jetliner crashed atop a commuter plane on a runway at Los Angeles International Airport.

In 1994, Jeff Gillooly, Tonya Harding's ex-husband, pleaded guilty in Portland, Oregon, to racketeering for his part in the attack on figure skater Nancy Kerrigan in exchange for a 24-month sentence (he ended up serving six months) and a \$100,000 fine.

In 2011, Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak announced he would not run for a new term in September elections but rejected protesters' demands he step down immediately and leave the country, after a dramatic day in which a quarter-million Egyptians staged their biggest protest to date calling on him to go.

In 2016, the World Health Organization declared a global emergency over the explosive spread of the Zika virus, which was linked to birth defects in the Americas, calling it an "extraordinary event" that posed a public health threat to other parts of the world.

In 2020, as China's death toll from the new coronavirus rose to 259, Beijing criticized Washington's order barring entry to most foreigners who had visited China in the past two weeks. A World Health Organization official said governments needed to prepare for "domestic outbreak control."

Ten years ago: Hillary Rodham Clinton formally resigned as America's 67th secretary of state, capping a four-year tenure that saw her shatter records for the number of countries visited. The Dow Jones industrial average closed at 14,009.79, above the 14,000 mark for the first time in more than five years. Former New York City Mayor Ed Koch died at age 88.

Five years ago: Republican State Rep. Don Shooter was expelled from the Arizona House because of a lengthy pattern of sexual misconduct, making him the first state lawmaker in the U.S. to be booted out since the #MeToo movement emerged. Sheriff's officials in Los Angeles said new witnesses had emerged in the 1981 drowning death of actress Natalie Wood, prompting investigators to name her former husband, Robert Wagner, a "person of interest" in what they considered a "suspicious death." (Detectives later said the evidence hadn't reached the threshold for a murder investigation and that they had no plans to file criminal charges.)

One year ago: Russian President Vladimir Putin accused the U.S. and its allies of ignoring Russia's top security demands but signaled he was willing to engage in more diplomacy to ease tensions in Ukraine. (Russia would invade Ukraine on Feb. 24.) Quarterback Tom Brady announced his retirement from the NFL after winning seven Super Bowls and an unprecedented 22-year career. (Six weeks later he would reverse course and announce he would return for a 23rd season). ABC News announced that Whoopi Goldberg would be suspended for two weeks as co-host of "The View" over remarks a day earlier about Jews and the Holocaust that the network called "wrong and hurtful."

Today's birthdays: Today's birthdays: Actor Garrett Morris is 86. Bluegrass singer Del McCoury is 84. TV personality-singer Joy Philbin is 82. Political commentator Fred Barnes is 80. Rock musician Mike Campbell (Tom Petty & the Heartbreakers) is 73. Blues singer-musician Sonny Landreth is 72. Actor-writer-producer Bill Mummy (MOO'-mee) is 69. Rock singer Exene Cervenka is 67. Actor Linus Roache is 59. Princess Stephanie of Monaco is 58. Actor Sherilyn Fenn is 58. Comedian-actor Pauly Shore is 55. Actor Brian Krause is 54. Jazz musician Joshua Redman is 54. Rock musician Patrick

Wilson (Weezer) is 54. Actor Michael C. Hall is 52. Rock musician Ron Welty is 52. Rapper Big Boi (Outkast) is 48. Roots rocker Jason Isbell is 44. Country singer Julie Roberts is 44. Rock singer-musician Andrew VanWyngarden is 40 TV personality Lauren Conrad is 37. Actor-singer Heather Morris is 36. Actor and mixed martial artist Ronda Rousey is 36. Rock singer Harry Styles (One Direction) is 29.

Got a story or photos to share?

Connecting is a daily newsletter published Monday through Friday that focuses on retired and former Associated Press employees, present-day employees, and news industry and journalism school colleagues. It began in 2013 and past issues can be found by clicking Connecting Archive in the masthead. Its author, Paul Stevens, retired from the AP in 2009 after a 36-year career as a newsman in Albany and St. Louis, correspondent in Wichita, chief of bureau in Albuquerque, Indianapolis and Kansas City, and Midwest vice president based in Kansas City.



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:

- **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.
- **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.

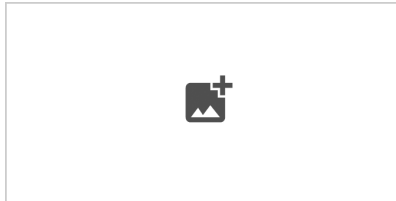
- **First job** - How did you get your first job in journalism?

- **Most unusual** place a story assignment took you.

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