



March 8, 2018

**Statement by Harry Harris, East Bay Times crime reporter**

I have been a journalist for more than 52 years.

Luckily, I have been able to work at the same publication for the entire time, starting in 1965 when we were known as the Oakland Tribune.

I have been fortunate to have won several awards, including being a leader on our team that won the 2017 Pulitzer Prize for breaking-news coverage. I also won the Northern California Society of Professional Journalists 1996 Unsung Hero award, which is given to a journalist nominated by his or her colleagues for behind the scenes contributions.

I believe this background makes me more than qualified to express what a newspaper, and now of course its other platforms, means not only to the communities it serves but to its employees.

Times may have changed, but a newspaper and its platforms are what its readers rely on to let them know what is happening in their communities, from government to crime and education, to the environment and transportation, to finance and technology and even things such as movie reviews and prep sports.

They expect their newspaper to keep government in check, and to keep them up to date on news and trends both good and bad.

They read to see if someone they know has been mentioned in a story or how an event in another part of the world might affect them. They do it to simply keep informed.

And some even read it because a newspaper is how they learned to read, and they consider it an old friend.

Those who work for a newspaper certainly do not do it for the money or the fame.

They do it because they are conscientious, concerned and care about their readers and the community.

Some might even say they love their profession and what it represents.

We know our job is to inform in an objective way, to right possible wrongs, to present different views and to let people know they have a voice that cannot be silenced by anyone.

Newspaper stories have helped solve crimes, brought relief to people impacted by disasters, changed unhealthy and even deadly conditions and provided them with information they can use to make their decisions on elections, both local and national.

We have captured the joy on people's faces when something good has happened in their lives, and also the devastation a tragedy can bring them.

In the newsrooms of which I've been a part, where I have seen colleagues die and others give birth, there has always been professionalism, camaraderie, respect for what we do and acknowledgement to not abuse our positions.

These are just some of the reasons I hope our local papers can be purchased by someone who believes there is far more to running a newspaper than the profit margin. Someone who understands much can be gained by adding employees and not reducing their numbers so that more news and not less can be covered.

To have an owner who really cares about journalism and what a newspaper means to a community can bring them, in my opinion, rewards just as meaningful, if not more so, as profits.

I hope such an owner is out there.

*Harry Harris is a member of Pacific Media Workers Guild, TNG-CWA Local 39521.*