

2007: John S. Carroll, *Los Angeles Times*

Widely regarded as one of the most able and influential newspaper editors of his generation, John S. Carroll, turned a series of good newspapers into much better ones. This record, in itself, merits the Moses Berkman `20 Memorial Journalism Award. However, rather than from simply resting on the laurels earned in the course of a long and celebrated career, Mr. Carroll, achieved new eminence in 2005 for his principled resignation as editor of the *Los Angeles Times*.

There, Mr. Carroll, after building the newspaper to the highest point in its history, resigned rather than proceeding with what seemed likely to be an endless series of incremental cutbacks and job reductions. Since that moment, he has taken up the challenge of exploring, in a characteristically temperate manner, the momentous economic and technological challenges now faced by American journalism, as well as assessing the grave anxiety many feel about the future of the news business. Through his actions, and now his writings, Mr. Carroll has emerged as the nation's leading champion of high journalistic standards, the uncompromised quest for journalistic excellence, and undiminished commitment to the ethos of public service that has characterized the best American newspapers.

The son of a North Carolina editor and publisher, he grew up among journalists who were deeply engaged by their work and passionately committed to serving the best interests of their readers. Educated at Haverford College, he broke into newspaper reporting in 1963 at the *Providence Journal-Bulletin*, where in a classic apprenticeship he covered rural and suburban towns. After service in the Army, he took a job at the *Baltimore Sun* in 1966, where he later described his job as "turning over rocks" to see what might be there. This project extended from general assignment beats to writing obituaries, to service as a foreign correspondent in Vietnam and the Middle East, and, finally, in the Nixon Years, to service as the Sun's White House correspondent.

Mr. Carroll's career changed direction in 1973, when he took an editing position on the city desk of the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, in those days the hotbed of American investigative reporting. As city editor and metropolitan editor, he directed coverage that won Pulitzer Prizes on police abuses and other matters. In 1979, he moved to become editor of the Lexington Herald-Leader, which developed under his leadership into an outstanding and influential metropolitan daily. The paper won a Pulitzer in 1986 for its coverage of corruption in the University of Kentucky sacrosanct men's basketball program, and was finalist for a Pulitzer in four additional years.

In 1991, he moved to become editor of his old newspaper, the *Baltimore Sun*, where more Pulitzers followed. Finally, he served as editor of the *Los Angeles Times*, from 2000 to 2005, supervising the reclamation of that newspaper's reputation and winning an unprecedented 13 Pulitzer Prizes in five years.

Along the way, he earned many honors, including a Nieman Fellowship, the American Society of Newspaper Editor's Leadership Award, the National Press Foundation's Editor of the Year Award, election to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, the Burton Benjamin Memorial Award from the Committee to Protect Journalists for lifetime achievement in defense of press freedom.

Mr. Carroll now serves as Knight Visiting Lecturer at the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard, where he has devoted searching attention to the question of whether American newspaper journalism can preserve the improvements achieved in recent decades in the face of harrowing economic challenges. He seeks, he says, to explain to the public why journalism is essential to a self-governing nation—and to find owners who recognize the valuable role newspapers play in their communities.