On Campus

Pulitzer’s Other Prize

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As the University wraps up its 250th anniversary, the Graduate School of Journalism is kicking off its own retrospective. In 1904, Joseph Pulitzer published “The College of Journalism” in the *North American Review*, outlining his vision for a journalism school. Dean Nicholas Lemann unearthed the treatise at a centennial lecture in September attended by Pulitzer’s grandson, Michael Pulitzer, and James Boylan, founding editor of the Columbia Journalism Review and author of *Pulitzer’s School: Columbia University’s School of Journalism, 1903–2003.*

“It is powerful in a way that educational manifestoes usually are not,” Lemann said of Pulitzer’s essay, which defended a vocation that was considered unworthy of academic study. “The journalist has a position all his own,” Pulitzer wrote. “He alone has the privilege of moulding the opinion, touching the hearts and appealing to the reason of hundreds of thousands every day.” The journalism school’s newly instituted master of arts, a second year of study in a specific area, mirrors Pulitzer’s concept of training journalists in a particular subject. “Why not divert, deflect, extract, concentrate, *specialize them for the journalist as a specialist?*” Pulitzer asked in the essay.

He appealed to the necessity of journalists educated not only in the craft and an area of expertise, but above all, in ethics. “An able, disinterested, public-spirited press, with trained intelligence to know the right and the courage to do it, can preserve that public virtue . . . . A cynical, mercenary, demagogic press will produce in time a people as base as itself,” he wrote.

“Pulitzer’s educational ideas are so good that they can serve as a guide to educators of journalists a hundred years later,” said Lemann.



Guide to school abbreviations