

Press is 'dull, dull, dull'

Globe editor raps writers

By Debbie Howlett
Of the Emerald

A smooth, blue, pinstriped suit states Thomas Winship's conservative philosophy. A red tie, offering some flash to the subdued clothing, underscores the modernization the Boston Globe editor says he is bringing to basic journalism.

Winship was the speaker for the 62nd Oregon Newspaper Publisher's Association Conference's Eric Allen Memorial Lecture. A luncheon was held in the EMU Ballroom Friday.

Winship took charge of the Globe in 1965, and since then the paper has won eight Pulitzers — three in one year. Everett Dennis, dean of the University's journalism school, proclaimed Winship as the man who took the Globe from a "mediocre paper to a great American newspaper."

Introduced as a "writer's editor," Winship said that the American press is "dull, dull, dull."

Winship told the audience of about 250 that newspapers need better writing from reporters. "Only good, concise, easy-to-read newspapers will survive the cable TV electronics invasion."

Relating a tale from another journalism conference, Winship said that his colleagues complained of "poor lineage and sagging circulations because of electronic media gremlins."



Thomas Winship

Winship told of another editor's answer to those complaints. "Gents," quoted Winship, "why don't we do what we're best equipped to do — improve writing?"

During his speech, Winship said that journalism schools are paying "prime attention to good writing — to turning out brighter and brighter, more and more eager journalists."

After the speech, Winship pointed to schools like the University as examples of journalism schools focusing on writing skills.

"There's more to journalism schools than just Columbia," he said. "Oregon is one of the great ones, one of the trail blazers." Journalism schools

'Only good, concise papers will survive the cable TV invasion.'

are turning out reporters that "come to us way ahead," he said.

The key to developing good writing is atmosphere, Winship said. "We need informal, irreverent, comradery in the newsroom. We've even had romances and marriages."

"Once, Sally Grimm called me the skipper of the love boat."

Winship said it all comes down to what he calls the "care and feeding" of reporters. One of the caretakers at the Boston Globe is an English teacher Winship hired.

"Every metro paper should have a full-time teacher of writing — even law firms have them," he said.

"While our electronic brethren gallop headlong into the future, journalism should go backwards to good writing, good design, and the basics."

"Our biggest challenge," Winship said after his speech, "is to be useful and relevant in houses full of electronic gadgetry."

School hosts news conference

The University met the press this weekend, during the 62nd conference of the Oregon Newspaper Publishers Association, sponsored by the University Journalism School.

Highlighting the weekend of lectures and workshops was Thomas Winship, the editor of the Boston Globe, who gave the "Eric Allen Memorial Lecture."

Workshops on design, circulation, creativity in packaging and daily/nondaily roundtable discussions made up the bulk of the conference.

Two noted papers were discussed in the "graphics workshop." Joann Byrd, executive editor of the Everett (Wash.) Herald and Martin Weinberger, publisher and owner of the Claremont (Calif.) Courier, gave a slide presentation of their papers.

At the Friday night banquet, Everett Dennis, dean of the University's journalism school, spoke to the publishers and editors about journalism education and the press in hard times.

Dennis chronicled his travels through journalism school and his career, pointing out that in his senior year at the University, as editor of the Emerald, he was sued for libel.

"It's a great adventure to come back to the University," Dennis said. "The state of journalism education is that of underfunding, overenrollment and growing consumerism."

But, said Dennis, "We haven't lost that fighting spirit."

Dennis spoke of a need for the University to serve the middle management professional to both the professional's and the student's advantage.

"We need to take a new look at ourselves," said Dennis. "Journalism education has become somewhat ossified."

The conference, which ran through mid-day Saturday, gathered professionals from California, Oregon and Washington, as well as a smattering of professionals from around the country.

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