The 9th Annual Edward R. Murrow Forum on Issues in Journalism

From TV to Tablet: Is the Digital Frontier Making Journalism Better?

Tufts University April 16, 2014
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Anthony P. Monaco, President, Tufts University

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Julie Dobrow, Director, Communications and Media Studies Program

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Arianna Huffington, Chair, President, and Editor-in-Chief, Huffington Post Media Group
Jonathan Tisch, A76, Co-CEO, Loews Corporation

Questions and Answers

The Edward R. Murrow Forum on Issues in Journalism

The Edward R. Murrow Forum on Issues in Journalism is an annual event held at Tufts University. Dedicated to illuminating aspects of the many contributions Murrow made to journalism and public diplomacy, the Forum brings together interdisciplinary panels and speakers to reflect on Murrow’s legacy and relate it to contemporary issues in journalism.

The Forum debuted in 2006 with former Nightline host Ted Koppel serving as the keynote speaker and moderator examining the contemporary state of the news business. In 2007 former CBS News anchor Dan Rather led a panel discussing the coverage of war and conflicts. In 2008 former NBC Nightly News anchor Tom Brokaw and panelists explored the current state of political coverage. The 2009 panel was headlined by MSNBC’s Hardball host Chris Matthews, along with Governor Michael S. Dukakis, former Democratic presidential candidate, and Janet Wu, WCVB TV’s political reporter, discussing the press’ role in encouraging or discouraging people from seeking public office. In 2010 the Forum focused on Murrow’s historic public investigation of Senator Joseph McCarthy’s blacklisting. Panelists Casey Murrow, author Lynne Olson, and screenwriter/MA ACLU vice president Arnie Reisman examined Murrow’s legacy in light of possible post-9/11 blacklistings.

Starting in 2011, we introduced a new format. Jonathan Tisch, A 76, has served as interviewer for a series of lively and provocative conversations with some of our leading journalistic figures. Katie Couric, then anchor of the CBS Evening News and correspondent for 60 Minutes, headlined the 2011 discussion of television news in the era of webcasting. The 2012 Forum featured NBC Nightly News anchor and managing editor, Brian Williams, discussing “Covering Campaign 2012: New Tactics, New Opportunities, New Challenges.” In 2013 we welcomed Christiane Amanpour, CNN’s chief international correspondent and ABC’s global affairs anchor for a discussion on “The Evolving Role of the Foreign Correspondent.”

Edward R. Murrow

During a career that began as radio news took hold in the 1930s and soared with the early years of television news in the 1950s, Edward R. Murrow’s name became synonymous with broadcast news.

His signature live radio opener during the London Blitz – “This is London” – still resonates. As director of CBS’ European operations, Murrow hired a team of reporters who became known as “Murrow’s boys.” They joined him in presenting vivid commentaries that made events in Europe come alive in American living rooms. To many, Murrow’s broadcasts as bombs dropped over London, his sparse but eloquent reporting of the liberation of Buchenwald and other work, personified the international correspondent and defined coverage of international issues for generations to come.

With the advent of television, Murrow teamed up with Fred W. Friendly in an attempt to translate his popular radio program, Hear It Now to the new medium. See It Now broadcasts, from Suez and Poland and apartheid in South Africa and civil rights in the U.S. south, won widespread acclaim. Murrow’s spotlight on Senator Joseph McCarthy earned him a Peabody Award and an Emmy, among other honors. At CBS, Murrow also produced Person to Person, Small World, and CBS Reports.

Always ready to push the definition of “news” to new forms of media, in 1960 Murrow moved into documentary filmmaking, as well. Murrow and Friendly produced Harvest of Shame, a documentary that aired on Thanksgiving Day shocked the nation with its depiction of the plight of migrant farm workers, leading to a call for legislation to protect workers. For years, this work defined the television documentary form.

By 1961, Murrow’s long association with CBS ended and he took a job as the head of the U.S. Information Agency, which he left due to illness in 1964. Murrow died the following year.

“A reporter is always concerned with tomorrow,” Murrow once said. “There’s nothing tangible of yesterday. All I can say I’ve done is agitate the air ten or 15 minutes and then boom - it’s gone.”

Far from gone Murrow’s legacy still sets a high standard for American journalism.
Arianna Huffington

Arianna Huffington is the chair, president, and editor-in-chief of the Huffington Post Media Group. She is a nationally syndicated columnist and the author of thirteen books.

In May 2005, she launched The Huffington Post, a news and blog site that quickly became one of the most widely-read, linked to, and frequently-cited media brands on the Internet. In 2012, the site won a Pulitzer Prize for national reporting.

In 2013, she was named to the Forbes Most Powerful Women list. In 2006, and again in 2011, she was named to the Time 100, Time magazine's list of the world’s 100 most influential people.

She serves on several boards, including EL PAÍS, PRISA, the Center for Public Integrity, and the Committee to Protect Journalists.


Originally from Greece, Huffington moved to England when she was 16 and graduated from Cambridge University with an M.A. in economics. At 21, she became president of the famed debating society, the Cambridge Union.

Huffington has received honorary degrees from both Smith College and Brown University.

Jonathan M. Tisch, A76

Jonathan M. Tisch is co-chairman of the board and a member of the Office of the President of Loews Corporation, one of the largest diversified financial holding companies in the U.S., and is also chairman and chief executive officer of Loews Hotels & Resorts.

During his tenure as CEO beginning in 1989, Tisch engineered Loews Hotels’ expansion and emergence as a leading luxury hotel brand by infusing the properties with a widely-praised corporate culture that places a high value on partnerships that empower employees, satisfy customers, contribute to communities, and improve the bottom line. Tisch initiated the Loews Hotels Good Neighbor Policy over 20 years ago, the first of its kind in the hospitality industry. The Loews Good Neighbor Policy is a recipient of the U.S. President’s Service Award.

Tisch is the author of three best-selling books that explore his leadership philosophy, the role of the customer experience, and civic engagement: The Power of We: Succeeding Through Partnerships; Chocolates on the Pillow Aren’t Enough: Reinventing the Customer Experience; and Citizen You: Doing Your Part to Change the World.

He is also the host of the Emmy-nominated television series Beyond the Boardroom with Jonathan Tisch, where he speaks with some of America’s preeminent CEOs and business luminaries in one-on-one interviews.

In recognition for his leadership and civic involvement, Crain’s New York Business named Tisch one of the “Top Ten Most Influential Business Leaders,” and he was named “CEO of the Year” by the Executive Council of New York in 2006.

Tisch served as the vice-chairman of the Welfare to Work Partnership, and currently serves on the Board of Trustees for Tufts University, where he is also the naming benefactor of the Jonathan M. Tisch College of Citizenship and Public Service. He is also on the board of the Tribeca Film Institute. Tisch is a co-owner and a member of the board of directors of the New York Giants and serves as the team’s treasurer. Tisch was instrumental in bringing Super Bowl XLVIII to the New York metropolitan area and was a co-chair of the 2014 NY/NJ Super Bowl Host Committee.

Tisch received his undergraduate degree from Tufts University.
Tufts University’s Communications and Media Studies Program is dedicated to fostering media literacy through liberal arts. Through the program’s courses, internships, on-campus and alumni events, students develop the critical scholarship, ethical contexts, and technical understanding they need to become responsible users and producers of media. The CMS program offers an interdisciplinary approach that focuses on the role of media in the U.S. and internationally, stressing a liberal arts analysis of the impact of mass communication on individuals, institutions, and cultures. The CMS program is extraordinarily popular among students, offering minors in mass communications and media studies, film studies, film practice, or multimedia arts. Many other students participate in the media and public service program, the environmental communication program, and internship programs. This year the program also launched a new, five-year BA/MS program in health communication with the Tufts Medical School. For more information, visit ase.tufts.edu/cms.

The Edward R. Murrow Center for Public Diplomacy, Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University

Inaugurated by Vice President Hubert H. Humphrey, the Murrow Center was established in 1965 as a memorial to the man whose distinguished radio and television reporting and analysis of world news for CBS News, and imaginative leadership of the U.S. Information Agency, set a standard of excellence in the field. The Murrow Center was conceived both to house Edward R. Murrow’s professional papers (The Murrow Collection) and to promote academic work, fresh research, and dialogue relating to the field of public diplomacy.

The current focus of the Center involves expanding the early U.S.-centric definition of the field to one that engages all major governments, and is directly impacted by such major non-government players as the media, multinational corporations, and nongovernmental organizations. The Center is also exploring the inter-related political, economic, and environmental dimensions of the resource rich circumpolar Arctic, and the public diplomacy implications for the eight-country Arctic Council as the region attracts growing global attention. In this context, the Center is engineering an ongoing international inquiry, “Warming Arctic: Voyage of Re-discovery,” combining public policy, public awareness, and fresh research. It hosted a lively international conference, "Panning for Wealth in the Warming Arctic," headlined by then Sen. John Kerry at Fletcher in March 2012, followed by "Deadly Dance: Arctic Warming and Global Climate Change" in March 2013. For more information, visit fletcher.tufts.edu/murrow.

The Jonathan M. Tisch College of Citizenship and Public Service

The Jonathan M. Tisch College of Citizenship and Public Service is a national leader at the forefront of civic renewal. Driving the University’s commitment to produce active, ethical, and effective citizens, Tisch College is a catalyst across Tufts schools – preparing students to have a positive, lasting impact on the world around them and engaging faculty in powerful public impact research. This model and Tisch College’s leading research on civic education are setting the standard for the role of higher education in improving societies by engaging their citizens around them and engaging faculty in powerful public impact research. Visit activecitizen.tufts.edu for more information.

The Digital Collections and Archives at Tufts University holds the world’s largest collection of Edward R. Murrow material: "The Edward R. Murrow papers" and the recently donated "Janet Brewster Murrow and Edward R. Murrow family papers."

"The Edward R. Murrow papers" contain Murrow’s work-related records. Dating largely from 1934 to 1965, the collection’s 55 linear feet of documents include correspondence, a few personal materials, work and activities-related files, and over 320 photographs. The papers also include about 1700 books and memorabilia, as well as audiovisual material. The papers enable patrons to research Murrow's career at the International Institute of Education, at CBS, and at USIA, and to trace major developments in the history of broadcasting at CBS and in the U.S.

The "Janet Brewster Murrow and Edward R. Murrow family papers" include scrapbooks, photographic material, and audio recordings created by the women in the family. The bulk of the material dates from 1924 to 1970. Janet Brewster Murrow took all the photographs, slides and negatives (with the possible exception of a few of the images from her teenage years) and they thus reflect what she considered important, memorable, beautiful or interesting about her family and their work over the decades. Most images were taken with a 35 mm camera; some with a larger format Rolleiflex camera. Jennie Brewster (Janet’s mother) created the scrapbooks using newspaper articles, letters, some drawings and photographs. The scrapbooks, partially intended to serve as memory books for Casey, her grandson, represent Jennie Brewster’s views of what she considered significant and memorable for her daughter’s family.

The scrapbooks are particularly noteworthy for including many local and regional newspaper clippings about Edward R. Murrow dating from the 1930s to 1950s - unknown to many Murrow scholars.

Photos of Edward R. Murrow courtesy of the Digital Collections and Archives at Tufts University