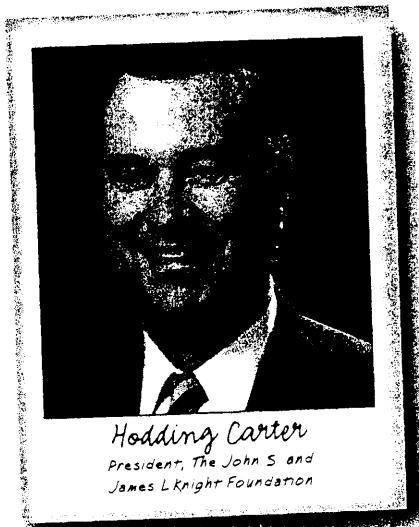


Four journalists (obviously biased) talk about trust and news councils.



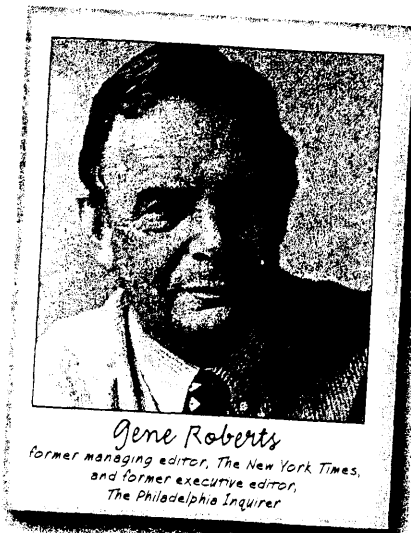
"In a time when public disenchantment with the news media grows stronger by the day, news councils offer a way out.

"The authors of the Bill of Rights believed freedom of the press was necessary to help guarantee the preservation of a free society. In effect, they declared the press a public trust.

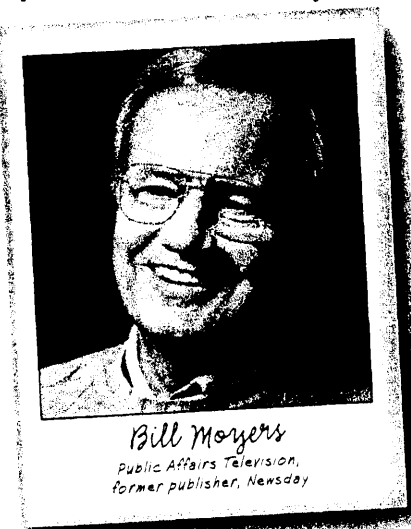
"But let the public decide that the press itself is not worthy of trust—that it is part of the problem rather than part of the solution—then freedom of the press will inevitably be curtailed.."

"News councils provide a non-judicial forum; they let the people know that the press does not suffer from delusions of infallibility; and they reaffirm the primacy of the First Amendment, but reestablish the imperative need for public trust.

"What has worked so well in Minnesota for 30 years can and should be applied to other states and regions. Freedom of the press is too vital to America's democratic health to allow it to be eroded by unthinking insistence on unaccountability on the one hand or punitive, legal restraints on the other."

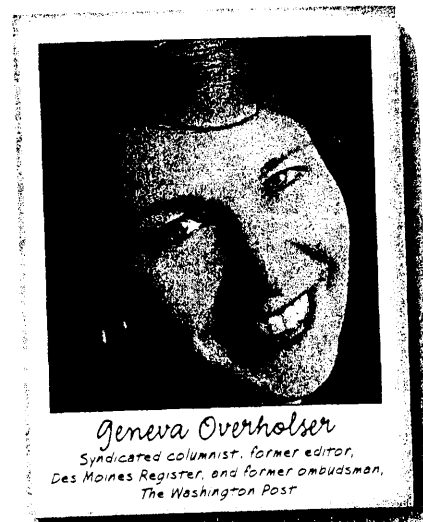


"The experience of the Minnesota News Council argues forcefully for further experimentation in other states as a way of increasing media openness and credibility."



"Journalism should welcome the spread of news councils for their help in maintaining our credibility. Against the power of the press, what other recourse will citizens have except our willingness to be open and accountable?"

"The Minnesota News Council has shown that hearing the grievance of a citizen confirms journalism as the friend of democracy."



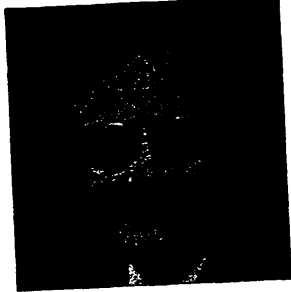
"We haven't yet found exactly the right means of responding to this challenge. But I think it is necessarily a complex mix: ombudsmen, explaining ourselves better in our own pages; strengthened corrections policies; vigorous media criticism; letting the public into our processes, and – very important – some network of news councils, local regional or state.

"We can't afford to resist experimenting with any means of thoughtful and noncoercive questioning and examination of what we do..."

A news council can be an extremely useful tool: it is not a threat. If you are interested in starting one in your area, consult the Minnesota News Council's web site at www.mtn.org/newscouncil. You'll find valuable guidance for your exploration. Or call the Council at 612-341-9357.

This ad was paid for by
The Ethics & Excellence in Journalism Foundation

News councils *help* the press? Minnesota news people say "YES!"



John French
Minneapolis Attorney,
represented the Star Tribune

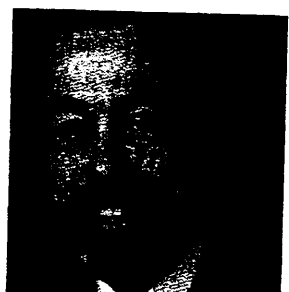
I've seen the Minnesota News Council in action and I've been favorably impressed. The News Council provides an alternative to lawsuits that would be expensive, time-consuming and detrimental to the best interests of both parties.

It provides an important forum for the consideration of grievances that do not rise to the level of legal wrongs, but are nonetheless real and important to those who feel aggrieved.

The News Council process serves the media by reminding them that, while the press is free from government control, their continuing success depends on remaining accountable to the people they serve.

Whether a complaint is upheld or denied, the public usually feels there was a significant gain in being heard. And the media often learn something valuable by listening to the deliberations.

But perhaps as important as any decision of the News Council is the fact that a news organization participates in the hearing process and openly discusses media ethics. I believe it increases the press's credibility.



Terry McCollough
Publisher, Brainerd Daily
Dispatch and former
News Council Member

I'm one of the few people who has seen the News Council from both sides. I served as a media member in the 1980s and have appeared before the News Council twice in response to complaints.

The existence of this forum — and our willingness as journalists to support it — sends a positive message to a public that is increasingly disenchanted with us: "We are worthy of your trust, and we are accountable."

The concept of a news council should spread across the country. It could be the best ally we have in preserving a free press.



Walker Lundy
Editor/Sr. Vice President,
St. Paul Pioneer Press

In 10 years, I have appeared before the News Council only once. It felt quite uncomfortable having those 20-some citizens — half of them journalists — asking why we did what we did. But the hearing was fair, both sides were heard, and the Council voted in our favor. Afterwards, the complaining citizens and I shook hands. I think they left feeling better because they were heard in public. I left with a vivid reminder of both our power and our responsibility.

I have come to be a big supporter of the News Council. On page 2A, every day, we invite readers to contact the News Council if they don't get justice from us. How can we not be a part of something that can serve as a public antidote to media arrogance? These days, journalists can use all the help we can get.

A news council can be an extremely useful tool. To learn more, consult the Minnesota News Council's web site at www.mtn.org/newscouncil, or call the Council at 612-341-9357.



Don Smith
Publisher, Monticello Times
and former
News Council Member

This ad was paid for by
**The Ethics & Excellence in
Journalism Foundation**