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# PULITZER CENTER 15TH ANNIVERSARY

15th Anniversary Celebration  
Harold Pratt House  
New York City  
December 9, 2021

## Dinner Remarks

**Jon Sawyer**

Executive Director, Pulitzer Center on Crisis Reporting

Good evening! I'm thrilled to be with you all, *in person*, and to celebrate together another milestone in the Pulitzer Center community that we've all been building together. It's wonderful to have in one room so many of the people so crucial to the work we do—our journalist grantees, our news-media and educator partners, my colleagues on the Pulitzer Center staff and board, and representatives of the individual and institutional donors that have sustained our work. Welcome all!

Many of you were in this room in 2016, as we celebrated our first ten years. We had a lot to celebrate then but what strikes me most tonight is the transformative growth we've experienced in the five years since.

In 2016 we were a staff of 16, all of us based in Washington, supporting just over 100 projects and almost all of those projects focused on reporting overseas.

Today we are supporting twice that number of reporting projects, many focused on critically important issues here at home, with a staff of nearly 50 that now includes colleagues based in Houston, New York, Philadelphia, Boston, Chicago, New Haven, San Francisco, and Miami—and also Sao Paulo, Lisbon, Kinshasa, Kuala Lumpur, Bangkok, and Jakarta.

We have built a far bigger presence in the United States, in partnership with regional news outlets and also schools and universities, and at the same time have seen an ambitious

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expansion of our work overseas and the creation of cross-border collaborative reporting networks and an emphasis on elevating the voices of journalists who live in the communities on which we report.

More on all this later, and the chance to hear from Dean Baquet and Nadja Drost about some of our most consequential collaborations, but for now my thanks to all of you for coming—and for the privilege of working with so many talented people dedicated to getting our country and the world out of the ruts we’re in.

Those ruts are pretty deep, as you know, and getting us back on a more sustainable, productive path is likely to be the work of many hands and many years. In setting about that task I can’t imagine better company, or more inspirational, than the people in this room. With that I’ll get out of the way of the excellent conversations that I’m sure you’re all about to have—and thank you again for being with us tonight.

## Jon Sawyer

I have the welcome task now of introducing two speakers who in this room require very little in the way of introduction: Dean Baquet and Nadja Drost.

Dean Baquet has been executive editor at *The New York Times* since 2014 and before that managing editor, since 2011, leading the newspaper through a tumultuous era of war, poisonous politics, racial reckoning—and explosive growth in the reach, resources and ambitions of the newspaper itself.

In terms of the Pulitzer Center I think of him as the man who says yes, quickly approving collaborations as unusual and bold as our co-support for two years of Carol Rosenberg’s reporting from the Guantanamo prison, the *Times* participation in our Rainforest Investigations Network, and one crazily big idea after another from Jake Silverstein and the *New York Times Magazine*.

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Of the 74 reporting projects we've done with *The Times* 69 came during Dean's watch, supporting the work of more than 50 journalists—among them Sarah Topol, Steve Sapienza, Tina Rosenberg, and Scott Anderson, who are with us tonight.

After Dean speaks we'll hear from Nadja Drost, who in my view is representing multiple constituencies here:

First, the Columbia School of Journalism: It's the school where Nadja got her degree, the school where we partner on reporting fellowships both for video documentary students and new graduates, and the school that accounts for more Pulitzer grantees than any other. We're pleased to have such a great Morningside Heights contingent with us here tonight.

Our Columbia connection was forged in part by our board member Linda Winslow, a J School grad herself who is also largely responsible for a relationship as consequential to the Pulitzer Center as that with *The New York Times*. Linda was for many years *NewsHour's* executive producer and under her leadership and that of her successor Sara Just we have done one extraordinary collaboration after another—more than 250 stories over the past 15 years, including work around the globe with Fred de Sam Lazaro, Marcia Biggs, Hari Sreenivasan, and Jane Ferguson, all of whom are here tonight.

Nadja and her partner Bruno Federico are part of that special *NewsHour* community too, of course, and tonight she'll share their reporting on migrants making the treacherous passage through the Darién Gap. Their work on that project was honored this year with both an Emmy and a Peabody, the most prestigious awards for broadcast journalism; Nadja's story on the same subject for *California Sunday Magazine* won the Pulitzer Prize for feature reporting.

To us the most important constituency Nadja represents is neither Columbia nor the *NewsHour* but Pulitzer Center *grantee*. She has received eight Pulitzer grants stretching back to 2011, when she applied for—and got—a grant to support her work in Colombia on Indigenous resistance to illegal mining. That investment, like every one since, was repaid a hundredfold by the quality of her work.

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So please join me in welcoming Dean Baquet, first, and then Nadja Drost.

## **Dean Baquet**

Executive Editor, *New York Times*

I promised Jon I would keep this to four or five minutes. Jake [Silverstein], when he did this, went 20 minutes. [laughter]

I too represent many constituents:

Jake [Silverstein], who is one of the most wildly creative editors I've ever worked with, and

Sam Dolnick, who is a senior editor at the Times and a member of the [Pulitzer] board.

It's really an honor to talk about the work of the Pulitzer Center on this anniversary—not only because it has been such an important partner for *The Times* and other news organizations; not only because its leaders are such generous colleagues and it's easy to say yes to them.

The Center represents something increasingly rare in the world of journalism today. Its focus is on reporting: pure, ambitious, big reporting. The biggest. The heaviest subjects. The ones that so few news organizations have the resources or the courage to take on.

The Middle East. Climate change.

It is a commodity that I worry is in short supply, as newsrooms shrink and as more and more journalists are drawn to quick hits, takes, and stories that seem designed to reassure rather than challenge their readers.

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There is much talk these days about some of the issues that are roiling the profession we care about: the loss of local news, the important debate over how journalists should position themselves in a world in which trust in us is eroding.

But there's not enough talk, in my mind, about the beauty of open-minded and empathetic reporting, reporting and digging with limitless goals. Reporting matters. It is the most important thing we do.

Nathaniel Rich's piece, "Losing Earth," perhaps the biggest exploration of the world's failure to deal with the crisis of climate change. Eighteen months, more than 100 interviews.

"Fractured Lands," an epic examination of the turmoil in the Middle East. That project, and "Losing Earth," are among the deepest journalistic enterprises that *The Times*, or any other organization for that matter, has ever published.

People talk about *The 1619 Project* as though it was merely a feat of analysis and opinion. In fact it was a tremendous example of deep reporting into history and current American life.

And it would have ended as simply a piece of fine journalism had the Center not stepped in, created a lesson plan, and made it available to thousands of teachers across the country.

Jon, you and your team gave that project an ongoing life.

As someone who grew up in the South, that doesn't want to talk about this subject, I can say that your work here will change people deeply over time. We can't thank you enough.

I could go on, but I would use up my short time hear reading lists.

In some ways, by the way, Carol Rosenberg is my favorite. Without her, and the Center, the secrets of Guantanamo Bay would remain just that—secrets.

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*The Times* and the Center have collaborated on 74 projects, from 54 countries, and that's staggering.

There was one line in the beginning of "Fractured Lands," as the story scrolls across your screen. It says in the beginning, simply, "This is a story unlike any we have previously published."

Frankly, that line could appear dozens of times in our pages, and it's thanks to the Center.

Happy anniversary.

## **Nadja Drost**

Grantee, winner of Pulitzer Prize, Peabody and Emmy awards

Good evening, everyone. It is such a true pleasure to be here with you all tonight and to have the opportunity to celebrate – in person!

I started working with the Pulitzer Center pretty early on, in both the Pulitzer Center's life, and in my career as a freelancer, then based out of Bogotá. It was 2011 and gold prices were going *through the roof*.

I wanted to spend a week reporting in the mountains of Colombia's south, where traditional miners working the gold veins were under threat by paramilitaries and the encroachment of foreign mining companies. I needed just \$600 but the radio program couldn't afford it, my editor told me: *IF you can get the funding, we'll do the story*.

That line has become a refrain heard by freelancers the world over.

The Pulitzer Center recognized the story needed to be told, and their support *made it* happen.

And today, *that* line has become a refrain, behind so many of the important, yet under-reported, stories the public reads, listens to, and watches today.

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This vision, of bringing original and necessary stories out into the world, has enabled Bruno and I, and so many other journalists, to work on stories that otherwise wouldn't get reported. Perhaps none more so than our reporting on the Darien Gap.

The Darien Gap is an isolated, mountainous jungle straddling the border of Colombia and Panama. There's no road through it to connect the two countries. It's an unlikely place from which to witness the fallout of a global migration crisis, but in recent years, it's become a nexus for migrants from around the world – Africa, Asia, and the Caribbean – taking their chances at one of the few ways left to reach the US – via South America, and then, crossing the Darien Gap by foot to continue north.

Their journey is treacherous, a week or even two of unforgiving terrain. Their smugglers abandon them. They run out of food, get lost, injured. Some drown. Many are robbed and raped.

Reporting their journey – and reporting it safely – required a lot of resources. But Bruno and I felt it was important for us to be able to walk alongside migrants to be able to show what they endured on a migration route that was virtually unknown at the time, in order to reach the US.

One morning, we were packing up a campsite we shared with a group of about 20 Haitians whom we had been walking with for a couple days – pregnant moms, dads, and young kids, slogging through mud, climbing slippery, steep slopes. When they crossed rivers, sometimes chest-high, they'd hold their babies and baggage above their heads, the current pulling at their legs.

As we were about to leave camp, 15 men emerged from the forest. They were from Bangladesh, and carried nothing except for the clothes they were wearing. They had been robbed four times already --machete to neck, pistol to head – of their money, clothes, tents, food. They hadn't eaten in 2 days.

Our group kept growing, as we came across more migrants who had gotten lost, robbed, sexually assaulted. But there was no more food, and no end in sight.

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One night, the Bangladeshis heard the terrifying roar of what they figured must be a tiger approaching. Its specter was so distressing, they started crying. They thought about their families, and if they would ever see them again.

The sounds were loud and disturbing, for certain, but they came in fact from howler monkeys somewhere up in the trees. But at this point in the Darien, when an empty stomach dizzied the head, when successive groups of masked men had stripped you at gunpoint of everything you had, when the signs you found of other migrants who had passed before you were their photo ID cards and bones and flesh strewn across the forest floor, when walls of green felt like they were closing in on you, distorting time and distance, and when everything about this journey was an aberration of how you imagined it, this was when it became a living nightmare... a nightmare where monkeys became tigers.

Back in New York, as Bruno and I worked on our stories, we felt *angry* about what we had witnessed: a man-made tragedy in an otherwise paradisaical wilderness. We wanted to make it clear *why* people had to take this harrowing journey. IT wasn't because the Darien Gap was an inevitable, geographic barrier. This was immigration enforcement rippling southward. Where the decision to close borders to migrants denied them a safer way, pushing them to take a deadly jungle route.

We also felt so *privileged* to report a story we hoped could contribute to our understanding of one of the most pressing issues of our time: global migration. And we felt so *lucky* to be working with media outlets and colleagues who were so committed, especially Morgan Till at the PBS NewsHour and Kit Rachlis at the California Sunday Magazine (which, after shutting down during the pandemic, won a Pulitzer Prize).

As a journalist, all you want to do is be able to get out there and report the stories you think need to be told. Just do the work. And when I look back, it strikes me: how instrumental the Pulitzer Center has been, not only for Bruno and myself, but for *so many* journalists, in pursuing urgent, ambitious reporting, building story after story. Doing the work.



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Stories that dig deep, involve travel, risk, spending *time* in a place are expensive to report. They are a challenge for most newsrooms. But they're particularly challenging for freelancers to pull off. And yet, freelancers are increasingly relied upon by many media outlets, especially to bring those stories off the beaten path.

I don't need to tell this crowd that journalism faces many headwinds. The Pulitzer Center has come to occupy a crucial role within today's media ecosystem – I'll go so far as to say a life-line for so much of the deep, nuanced reporting we need today.

We want that reporting to have impact, of course. And this is another reason Bruno and I love collaborating with the Pulitzer Center – because it helps stories achieve this. It champions stories across many platforms—from its broad networks, to social media and educational outreach -- by expanding the reach of projects into different spaces, with new audiences that engage with them. They help stories *land* – in community discussions, the hallways of decision-making, schools, homes.

On a wintery afternoon, over a year after Bruno and I had returned from the Darien, our doorbell in Brooklyn rang. I opened the window of our 2<sup>nd</sup> floor apartment to see who it was, and upon seeing a delivery man, I told him the bag of food in his hand must be for our neighbors below. He thanked me and turned down the steps, stopped, and looked back up at me. "Nadja?" he called out. I didn't recognize this man, masked up, his jacket hood pulled up. Down on our stoop, he excitedly pulled up on his cellphone one of the NewsHour videos Bruno and I had made on the Darien Gap. He was one of the Bangladeshis we had walked with. The last time we had seen him was in a camp for migrants in Panama, coming out of a nightmare where monkeys had become tigers.

He did a hilarious imitation of Bruno behind the camera, who had essentially crossed the Darien Gap twice, always running back and forth on the trail to capture gripping, beautiful footage. Ripon had shown the video to relatives he had here in the US – it helped them understand his journey.

He had spent a few months in ICE detention before being released, but one of the Bangladeshis in his group was deported – as had other migrants from Haiti, Pakistan and Cameroon. Ripon was grateful he had made it here, sharing an apartment with 7

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Bangladeshis, now braving the New York streets on his delivery bicycle, which had already been stolen.

I wrote a twitter thread about this incredible of chance encounters. To my great surprise, the thread went viral ( I'm used to having an average of two people like my tweets). Suddenly, everyone was asking how they could help this man and other recent immigrants. One stranger, a young guy in Manhattan working for Microsoft, started a GoFundMe campaign that raised over \$6,000 for Ripon in under a day.

And I couldn't help but wonder: what WAS it about this story that moved so many people? It is, of course, an insane twist of coincidence, one of those "only in New York" stories. But beyond that, I think it came down to the power of true story-telling to make people feel connected. And empathetic. Ripon was no longer part of a faceless, nameless mass of people arriving at our southern border. He, and others who made it here, are now our neighbors. We might see them at our doorstep, or on the subway. They may become colleagues; our children might go to the same school.

So here's what I'd like to celebrate tonight. That there's an organization that helps ensure that stories that might originate far away, or feel isolated from us, get made. And that helps create ways for the public to engage with those stories. That that this organization has created a community where great journalism can thrive.

This is not something that happens magically. It takes vision, dedication, and a remarkable team of people - and they deserve a toast with the same gusto they put into everything. Thank you to each one of them AND to each one of you for being a part of this community - here's to another 15 years!

## **Jon Sawyer**

Hello again — and thanks to Dean and Nadja for their inspiring remarks.

When we met five years ago most of the talks focused on our role internationally, helping news outlets fill gaps in coverage of the big global issues that affect us all. That remains a huge priority for the Pulitzer Center today—more on that in a moment from Marina—but I

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want to focus first on something few of us anticipated in the spring of 2016: that it was also going to be essential for the Pulitzer Center to engage more deeply with issues here at home.

At the time of our 10th anniversary dinner, in April 2016, Donald Trump was already making a hash of the Republican primary field. But I don't think anyone in the room that night—certainly not I—anticipated that he would win the election, that ideas like banning Muslim immigrants or junking the climate accords or labeling the news media as “enemies of the people” would resonate with so many people.

Nor did we anticipate, in the last year of the second term of the country's first Black president, that we were on the knife-edge of a racial reckoning as brutally divisive as any since the Civil War, that over the next five years we would see neo-Nazis marching in Charlottesville, the slow-motion videotaped murder by police of George Floyd in daylight Minneapolis, a pandemic that exposed as never before our collective cruelty toward minorities and other vulnerable communities, and, this past January, a violent mob wielding Confederate flags storming into the U.S. Capitol itself.

All this was happening at the same time that the bottom dropped out for the American newspaper business. In the last 10 or 15 years, according to research by the Pew Center and at the University of North Carolina, newspapers shed 57 percent of their employees while a quarter of local print newspapers shut down entirely. The *California Sunday Magazine* that published Nadja's reporting was out of business by the time her Pulitzer Prize was announced.

It was against that somber backdrop that we undertook two of the most important initiatives in the life of the Pulitzer Center: establishment of *Bringing Stories Home* three years ago and then, in the summer of 2019, our agreement to Jake Silverstein's suggestion that we become the chief education partner for *The 1619 Project*.

The idea of *Bringing Stories Home* was to support enterprise reporting by non-national news outlets and educational outreach in communities across the country. The three years since launch have seen the publication or broadcast of 102 projects with news outlets in more than 50 communities. We've forged deep ties with journalists and editors

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at news organizations ranging from the *Bangor Daily News* and *Baltimore Sun* to the *Tucson Star*, *Mission Local* in San Francisco, WBEZ in Chicago, and *High Country News*. The results have included multiple projects on police accountability, Indigenous rights, the abuse of migrants at the border, racial justice, the disproportionate effects of COVID on minority and low-income communities and, through the affiliated *Connected Coastlines* initiative, dozens of projects on the increasingly adverse local impacts of climate change.

A crucial part of *Bringing Stories Home* is working with our news partners to bring the journalism and issues into local classrooms, at the K12, community college, and university levels. The aim is engaging students with issues that matter, of course, in classroom settings that are perhaps the last place in America where you can still reach people across the political spectrum and at least hope for constructive debate and discussion.

*1619*, of course, gave us plenty to debate and discuss.

The demand for curricular materials from teachers and students eager to engage was explosive. By the fall of 2020, *1619* had become a national phenomenon, with teachers in every state downloading our curricular materials, two book versions of the project and a documentary on the horizon, and the project as a whole increasingly under political attack.

At that time, knowing first hand the value of the work and its impact on students, we reached out to a number of foundations and other donors, asking them to join us in a dramatic expansion of the *1619* education program. The more than \$3 million raised toward that goal allowed us to launch the multi-year *1619 Project Education Network*, with a first-year cohort of nearly 170 educators representing 42 teams from 21 states.

It also allowed us to design and build [1619education.org](https://1619education.org), a gorgeous web portal filled with lesson plans, resource materials, and incredibly moving student work in a multitude of forms. It is the best answer I know to those who fault *The 1619 Project*—or question the need for honest discussion of the history that has shaped us all.

The deep engagement with diverse communities here in the United States reflected by these two initiatives will be a continuing and vital part of our mission. But we are just as

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ambitious in our work internationally—and here too the past few years have been transformational.

The week of our 10th anniversary dinner *PBS NewHour* broadcast a video animation we had funded in support of the *Panama Papers*, the investigation of offshore financing based on a massive leak of documents to the International Center for Investigative Journalists.

That marked the continuation of a highly productive relationship between the Pulitzer Center and ICIJ, and in particular its deputy director, Marina Walker Guevara. We did multiple projects together, from the Paradise and Luxembourg Papers on financial manipulation to exposés of dangerous mining practices by multinationals in Africa.

And then, in the beginning of 2020, Marina agreed to join the Pulitzer Center team as executive editor.

She is a woman of boundless energy, endless curiosity, and deep emotional intelligence—a natural community builder and one of the most inspiring journalists I've had the good fortune to know. She has somehow managed, in the face of a pandemic, to oversee a most dramatic expansion in our staff and editorial ambitions.

Please join me in welcoming her now.

**Marina Walker Guevara**  
Executive Editor, Pulitzer Center

Thank you, Jon, and good evening everyone.

As Jon just told you, I joined the Pulitzer Center in early February of 2020, five weeks before the world as we knew it changed forever.

Since then, this vibrant and resilient global community of journalists, outlets, and educators that is the Pulitzer Center, all of you, has met challenge after pandemic challenge with courage, inventiveness, and compassion.

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It has been such an inspiring privilege to be part of this work, this community, and to help guide its journalism. So the first thing I want to say is thank you.

I continue to be in awe of how much the journalists and outlets we support have accomplished in the past two years. When borders closed, they found creative ways to cooperate across newsrooms and countries, discovering in the process a new sense of journalistic solidarity. They used mapping and other digital tools to overcome mobility restrictions, whether in the Amazon or Xinjiang, and cooperated with other disciplines -- scientists, artists, educators -- to get the context and the nuance that makes a story not only compelling but truly relevant to those most affected.

For those journalists, our partners, the stakes have never been higher. Press freedom is slipping away before our eyes in the Philippines, Hong Kong, India and Hungary, Poland, Nicaragua and Venezuela as new authoritarian and populist regimes and movements consolidate around the world, including in the US. In the past two years, our grantees have been shot, arrested, and beaten.

They have also done some of their most transformative and consequential work. I am thinking of Joanne Cavaunagh Simpson whose relentless reporting on a government spy plane program in Baltimore was cited by the 4th Circuit Court of Appeals when it ruled the program unconstitutional. Or the groundbreaking exposé by freelancer Sukanya Shanta of discrimination against Indian marginalized groups behind bars, which triggered the abolition of caste-based labor in prisons in the state of Rajasthan. Just last month, an investigation by Brazilian freelancer Manuela Andreoni in the New York Times helped strike down a law that had allowed cattle ranchers to all but extinguish a reserve in the Amazon rainforest. The cattle's end market? Luxurious leather seats for American SUVs.

Manuela is a one of 13 inaugural fellows of our Rainforest Investigations Network. Just about a year ago we decided to double down on our rainforest reporting by launching a network that would support cross-border collaborative investigations by journalists from the three main rainforest regions: Amazon, Congo Basin and South East Asia. Through the network we provide grants, data and editorial support. And we also coach the journalistic

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collaboration, which includes global outlets such as El Pais, NBC, Bloomberg, and The New York Times.

The Rainforest Investigations Network points us in the direction we want to go -- a journalism that is networked, collaborative, and cross-border, one that encourages radical sharing of journalistic talent and resources in the public interest. We know that this kind of collaborative work delivers the decisive scoops. In the process, we build capacity and community -- lasting commodities -- in newsrooms around the world.

Throughout these trying times we have had the opportunity to reflect about our own role as funders and supporters of journalism. We acknowledge the power that we have to launch careers, empower teams, and enable world-changing stories. But we also know that without clear values and intentionality, without acknowledging and addressing our biases and blindspots, and without holding ourselves accountable, we are prone to reproduce the excesses that have eroded trust in journalism and hurt many of our own colleagues and communities.

We count on all of you to help us do more and be better as we address the challenges of our time through our singular mission: journalism and education for the public good.

In the next 15 years, we want to remain clear-eyed and decisive, strategic and ambitious. We want to anticipate trends and innovate in the newsroom and in the classroom alongside all of you. But we want all that innovation and growth to be sustained and fueled by the most old-fashioned of journalistic values: active listening, deep intellectual curiosity, and fairness.

Thank you.

**Jon Sawyer introduces Emily Rauh Pulitzer**

Thank you, Marina.

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None of what we've discussed tonight would be possible without the support we've received from so many foundations and individual contributors, many of them here tonight.

I want to salute all you've meant to us:

*Agnes Gund*, creator of the Arts for Justice Fund, for multiple projects, many with an arts focus, aimed at raising the visibility of mass incarceration and racial injustice.

*Toby Volkman*, from the Luce Foundation, for support now stretching over eight years for our work on religion and international affairs.

*Carey Meyers*, for shepherding our first grant from the Rockefeller Foundation to the support we just received from the Helmsley Trust for our work on vulnerable communities in sub-Saharan Africa.

*Tim Isgitt*, from Humanity United, for multiple grants over the past 10 years on topics ranging from conflict prevention and migration to *The 1619 Project*.

*Rich Stone*, a former grantee now with the Howard Hughes Medical Institute, for multiple grants in support of our Connected Coastlines initiative.

*Jennifer Jenkins*, from Facebook (or Meta), for the lead role in support of our 1619 work and also for the \$5 million gift to our endowment that guarantees permanent support for our *Bringing Stories Home* initiative.

In negotiating the gift for *Bringing Stories Home* I know Jennifer was influenced by the fact it would be matched dollar by dollar with support for our general endowment fund from Emily Rauh Pulitzer, our chair.

We announced Emmy's challenge grant, \$12 million in total, in this room five years ago.

I am pleased to announce tonight, *so pleased*, that as of this month we have contributions and pledges in hand that will meet Emmy's challenge.



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I cannot stress too much what an extraordinarily generous and important commitment this is. It gives us the financial security that will help us weather the challenges ahead—and will help make the Pulitzer Center a permanent platform in support of journalism and education for the public good.

We would not be here tonight were it not for Emmy—and also for the best, most collegial, most insightful, and most supportive board of directors any organization could wish to have. Many of you are here tonight and I'd like for you to stand as I call your names:

Sam Dolnick  
Betsy Karel  
Dick Moore  
Joel Motley  
Joe Pulitzer  
David Rohde  
Linda Winslow

And Bill Bush and Robbie Robinson, who couldn't be here tonight but are very much with us in spirit.

Thank you all—for your close attention, your good counsel, your wealth of experience and contacts. It means the world to all of us.

And now I'd like to welcome to the podium Emmy Pulitzer. You've just heard about the signal role she has played at the Pulitzer Center over the past 15 years. Somehow during that same period she also created and led one of the country's most innovative arts institutions, the Pulitzer Arts Foundation; helped make possible the spectacular renovation of the Harvard Art Museums; and spearheaded a unique urban renewal initiative that will transform the midtown section of St. Louis.

I'm in awe of all she does—and grateful that she has been a part of my life since I began work at the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* nearly 50 years ago.

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Emmy.

## **Emily Rauh Pulitzer**

President of the Board

My involvement begins in the Fall of 2005 though I am sure the idea had been incubating in Jon's mind before that.

The previous Spring the board of Pulitzer Inc on which I sat had made the difficult decision to sell the company, which had been started by my husband Joe's grandfather in 1878 and was led and controlled by the family ever since. One can say we were smart or more likely very lucky because I think few realized the magnitude of the changes which the newspaper industry would face.

It was a few months after the sale that Jon stepped down as the *Post-Dispatch* Washington bureau chief. He came to me saying that media companies were closing foreign bureaus and limiting the number of journalists they sent abroad, at a time when it was more important than ever that we know what is going on in the rest of the world. He had the idea of creating a nonprofit journalism organization with the goal of filling gaps in coverage of important global issues and reaching the broadest possible audience.

After several months of discussion I decided along with Joe's cousin David Moore and his wife Katherine that we would give Jon a modest seed grant over the course of several years, but with a clear understanding that our continued support would depend on proof that the concept could work—and proof that other donors, foundations and individuals alike, would join the cause.

He has met those tests and a great deal more, with the help of the superb team of colleagues he has recruited.

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The talks we have heard tonight are reminders of what an impressive organization the Pulitzer Center has become. A key to its success, in my view, has been its commitment to collaboration and partnerships, working with an amazing range of journalist grantees, news-media outlets and educational partners to create journalism of the highest quality and then bringing that work to audiences across the country and globe.

Given the challenges before the world and those to democracy our country and others are facing, it is extraordinarily important that the Pulitzer Center be put on permanent footing.

The \$12 million endowment challenge which I provided in 2016 has now been met by generous contributions and strong endorsement of the Center's work by members of the board of trustees, members of the Moore and Pulitzer families, and other individual, foundation, and corporate donors.

Everyone in this room has had a part in bringing this vision to life. I am proud to have the Pulitzer name associated with this work—and I know how much it would mean to my husband to see the best of the Pulitzer journalism tradition, and its spirit of innovation, so ably reflected by the Pulitzer Center today. I am happy to join in celebrating all that you have done.

## **Jon Sawyer closes**

Thank you, Emmy, and thanks again to all of you for being here, and for your support through the years.

I'd like to close by quoting something Jake Silverstein said at our Washington celebration of the 10th anniversary. He described the Pulitzer Center as "a sort of laboratory of audacity," making possible innovative, collaborative projects and outreach that news organizations were increasingly unable to undertake on their own.

In the next 15 years, I expect the Pulitzer Center to continue to grow, to expand in ways that perhaps today we can't even foresee. I hope one constant will be the spirit of

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innovation that Jake described, and that when the Pulitzer Center gathers 15 years hence we'll still be talking of it as "a laboratory of audacity."

And with any luck we'll still be working with partners as gifted, and like-minded, as Jake, Dean, Nadja and Bruno, and all of you.

Thank you, and good night!