We have inherited, to reduce it all to a few words, a journalism of the expert and the
vendu, a journalism of information, fact, objectivity, and publicity. It is a scientific
conception of journalism; it assumes an audience to be informed, educated by the
journalist and the expert. In their different ways, the methods of the journalist and the
expert guarantee the truth and sanctify the precept of the press. I would suggest we
throw out this vocabulary and think of journalism, instead, as a record, a conversation
and an exercise in poetry and utopian politics. (p. 17)

What would journalism look like if we grounded it in poetry, if we tried to literalize
the metaphor rather than the metaphor of objectivity and science? It would gener-
ate, in fact, a new moral vocabulary that would dissolve some current dilemmas . . . .
We should not shrink from this new metaphor. Social life is, after all, the succession of
great metaphors. The metaphor which has governed our understanding of journalism
in this century has run into trouble. The ethics of journalism will not move us forward
until we actually rethink, re-describe, re-interpret what journalism is not the science
or information of our culture but instead its poetry and conversation. (pp. 18-19)

In Jim's perspective, when ethics is understood as a formal system, the charac-
ter of and rationale for the press are left untouched. Journalism ethics as rules
"seem to me to be beside the point." (p. 6). Although preoccupied with rules
about gifts, junksmen, conflicts of interest, sensationalism, and unattributed sources, 
"the entire structure of professional life" is accepted "as a given. The ethics of
journalism often seems to be a cover, a means of avoiding the deeper question of
journalism as a practice in order to concentrate on a few problems in which there
is general agreement." (p. 6). Journalism ethics as currently understood is a purely
negative enterprise. It seeks to stifle practices that damage the press' credibility or
are patently unfair. "But none of this will solve the real problems of journalism.
In fact, those problems cannot be solved; they can only be dissolved in a new set
of practices, a new way of conceiving what journalism is and how one ought to go
about it." (p. 16).

Jim Carey's manifesto stimulates my mind and inspires my spirit. His words, ephemeral in time and space, endure for the ages. The memories will never grow
old.

References
G. Sagan (Ed.), Ethics and the media (pp. 5-19). Iowa City, IA: Iowa Humanities Board.
later that I learned that Jim was the dean of the college and Ted the former dean. I am not sure what I might have expected when first meeting a dean, but I am quite sure that it would not have been smart, gregarious, engaging, jovial, intense and impressive persons such as Jim and Ted. (I probably would have expected someone taller and older, too, but before meeting them I had little more to go on than the Dean Wormer character from Animal House.)

To say that Jim was not the picture of a dean would of course do him a great disservice, and be untrue, but by today’s standards I suspect most would not recognize him as one. Oh, they would consider him a “throwback” who little resembles the college leaders of today. He was most interested in supporting the people of the college—faculty, students, staff, alumni. He was not given to careerism, nor do I think he was interested in administration for its own sake. In his 1991 resignation letter to the faculty and staff of the College of Communications he wrote, “I never intended to make this a career, though I suppose I inadvertently have.” I would argue, however, that even though he later intended to take on the deanship of the School of Journalism at Columbia University, he still did not make administration a career. Granted, he spent about half of his years of university employment in one administrative role or another, but there was no calculus involving strategic moves every few years to attain a higher administrative post and bigger salary.

Kim Rozoll, Jim’s successor as dean (and, like Ted Peterson, also sadly no longer with us), told the story that Jim once came up with four reasons to become an administrator. “Money and money were two reasons,” Kim recalled Jim saying, “although they produce the wrong kind of administrator and the first is hollow.” The third reason (ii) a vision, a plan for the department’s future... the fourth reason (iii) a sense of duty.” (Murny, 1992, p. 11). The latter two reasons, vision and duty, guided Jim’s work as an administrator. The last reason, duty, particularly motivated him I think. He was dean because it was the right thing to do, and if any one question guided his decision making is that simple question: What is the right thing to do, by and for the college and its people?

Jim’s vision was one that unfortunately sets him apart from many, probably most, contemporary administrators. It can be found in his essay “The Engaged Disciple,” an oral version of which was delivered as the Carroll C. Arnold Lecture at the 2000 meeting of the National Communication Association. In that essay he described the American academy as the “home of the free” offering exceptional choices and opportunities. He was indeed grateful for those choices and opportunities, but he was keenly aware of the possible trade-offs involved, namely that the conversations that took place in the academy would not merely become like those that took place outside of it but that they would become those conversations. The academy would lose “public discourse beyond the technical speech that occupies so much of our time” (Carey, 2002, p. 5).

Jim, I think, believed that of all colleges, one charged with studying and teaching communications should understand the powerful forces that shape and discourse wield in the world and teach communications as a profession; not a job, not a career, not a way to make a living, but a tradition, one rooted in storytelling and conversation, sometimes professional and sometimes not, but always part of how we get along with one another and get along in the world. A journalism school, for instance, was for him not simply a professional school that initiated students into a career. Rather it was a school that fostered a belief, a faith, in the work of journalists and journalism, and situated, deeply, that work in context and in history. So it was with Jim as a dean, as an academic leader. His leadership was not simply his job or his career. It was a profession of his belief in the academy, and he fought for that belief by engaging himself in conversations at multiple levels of the academy and by shepherding first the Institute of Communications Research and then the College of Communications at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign through (long) adolescence into adulthood. To some extent he made it up as he went along, not because he did not have a vision or was simply quick on his feet, but because he responded to those around him and continually sought to make the academy, or at least his corner of it, a form of the republicanism he espoused in his writing. He led by example, through no force but that of thought and reason. As Cherry Christiansen said in a tribute to him at the time of Jim’s resignation, “Dedications mean to (Jim) a prophet’s cloak; certainly nothing egal.”

But many (maybe most, even all of us in the college used the title of dean as a shorthand way of acknowledging how much his leadership meant to us. That is why, to me, he will always be Dean Carey.

Notes

1. His prominence as a journalism scholar and teacher, not surprisingly, can over-shadow his many other intellectual accomplishments, including his contributions to cultural studies and to our understanding of the role communication technology has played throughout history.

2. Having since worked with many deans I can think of many characteristics, ones search committees often focus on, that could be less important than these.

3. Another example: One of Jim’s last acts as dean was to himself provide funds for a new undergraduate scholarship in the name of the college’s non-academic staff, and to note how much he disliked the term then used, “non-academic,” to designate “the people...who turn this physical place into a human environment.”

4. I write “unfortunately” because there are too few now who would consider it, much less share it, although the academy would be so much better for it if they did.

References

