



**A Message from the Director of the
Inamori International Center for Ethics and Excellence
Gregory L. Eastwood, MD**

The purpose of the Inamori Center is to foster ethical leadership around the world.

December 10, 2007

“Excellence is an art won by training and habituation. We do not act rightly because we have virtue or excellence, but we rather have those because we have acted rightly. We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act but a habit.”

- Aristotle (384-322 BC)

In this Message...

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(1) Inamori Ethics Prize and Symposium

The Inamori Ethics Prize, awarded by the Inamori International Center for Ethics and Excellence, will occur September 4, 2008 in Severance Hall on the Campus of Case Western Reserve University. A lecture and symposium will precede the prize ceremony. The \$25,000 prize will be awarded to an individual who has demonstrated exemplary ethical leadership and accomplishment and whose ethical positions, influence, and actions have greatly improved the condition of humankind. Such individuals may come from business, technology, science, health care, government, philanthropy, nonprofit organizations, education, or other fields.

Nominators should submit, by regular mail, fax (216-368-4455), or e-mail (InamoriEthicsPrize@case.edu), a brief letter explaining how the nominee fulfills the criteria indicated above and a resume, curriculum vitae, or other biographical information about that person by February 1, 2008 to the Inamori International Center for Ethics and Excellence, Crawford Hall, Room A15A, Case Western Reserve University, 10900 Euclid Avenue, Cleveland, Ohio, 44106-7051, USA. The Selection Committee may contact nominators and nominees to obtain additional information.

(2) What are the Ethical Responsibilities of Journalists?

This topic evoked a vigorous discussion among panelists and audience during a symposium held at the Inamori International Center for Ethics and Excellence on November 16, 2007. The event was part of the Inamori Center Ethical Leadership Series in conjunction with Professor Joseph

White's Public Affairs Discussion Group. Panelists were Theodore Gup, Shirley Wormser Professor of Journalism, and Christianne Sheridan, Special Assistant to the President and Director of Presidential Communications at Case Western Reserve University. Dr. Gregory Eastwood, Director of the Inamori Center, moderated the discussion.

Journalists and news media editors are leaders in our society. Thus, consideration of the ethical responsibilities of journalists is a fitting topic for discussion under the sponsorship of the Inamori International Center for Ethics and Excellence, whose purpose is to foster ethical leadership around the world.

The following is an edited synopsis of the questions posed by the moderator and the audience, and the consequent commentary.

1) Question: Journalism is a profession. Professions typically have purposes and ethical guidelines. What would you say is the purpose of journalism and what are its ethical guidelines?

The purpose of journalism is to inform. The purpose is different in a democracy than in a totalitarian regime. In a democracy, the press informs the populace and exposes secrecy. In a totalitarian regime, the press is used to support the regime and control the populace.

Fairness (see also Question 3) and objectivity are dominant ethical principles. If reporters develop special relationships, that may erode credibility. The question is what constitutes a special relationship? Some reporters do not accept a gift of any kind, no matter how trivial, believing that any gift has the potential for influencing objectivity. However, newspapers have subcultures, such as reporters who cover sports or government, in which the working rules may be different. For example, in the past it was common for sports or arts reporters to accept complimentary tickets to events and performances. This is changing in the direction of reporters or their newspapers paying for their own tickets.

2) Question: The journalistic tradition in the United States is based on the concept of an open society, an informed populace, and "the need to know." What are the boundaries of "the need to know?" When does the need to know become "voyeurism," "gossip," and "invasion of privacy?"

The boundaries are affected by the tension between the need of the newspaper (or other media) to be financially viable and the need to report a balance of news objectively. For example, typically there is tension in the newsroom about how much "fluff" should be on page 1. There has been a perversion of our priorities: O.J. Simpson on the front page, Iraq not. This raises the notion of the "sin of the audience." The sin of the audience refers to what the readers or viewers want to read or see and whether it is what they *should* be reading or seeing. Clearly, this is a value judgment. The American press generally gives the public what it wants to know.

3) Question: Why do reporters always have to be so even-handed on issues that seem clear? For example, why give the skeptics about climate change or the supporters of creationism equal coverage with the scientific evidence for climate change and for evolution?

"I'm going to ignore that question," responded a panelist, then quickly asked the questioner, "How would that make you feel?" To ignore opposing views requires a degree of smugness and hubris. Balance and fairness do not mean that coverage has to be exactly even. But if the source is responsible, he/she is entitled to be heard. There have been examples of popular issues or issues advocated by prominent people that have been discredited by reporting a minority or seemingly unusual view.

4) Question: Why are the media so liberal?

Reporters may seem to be liberal because people who go into journalism want to heal the world. This makes them caring activists, not necessarily liberal. However, the coverage is not left-leaning. The Clinton Administration, which ostensibly was ideologically “liberal,” seemed vindictive, with a “bunker mentality.” Currently, it seems that much of the current media is conservative. Witness examples of conservative control of media, such as the Fox Network and other media owned by Rupert Murdoch. “Now, the liberal media is anemic.”

5) Question: Do journalists report on bad reporters?

Most identification of problematic behavior is raised “in house” with the editor, but unfortunately the daily press of business in the typical newsroom means that too little of such discussion takes place. Romenesko has a daily column of developments in the news business (<http://www.poynter.org/column.asp?id=45>) and a site devoted specifically to ethics (<http://www.poynter.org/subject.asp?id=32>) that posts stories that have ethical implications, includes references to cases that can be instructive, and provides opportunities for comment by on-line readers. Neither has a place to report unethical behavior per se.

6) Question: Why are sources “anonymous” so often? How do we know the validity of such sources?

The source always is known in the newsroom, which provides a measure of validity. However, anonymity may be the only condition under which a source will provide information. Think of “Deep Throat” during the Watergate scandal and investigation, probably one of the most well known anonymous sources. Unfortunately, being “off the record” is now the default position. Sources often make anonymity a precondition even when anonymity is not necessary. But assuring anonymity may be the only way to get information because “We operate in a totally toxic atmosphere now,” meaning retribution is likely when challenging powers.

7) Question: Why are we not getting more news?

It is difficult to know whether citizens have withdrawn and do not demand information or the press does not give them the information. (See comments above under Question 2 about the “sin of the audience.”) After September 11, 2001, there was a collective protection of the country in the name of patriotism. In the long run that may not have been good for the country because we may not have had information that would be useful in making informed decisions about subsequent actions.

8) Question: What are your thoughts about the recent (October 26, 2007) fake news conference at the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)?

This is emblematic of contempt for the press by government and the public. If there is enough embarrassment and attention, it will lessen. People think the constitution protects the press. It is the other way: The press protects the constitution.

9) Question: The media latch onto “meta-narratives” regarding candidates for political office, all the reporters seem to “glom” onto them, and they become the story.

What we elect is not a candidate but the story about the candidate.

10) Question: If journalism is the first draft of history (attributed to former Washington Post editor, Phil Graham), are blogs the first draft of journalism (per comment on a September 1, 2002 radio station blog)? What is the appropriate use of blogs by journalists?

You can assume that most blogs have strong perspectives. Many people agree with each other in this space. So you know in advance what their views are. Three somewhat contradictory views about blogs are:

- 1) Blogs remove the capital barrier to entry into communication so anyone can participate – something to celebrate.
- 2) Blogs create and promote an era of opinion rather than fact.
- 3) Traditional moguls in journalism bemoan the lack of gatekeepers in blogs, but perhaps that is OK, as long as we take into account the biases in blogs.

(3) Search for Director, Inamori Center

The Inamori International Center for Ethics and Excellence seeks an individual with outstanding leadership, administrative, and academic skills to become the Director of the Inamori International Center for Ethics and Excellence and the Inamori Professor of Ethics. This joint position will replace the Center's current Director and Inamori Professor of Ethics, Dr. Gregory L. Eastwood, effective September 1, 2008.

The Inamori Center was created by a generous gift from Dr. Kazuo Inamori, President of the Inamori Foundation and Founder and Chairman Emeritus of the Kyocera Corporation, who believes that "people have no higher calling than to serve the greater good of humankind and society" and "the future of humanity can be assured only through the balance of scientific progress and spiritual maturity."

The purpose of the Inamori Center is to foster ethical leadership around the world. The Inamori Center fulfills its purpose by awarding a high profile ethics prize annually; collaborating with people and entities at Case Western Reserve University, in the regional community, and around the United States and the world; and sponsoring ethics research, scholarship, symposia, lectures, and other means of ethical discourse. As a beginning to influencing ethical leadership around the world, we seek to create a strong understanding of ethics, ethical thinking, and ethical behavior for all students, staff, and faculty at CWRU.

Reporting Relationship: The Director of the Inamori Center reports to the Provost, Case Western Reserve University

Candidate Qualifications: Candidates should have a record of accomplishment in leadership, administration, scholarship, and fundraising and have high integrity and moral character. The successful candidate should be eligible for a faculty appointment in one of the schools of the university.

Compensation: Compensation is competitive and commensurate with qualifications and achievement. The position is supported by the Inamori Professorship Fund.

Procedure for candidacy: Please submit a letter and curriculum vitae by regular mail, facsimile, or e-mail by February 1, 2008 to:

Gail Papay

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