

**Remarks by Gracia C. Martore
Accepting The Media Institute's
2014 American Horizon Award
November 18, 2014**

Thank you, Gary Pruitt – and thanks to all of you here tonight.

It's a deep honor to be presented with this award by Gary – someone who has dedicated his life to defending freedom of the press and is a champion of the media's crucial role in society.

Gary has continued The Associated Press's long legacy of fighting government secrecy and advocating for the public right to know. He fights for press freedom not only for AP journalists, but for all of us – and by extension – for all Americans. And the threats to press freedom are real. Thank you again, Gary.

I also, of course, want to thank Patrick Maines, Dick Wiley, and The Media Institute for this recognition, which I accept on behalf of more than 30,000 Gannett employees. We owe The Media Institute a great debt for its strong leadership and support in preserving our fundamental press freedoms.

A free and independent press is fundamental to a functioning democracy, and it is what differentiates democracy from dictatorship. It is what separates a free society from tyranny and on a night like this, it's appropriate to reflect on the wisdom of our Founding Fathers in creating a blueprint for our democracy that stands the test of time.

I want to extend my congratulations to Chris Dodd for receiving tonight's Freedom of Speech Award. It's an honor to be recognized with him this evening. I also want to thank him for his decades of service to this country and for his work as chairman and CEO of the Motion Picture Association of America. He has done much to support press freedom over the years and now fosters an environment in which filmmakers have the creative freedom to pursue their passion for storytelling.

That passion for storytelling is a common link between the worlds of entertainment and news.

At Gannett, our 5,000 journalists have a passion for storytelling....

- For covering the news wherever it leads and providing quality journalism;
- For connecting people, businesses, and communities around the world;
- And for giving people the information they need to educate, entertain, and improve their lives.

That is at the very core of what all Gannett employees do every day – and I’m so very proud of that.

In fact, a number of Gannett’s news leaders are in the room tonight. I want to give a nod to them because they have done an exceptional job in navigating the new media landscape while holding firm to our core principles.

Today we all live in a world transformed. Yet our purpose remains the same as it was when Gannett was founded more than 100 years ago – to serve the greater good of our nation and the communities we serve.

We are the great connectors – people to people; people to businesses; people to their communities. I’ve seen first-hand the deep connections we have to our local communities and the value we provide to them ... as we lead community efforts and events such as Make A Difference Day, and through our outstanding quality journalism.

We cover the things people tell us they care about: from breaking news and reporting that helps sort fact from fiction and fear ... to feature stories, local sports, and entertainment news that help entertain and enrich their lives.

I am especially proud of our investigative reporting. We have a passion for delivering outstanding public service reporting – and as a company, we are committed to shining light in dark corners – dark corners that others sometimes would prefer stay in the shadows, as Gary mentioned.

For example, more than 50 of our investigative journalists requested public records from local and state police agencies in their communities, seeking records to shed light on how police gather data from people's cellphones.

They are capturing information about thousands of cellphone users at a time, whether they are targets of an investigation or not.

We ran into a number of roadblocks on this story and the many follow-ups this year and had to fight for some of those records, too.

The end result was that we – and our readers and viewers – learned that the National Security Agency isn't the only government entity secretly collecting data from people's cellphones. Police are increasingly scooping it up, too.

As a result of our work – which we started at the end of last year and have been following ever since – at least 10 states passed laws placing new limits on police cellphone surveillance. And, at least 10 more legislatures are currently debating similar laws.

And police departments, from Nevada to Florida, are revisiting and revising their internal department rules about cell surveillance. Now that's investigative reporting at its best!

And we will continue doing that type of important work.

Just last month, for example, *Jackson Clarion-Ledger* reporter Jerry Mitchell exposed the shocking conditions in Mississippi prisons, where gangs rule and families say they pay thousands of dollars in protection money to keep their relatives alive. In addition, a corrections commissioner has been accused along with a local businessman in a bribery and kickbacks case. The commissioner promptly resigned and was arrested later. Needless to say, a federal investigation continues.

We don't know what the future will bring but we DO know that we will be in the thick of things, shining light in dark corners and holding our government officials accountable.

No one can say for sure what's ahead for our industry but we do know that we plan to be there as we reposition the company, serving the needs of "We the People" and our democracy – wherever consumers are, however information is consumed.

Thank you all.