

**Remarks by Gary Pruitt
Presenting The Media Institute's
2014 American Horizon Award
To Gracia C. Martore
November 18, 2014**

Good evening.

Warren Buffet is reported to have once said that if you want to be regarded as a great business leader, then pick the right industry.

Gracia Martore didn't take Warren Buffet's advice, which actually makes her all the more deserving of The Media Institute's American Horizon Award, and I'm very pleased to introduce her this evening.

Gracia is whip smart: a liberal arts graduate from Wellesley College who went into banking.

From there she joined Gannett in the finance department, and she excelled. So much so that she became the chief financial officer. And not just any CFO. But the best CFO.

Institutional Investor magazine ranked Gracia the best CFO in America in the publishing and advertising agencies categories for three years in a row, and *Virginia Business* magazine named her CFO of the year.

Gracia's responsibilities at Gannett then expanded into operations. She became chief operating officer in 2010 and then chief executive officer of Gannett in 2011.

And not just any CEO, but one of the best CEOs.

After being chosen CEO, *Forbes* cited her as one of the world's most powerful women, and *Fortune* magazine named her one of the 50 most powerful women in business for two years running.

Now, back to that choice of industry.

Gannett was a newspaper company. Newspapers are important, and I love them. But we all know they are under financial pressure. Several newspaper companies have gone bankrupt. Not Gannett, though – far from it. Gannett's newspaper operations are best in class – strongly profitable with *USA Today* being the largest newspaper in the country.

But Gannett is also a TV broadcaster, and under Gracia's leadership it has executed several significant broadcast acquisitions: most notably the Belo company last year. In short order, Gracia has transformed Gannett into much more of a television broadcast company than a newspaper company.

Gannett is also a very successful digital company. And it achieved that enviable status the hard way: It built most of its digital companies from the ground up, including cars.com and careerbuilder.com.

Next year, Gannett is spinning off its newspaper business into a separate company. In this way, Gracia will be creating two multi-billion dollar media companies.

By the way, Gracia had to choose which company she would serve as CEO. She chose the broadcast/digital company – apparently taking Warren Buffet’s advice this time.

So, against the odds and in a very turbulent environment, Gannett became a media dynamo. So Gracia is very deserving of the American Horizon Award. But it doesn’t end there.

Gracia takes seriously the role of leading a major corporation in modern society.

She has furthered Gannett’s longstanding commitment to providing management opportunities to women and people of color.

Furthermore, Gracia is passionate about helping to keep America’s communities strong through Gannett’s leadership. She chairs the Gannett Foundation, which supports charitable activities in the communities that Gannett serves. She also champions and participates in Gannett’s annual Make a Difference Day, the nation’s largest day of community service. Make a Difference Day was just last month with millions of Americans volunteering to work on community projects. On Twitter, #MDDAY reached 31 million people.

Gracia is also committed to serving Gannett communities and the entire country with strong news coverage. And concomitant with her news values is Gracia’s stalwart defense of First Amendment rights, always willing to take a stand and spend the money on cases and efforts that assure the public has access to the information it needs and has a right to know. Only in that way will Americans have the knowledge to participate fully in our democracy.

Gracia didn’t take the easy way to executive business success. And it’s a good thing, too. Gannett’s employees are better off for it. Gannett’s shareholders, who have profited handsomely, are better off for it. And the public at large has benefited as well.

Ladies and gentlemen, there could be no more deserving winner of The Media Institute’s American Horizon Award than Gracia Martore.