

**Remarks by Pamela Brown  
Presenting The Media Institute's  
2019 Freedom of Speech Award  
To Frederick J. Ryan, Jr.  
October 7, 2019**

Many of you know Fred Ryan as Publisher and Chief Executive of *The Post* or the Founder of Politico – or perhaps you even remember when he served as assistant to President Ronald Reagan.

I know him as the person who took a chance on me 13 years ago at WJLA/NewsChannel 8 when he was the president of Allbritton Communications. I was 22 years old, fresh out of college, not knowing where I would land. I'll never forget that day when the networking opportunity turned into a job interview on a sweltering hot day in August.

In typical Fred fashion – since I was a guest visiting that day – he introduced me to the entire newsroom for the quarterly meeting. I started to work there not long after, and it was a difficult transition for me at first – I had a lot of learning to do and many people wanted to see me fail. But Fred showed me unwavering support and nurtured my professional development every step of the way. He instilled a confidence in me as a young journalist that I have carried with me to this day. He was not only a champion for me, but also to journalists around the globe.

Of course we all know *The Washington Post* – under Fred's leadership – has earned many awards, including Pulitzer Prizes – but what has impressed me most is the way Fred has taken a stand for journalists who have faced oppression and the way he has not backed down from calling out the most powerful people in the world in that fight. He is fearless when it comes to the cause of press freedom.

It has been a little over a year since *Washington Post* columnist Jamal Khashoggi walked into the Saudi Arabia consulate in Turkey and never walked out as his fiancé waited for him outside. As Fred eloquently put it in his op-ed six months ago: “He was attacked and killed for doing a journalist's job – telling the truth.”

Fred has been relentless in uncovering the truth surrounding Khashoggi's death, honoring his life, and raising awareness of the peril journalists face. Under Fred's leadership during that time of crisis, he issued many forceful statements on behalf of *The Post*, unafraid to call out top Saudi Arabian officials and the role the U.S. Government played in not doing enough to hold them to account. He made clear that if there are no consequences for Khashoggi's murder, other authoritarian regimes will be emboldened and journalists around the globe will be at greater risk. He put his words into action – helping with *The Washington Post* initiative the Press Freedom Partnership – dedicating resources toward a global commitment to raise awareness of the importance of an independent press.

Fred knows all too well that journalists are under threat around the world as they face censorship, violence, and harsh confinement for doing their jobs – and he knows how so many journalists risk their lives knowing the potential consequences because they feel it is their duty to shine a light on the truth. He experienced it firsthand with *Washington Post* journalist Jason Rezaian, unjustly jailed in Iran for more than 500 days. Fred didn't give up fighting for Jason's release from the deplorable conditions he was experiencing in Iran and masterfully helped Jason transition back into life as a journalist back at home once he was released along with four other Americans. Fred will fight for what is right and he will never back down. I truly cannot think of anyone more deserving of this award than Fred. Please welcome him to the stage.