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THE OFFICE HOLDER AND HIS RELATIONSHIP WITH
THE PRESS: A TWO-WAY RESPONSIBILITY.

I APPRECIATE VERY MUCH THE INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE
IN YOUR SYMPOSIUM HERE AT MEREDITH THIS WEEK. THE TOPIC YOU
HAVE CHOSEN, "THE PRESS, THE PRESIDENCY AND THE PEOPLE" IS
INTERESTING AND RELEVANT AND I HOPE THAT THE DISCUSSIONS
WILL BE BOTH INFORMATIVE AND THOUGHT-PROVOKING.

YOU HAVE ASKED ME TO FOCUS MY COMMENTS ON THE SUBJECT,
"THE PUBLIC OFFICEHOLDER AND HIS RELATIONSHIP WITH THE PRESS;
A TWO-WAY STREET".

I AM DELIGHTED TO DO SO AND TO DRAW UPON MY SOME 23
YEARS OF EXPERIENCE AS A PUBLIC OFFICEHOLDER AT THE LOCAL AND
STATEWIDE LEVEL FOR INSIGHTS WHICH MAY BE HELPFUL TO YOU IN
YOUR CONSIDERATION OF THIS TOPIC.

REGARDLESS OF THE LEVEL AT WHICH AN OFFICEHOLDER
SERVES, IT IS OBVIOUS THAT HE CANNOT HOPE TO HAVE THE INTEREST
AND SUPPORT OF HIS CONSTITUENCY UNLESS THOSE WHO ELECTED HIM

REMAIN SUFFICIENTLY INFORMED. I HAVE FOUND, SELFISHLY SPEAKING, THAT IT HAS BEEN TO MY ADVANTAGE THROUGHOUT MY CAREER TO MAKE A MAXIMUM EFFORT TO LET THE PEOPLE KNOW EXACTLY WHAT WAS GOING ON RELATED TO THE POSITIONS I HAVE HELD. IN TURN, I BELIEVE THE PEOPLE ARE SERVED BEST WHEN THEY HAVE COMPLETE ACCESS TO INFORMATION WHICH IS ACCURATELY AND TRUTHFULLY PRESENTED.

I HAVE ALWAYS CONTENDED THAT THE PUBLIC'S ACCESS TO INFORMATION SHOULD NOT BE RESTRICTED TO THAT WHICH IS NON-CONTROVERSIAL IN NATURE. SOME OFFICEHOLDERS INSIST THAT MANY ISSUES ARE FAR TOO COMPLICATED FOR THE PEOPLE TO UNDERSTAND. THEY DOUBT THE ABILITY OF VOTERS TO SEPARATE THE WHEAT FROM THE CHAFF, TRUTH FROM UNTRUTH, AND THEREFORE, ARE FRIGHTENED AND SOMETIMES EVEN INTIMIDATED WHEN CONTROVERSIES ARISE. CONSEQUENTLY, THEY FEED THE PUBLIC ONLY PAP, RESTRICT CONTROVERSIAL INFORMATION AND SAY TO THE VOTERS, "TAKE ME ON FAITH; I AM DOING WHAT IS BEST FOR YOU."

THE VOTERS IN A STATE LIKE NORTH CAROLINA AND A COUNTRY LIKE THE UNITED STATES, SHOULD NOT BE ASKED TO ACCEPT "GOVERNMENT ON FAITH". IT IS CONTRARY TO OUR TRADITION, FOR OUR EARLY LEADERS BELIEVED INTENSELY THAT THE BUSINESS OF GOVERNMENT MUST BE PUBLICIZED AND THAT THE SURVIVAL OF THE NEW NATION DEPENDED UPON THE PEOPLE BEING KEPT WELL-INFORMED.

MADISON, WHO IS CONSIDERED THE FATHER OF THE CONSTITUTION, WROTE:

"KNOWLEDGE WILL FOREVER GOVERN IGNORANCE. AND A PEOPLE WHO MEAN TO BE THEIR OWN GOVERNORS MUST ARM THEMSELVES WITH THE POWER KNOWLEDGE GIVES. A POPULAR GOVERNMENT WITHOUT POPULAR INFORMATION OR THE MEANS OF ACQUIRING IT, IS BUT A PROLOGUE TO A FARCE, OR A TRAGEDY, OR PERHAPS BOTH."

THOMAS JEFFERSON REITERATED THIS BELIEF IN HIS STATEMENT THAT "NO ONE MORE SINCERELY WISHES THE SPREAD OF INFORMATION AMONG MANKIND THAN I DO AND NONE HAS GREATER CONFIDENCE IN ITS EFFECT TOWARDS SUPPORTING GOOD AND FREE GOVERNMENT."

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DURING THE LAST MANY MONTHS, OUR NATION HAS BEEN THROUGH A SERIES OF CRISES WHICH HAVE SHAKEN THE CONFIDENCE OF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE IN THE ABILITY OF THEIR GOVERNMENT TO BOTH ANTICIPATE PROBLEMS AND TO COPE WITH THEM WHEN THEY ARISE. A VERY TRAGIC BY-PRODUCT OF THE MONTHS OF DOUBT AND TURMOIL IS THE PUBLIC'S LOSS OF CREDIBILITY IN GOVERNMENT IN GENERAL, AND OFFICEHOLDERS FROM THE COURTHOUSE TO THE WHITE HOUSE.

IN THE MINDS OF MANY, ALL OFFICEHOLDERS HAVE BEEN TARRD WITH THE SAME BRUSH. WE HAVE FELT THE EFFECTS OF THE STATEMENTS PRESENTED AS TRUTH BUT LATER DECLARED "INOPERATIVE". WE HAVE FELT THE EFFECT OF DEEDS DONE IN THE NAME OF SUPPOSEDLY SACRED CAUSES WHICH TRANSCENDED LAW AND THE NECESSITY FOR TELLING THE TRUTH AND FAIR DEALING.

CONSEQUENTLY, SKEPTICISM TOWARDS THE WORKINGS OF GOVERNMENT IS FAR MORE PREVALENT, IN MY OPINION, THAN AT ANY TIME IN RECENT HISTORY REQUIRING THAT EVERY OFFICEHOLDER RE-EXAMINE HIS RELATIONSHIP TO THE PUBLIC AND PRESS AND DEVELOP NEW WAYS TO PROVIDE INFORMATION WHICH IS TRUTHFUL AND STRAIGHT-FORWARD.

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THOSE OF YOU WHO KNOW ME WELL KNOW THAT I AM NOT A PHILOSOPHER. I AM BASICALLY A VERY PRACTICAL PERSON AND IT IS FROM A PRACTICAL VIEWPOINT THAT I WOULD LIKE TO EXAMINE SOME WAYS PUBLIC OFFICEHOLDERS CAN ACHIEVE THIS GOAL.

A PUBLIC OFFICEHOLDER CANNOT HOPE TO RECEIVE THE CONFIDENCE OF MEDIA REPRESENTATIVES IF HE REMAINS REMOTE FROM THEM. THERE IS SIMPLY SOMETHING ABOUT PERSONAL CONTACT AND GETTING INFORMATION FROM THE HORSE'S MOUTH THAT HELPS INCREASE CREDIBILITY PROVIDED, OF COURSE, THAT A PERSON IS CREDIBLE. IT IS HUMAN NATURE TO WANT TO LOOK A MAN IN THE EYE, SO A RETREAT FROM PERSONAL CONTACT USUALLY IS SURE TO TRIGGER A CREDIBILITY GAP.

FIRST OF ALL, THEN, AN ELECTED OFFICIAL MUST BE AVAILABLE AND THIS DOES NOT MEAN JUST WHEN HE HAS A PRESS RELEASE TO HAND OUT. THERE IS MORE TO IT THAN THAT.

ACCURATE AND PERCEPTIVE COVERAGE OF A LEGITIMATE

NEWS EVENT OFTEN COMES ONLY AFTER THE ELECTED OFFICIAL HAS TAKEN THE TIME FOR INFORMAL BACKGROUND BRIEFINGS. USUALLY THESE SESSIONS BY MUTUAL AGREEMENT ARE OFF-THE-RECORD, ALLOWING THE OFFICEHOLDER TO LET HIS HAIR DOWN, PLACE THE NEWS EVENT IN PERSPECTIVE AND SPECULATE CONCERNING POSSIBLE FUTURE RAMIFICATIONS. THIS BACKGROUND INFORMATION, WHICH IS NOT PUBLICALLY ATTRIBUTED TO THE OFFICEHOLDER, CAN MEAN THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN MEANINGFUL, INTERESTING NEWS COVERAGE AND NARROW REPORTING OF AN ISOLATED NEWS EVENT.

NEEDLESS TO SAY, IF ONE PROVIDES BACKGROUND INFORMATION, THOUGH NOT QUOTED DIRECTLY, IT IS UNPARDONABLE FOR HIM TO LATER REPUDIATE SUCH FACTS PUBLICLY. REPORTERS AND NEWSCASTERS MUST ANSWER TO THEIR BOSSES. THEY MUST MAINTAIN THEIR OWN CREDIBILITY WITH THEIR SUPERIORS AT THE NEWSPAPER OR THE RADIO OR TV STATION, AND THIS CREDIBILITY IS DESTROYED WHEN UNCREDITED INFORMATION IS LATER PUBLICLY REFUTED BY AN OFFICIAL SUPPOSEDLY IN A POSITION TO KNOW.

THERE ARE OTHER THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND CONCERNING THE RELATIONSHIP OF THE "BEAT REPORTER" AND MEDIA MANAGEMENT. REPORTERS MUST PRODUCE ON A REGULAR BASIS. SOMETIMES IT TAKES AN EXTRA EFFORT FROM THE OFFICEHOLDER TO ENABLE THEM TO DO SO. I'VE FOUND IF YOU MAKE THIS EXTRA EFFORT IN SLACK NEWS TIMES THAT, IN TURN, YOU WILL GET YOUR FAIR SHARE OF NEWS COVERAGE WHEN THINGS ARE A LITTLE BUSIER.

DEADLINES ARE A PART OF THE "REAL WORLD" OF NEWS REPORTING. SOMETIMES NEW CONFERENCES MUST BE SCHEDULED AT TIMES LESS CONVENIENT FOR THE OFFICEHOLDER, IN ORDER TO GIVE EVERY MEMBER OF THE NEWS CORPS AN EQUAL SHOT AT THE STORY. THIS REQUIRES ADVANCE PLANNING; THIS REQUIRES CHECKING AROUND TO AVOID CONFLICTS WITH OTHER NEWS EVENTS. BUT I HAVE FOUND THAT IT IS WORTH IT TO MAINTAIN GOOD RELATIONS WITH THE MEDIA.

MOST REPORTERS, LIKE PEOPLE IN ANY OTHER PROFESSIONS, DO NOT EXPECT FAVORITISM; THEY WANT ONLY FAIR AND EQUAL TREATMENT. AND THEY RESPOND READILY TO FAIRNESS AND OPENNESS.

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WE NOTED EARLIER THAT THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE OFFICEHOLDER AND THE PRESS IS A "TWO-WAY STREET". WE HAVE LOOKED AT THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE OFFICEHOLDER; NOW LET'S LOOK AT THE ROLE OF MEDIA REPRESENTATIVES.

I AM A FIRM BELIEVER, AS I INDICATED EARLIER, THAT PEOPLE ARE MORE APT TO EVENTUALLY ARRIVE AT THE TRUTH WHEN THE MATTER AT HAND HAS BEEN EXAMINED AND DISCUSSED OPENLY AND FREELY. IT IS THE ROLE OF THE MEDIA TODAY IN MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST TO PROMOTE AND ASSIST IN THIS OPEN AND FREE DISCUSSION.

BUT THE FIRST REQUIREMENT FOR "OPEN" FREE DISCUSSION IS THAT OF "OBJECTIVITY" AND THERE IS FAR MORE TO BEING OBJECTIVE IN MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST THAN WE ORDINARILY CONSIDER.

IN MY OPINION, "OBJECTIVE" REPORTING REQUIRES "CONTINUOUS" REPORTING OF THE ON-GOING ACTIVITIES OF THE PUBLIC OFFICIAL AND HIS OFFICE.

QUITE FRANKLY, THIS IS A MATTER OF SOME CONCERN TO ME BECAUSE IT APPEARS THAT THERE MAY BE A TREND AWAY FROM THE TRADITIONAL "BEAT REPORTING" WHICH SAW MEDIA REPRESENTATIVES CALLING ON DESIGNATED OFFICEHOLDERS ON A REGULAR BASIS TO REPORT THE DAY-TO-DAY ACTIVITIES OF HIS OFFICE.

INSTEAD, WE SEEM TO BE MOVING MORE AND MORE TO "SPOT" REPORTING WHICH SEES EXCITING AND CONTROVERSIAL NEWS EVENTS RECEIVE ATTENTION WHILE OTHER ACTIVITIES OF PUBLIC INTEREST RECEIVE LESS AND LESS ATTENTION. THIS IS TRAGIC BECAUSE IT CAN CREATE A DISTORTED NOTION OF THE ROLE OF THE PUBLIC OFFICEHOLDER AND GOVERNMENT IN GENERAL AND THE PERFORMANCE OF INDIVIDUAL OFFICIALS IN PARTICULAR.

THE PUBLIC SHOULD HAVE THE BENEFIT OF KNOWING WHAT IS OCCURRING ON A DAY-TO-DAY BASIS IN ORDER TO BE FULLY INFORMED AND, IN TURN, OBJECTIVELY MEASURE THE PERFORMANCE OF THE PUBLIC OFFICEHOLDER.

IN ADDITION, MEMBERS OF THE PRESS SHOULD BE CAREFUL NOT TO SPEND A DISPROPORTIONATE AMOUNT OF THEIR ENERGIES TRYING TO CONFIRM THE WORSE SUSPICIONS OF THE ELECTORATE. PUBLIC OFFICEHOLDERS SHOULD BE PAINTED "COMPLETE WITH WARTS", TO BORROW AN EXPRESSION FROM SENATOR ERVIN, BUT THE PUBLIC DESERVES

THE TOTAL PICTURE AND, IN FACT, EXPECTS IT. MOST PEOPLE, I BELIEVE, WANT TO BE INFORMED, TO KNOW THE ORDINARY AS WELL AS THE SENSATIONAL, TO SEE THE WHOLE PICTURE AND CONSEQUENTLY WILL BE FAIR IN THEIR EVALUATIONS PROVIDED THEY HAVE THE INFORMATION NECESSARY TO DO SO.

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AS MANY OF YOU KNOW, THE PRE-ANNOUNCED NEWS CONFERENCE, COMPLETE WITH PREPARED STATEMENTS BY THE OFFICEHOLDER AND PRESS RELEASES FOR THE MEDIA, IS A STANDARD PART OF THE OPERATING PROCEDURE OF ANY MAJOR PUBLIC OFFICE. THIS IS GOOD BECAUSE IT PROVIDES ACCESSIBILITY AND AN EQUAL CHANCE FOR ALL MEMBERS OF THE MEDIA TO COVER A PARTICULAR STORY.

WE ARE CAUTIOUS IN OUR OFFICE ABOUT CALLING FORMAL PRESS CONFERENCES BECAUSE WE DO NOT WANT THE NEWS MEDIA TO FEEL THEY ARE BEING IMPOSED UPON OR "USED" BY THE OFFICE. THEREFORE, WE ORDINARILY CALL THE PRESS TOGETHER ONLY WHEN WE THINK WE HAVE A MATTER OF STATEWIDE INTEREST THAT REPRESENTS SOME SIGNIFICANT ACTION OR PROGRESS. CONSEQUENTLY, I HOPE WE HAVE ESTABLISHED A REPUTATION FOR BEING RESPONSIBLE IN THIS REGARD, AND WE ORDINARILY HAVE GOOD PRESS REPRESENTATION.

MY INCLINATION IS TO BE PRETTY FREE-WHEELING DURING THESE CONFERENCES, TO DISCUSS THE MATTER WHICH PROMPTED THE CALLING OF THE CONFERENCE, AND THEN TO OPEN THE FLOOR FOR ANY QUESTIONS CONCERNING THE CONFERENCE TOPIC OR ANY OTHER TOPIC.

THIS IS ALL WELL AND GOOD. IT PROMOTES COMMUNICATION. IT GIVES REPORTERS A CHANCE TO EXPLORE A LOT OF THINGS THEY MAY HAVE HAD ON THEIR MINDS AND GENERALLY CREATES A HEALTHY MEDIA RELATIONSHIP.

BUT LET'S LOOK AT THE OTHER SIDE OF THE COIN. OFTEN IN THE OPEN-QUESTION SESSION, A REPORTER HITS ON SOMETHING THAT CREATES SPECIAL INTEREST. SO WHAT HAPPENS? YOU DISCOVER THE NEXT MORNING THAT THE EVENT WHICH PROMPTED YOU TO CALL THE NEWS CONFERENCE IS PLAYING A POOR SECOND FIDDLE TO THE STORY BASED ON AN IRRELEVANT QUESTION POSED IN THE OPEN NEWS CONFERENCE.

THE ANSWER TO THIS PROBLEM IS SIMPLE; CALL A SINGLE-TOPIC NEWS CONFERENCE, RESTRICT QUESTIONS ONLY TO MATTERS WHICH YOU WANT DISCUSSED AND THEN BID THE PRESS FAREWELL. MOST PUBLIC OFFICIALS DON'T LIKE TO OPERATE THIS WAY. I KNOW I DON'T, BECAUSE, AS I SAID A MOMENT AGO, IT GOES AGAINST MY NATURE.

IT BECOMES APPARENT, THEN, THAT IN THIS PARTICULAR SITUATION, THE RELATIONSHIP OF THE PRESS AND THE OFFICEHOLDER IS VERY MUCH A TWO-WAY STREET. IN EXCHANGE FOR COMPLETE CANDOR AND ACCESSIBILITY, MEDIA REPRESENTATIVES, ON OCCASIONS, MUST RESIST THE TEMPTATION TO GIVE TOP BILLING TO THE CURIOUS AND CONTROVERSIAL.

IN RECENT YEARS, WE HAVE SEEN A PROLIFERATION OF PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICERS IN SOME PUBLIC AGENCIES. THEIR PRESENCE HAS SET OFF HOWLS FROM THE NEWS MEDIA AND DRAWN CHARGES THAT THEIR MAJOR FUNCTION IS THAT OF PROMOTING THE SELF-INTERESTS OF THE AGENCY RATHER THAN PUBLIC AWARENESS.

I WILL NOT DEBATE THAT ISSUE HERE TONIGHT. BUT I WILL MAKE THIS CHALLENGE TO THE MEMBERS OF THE MEDIA. MAKE YOUR COVERAGE OF PUBLIC AGENCIES SO THOROUGH AND COMPLETE THAT IT WILL BE IMPOSSIBLE FOR ANY AGENCY HEAD TO COMPLAIN THAT HE MUST HAVE PERSONS "IN HOUSE" TO ASSIST IN DISTRIBUTING PUBLIC INFORMATION. IN MY OPINION, NOTHING WOULD PLEASE THE GREAT MAJORITY OF PUBLIC OFFICEHOLDERS MORE OR BETTER SERVE THE VOTERS OF THIS STATE.

I WOULD LIKE TO TOUCH ON ONE MORE ITEM OF CURRENT INTEREST BEFORE CONCLUDING MY REMARKS AND THAT IS THE PROPOSAL FOR A NATIONAL PRESS "SHIELD LAW". THIS ISSUE PUTS VITAL SOCIAL VALUES IN CONFLICT: THE INTEREST OF SOCIETY IN FAIR AND EFFECTIVE ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE AND THE INTEREST OF SOCIETY IN A VIGOROUS AND INFORMED PRESS.

I AM FOR A FREE, STRONG AND AGGRESSIVE PRESS, BUT I AM OPPOSED TO ANY SHIELD LAW WHICH WOULD GIVE ABSOLUTE PRIVILEGE TO NEWSMEN.

THE FIRST AMENDMENT TO THE CONSTITUTION PROVIDES THAT THE "CONGRESS SHALL MAKE NO LAW ABRIDGING FREEDOM OF THE SPEECH OR FREEDOM OF THE PRESS. FOR NEARLY 200 YEARS THIS PROVISION HAS BEEN SUFFICIENT TO ALLOW THE NEWS MEDIA IN THIS COUNTRY TO OPERATE EFFECTIVELY WITHOUT A SHIELD LAW.

THIS IS A BROAD GUARANTEE OF PROTECTION WHICH ALLOWS FOR A CASE-BY-CASE CONSIDERATION OF THE CONFIDENTIALITY OF INFORMATION AND THE PROTECTION OF NEWS SOURCES. THIS IS

IN ACCORD WITH THE TRADITION OF AMERICAN LAW WHICH REJECTS "ABSOLUTES" IN FAVOR OF CASE-BY-CASE DETERMINATIONS. FOR EXAMPLE, WE HAVE A TRADITION OF BALANCING SOCIAL VALUES UNDER THE FIRST AMENDMENT, THE MOST FAMOUS BEING THE EXAMPLE BY JUSTICE HOLMES, WHICH POINTS OUT THAT IN SPITE OF THE CONSTITUTIONAL GUARANTEE OF FREEDOM OF SPEECH, ONE CANNOT SHOUT "FIRE" IN A CROWDED THEATRE.

THERE ARE MANY PRACTICAL PROBLEMS IN TRYING TO DRAFT A NEWSMAN'S PRIVILEGE LAW. FOR EXAMPLE, WHO WOULD BE COVERED? OBVIOUSLY YOU COULDN'T RESTRICT THE PRIVILEGE TO JUST "ESTABLISHMENT" MEDIA AND IF YOU MADE IT ALL-ENCOMPASSING, YOU INVITE EXPLOITATION BY THE TYPE OF INDIVIDUALS WHO SEEK SELF-SERVING LOOPHOLES IN ANY LAW.

WHEN WE LOOK SERIOUSLY AT THE RELATED QUESTIONS OF THE EXTENT OF SUCH A PRIVILEGE, THE DEFINITION OF THE CIRCUMSTANCES UNDER WHICH IT COULD BE CLAIMED, AND THE PROCEDURAL MECHANISM WHICH MIGHT BE NEEDED FOR MAKING SUCH A CLAIM, A NATIONAL NEWSMAN'S PRIVILEGE LAW LOOKS LESS AND LESS ATTRACTIVE. THE INHERENT PROBLEMS OF CONTROL AND ADMINISTRATION COULD EVEN EVENTUALLY RAISE THE QUESTION OF LICENSING OF NEWSMEN, AND I DO NOT BELIEVE THAT ANYONE WHO BELIEVES IN THE FREE PRESS AS THE BULWARK OF LIBERTY COULD ACCEPT THIS SORT OF GOVERNMENT INTERFERENCE.

IN MY OPINION, IT IS DANGEROUS TO BEGIN LEGISLATING WITHIN THE REALM OF THE FIRST AMENDMENT. SO I THINK WE HAD

BETTER LEAVE WELL ENOUGH ALONE. I THINK THE PRESS AND THE PUBLIC IS BEST SERVED BY PRESENT CONSTITUTIONAL GUARANTEES AND A DETERMINATION OF PRIVILEGE ON A CASE-BY-CASE BASIS WHICH WEIGHS THE PARTICULAR SOCIAL VALUES INVOLVED.

I CANNOT END THESE COMMENTS WITHOUT A SINCERE WORD OF PRAISE FOR THE MEDIA REPRESENTATIVES WITH WHOM I HAVE DEALT OVER THE YEARS, ESPECIALLY SINCE BECOMING ATTORNEY GENERAL. WITH VERY FEW EXCEPTIONS, THEY HAVE BEEN EXTREMELY CONSCIENTIOUS AND RESPONSIBLE.

I RECOGNIZE THAT THEIRS IS NOT AN EASY JOB AND THAT TIME AND MANPOWER RESTRAINTS ALONE OFTEN SEVERELY RESTRICT THE SCOPE AND DEPTH OF DAY-TO-DAY NEWS COVERAGE. LIKEWISE, I THINK THEY GENERALLY UNDERSTAND THE DIFFICULTY AND PERILS OF PUBLIC OFFICEHOLDING, THE IMMENSE POWER OF THE MEDIA, AND CONSEQUENTLY THEIR RESPONSIBILITY TO SEE THAT IT SERVES THE PROPER FUNCTION OF COMMUNICATION IN A FREE SOCIETY.

OFFICEHOLDERS AND THE PRESS, I THINK, SHARE THE BELIEF THAT ACCESS TO INFORMATION ABOUT GOVERNMENT IS REQUIRED FOR THE DEMOCRATIC SYSTEM TO WORK. OURS SHOULD BE A COOPERATIVE EFFORT TO SEE THAT SECRECY IS MINIMIZED AND THE FLOW OF ACCURATE AND CURRENT FACTS IS KEPT FREE AND CONSTANT.

THE CHALLENGE TO RENEW CREDIBILITY IN GOVERNMENT IS A REAL ONE TO EVERY OFFICEHOLDER IN THIS NATION TODAY. A GOVERNMENT WHOSE LEADERS CANNOT BE BELIEVED RUNS THE RISK OF LOSING THE PRIVILEGE OF REPRESENTING THE PEOPLE, AND THE PEOPLE RUN THE RISK OF LOSING THE CONTEST BETWEEN DEMOCRACY AND DESPOTISM.

OPEN GOVERNMENT INVITES ENLIGHTENED POLITICS AND CREATING OPEN GOVERNMENT IS A TWO-WAY STREET BETWEEN PUBLIC OFFICEHOLDERS AND MEDIA REPRESENTATIVES.