

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS STATEMENT OF NEWS VALUES AND PRINCIPLES

For more than a century and a half, men and women of The Associated Press have had the privilege of bringing truth to the world. They have gone to great lengths, overcome great obstacles – and, too often, made great and horrific sacrifices – to ensure that the news was reported quickly, accurately and honestly. Our efforts have been rewarded with trust: More people in more places get their news from the AP than from any other source.

In the 21st century, that news is transmitted in more ways than ever before – in print, on the air and on the Web, with words, images, graphics, sounds and video. But always and in all media, we insist on the highest standards of integrity and ethical behavior when we gather and deliver the news.

That means we abhor inaccuracies, carelessness, bias or distortions. It means we will not knowingly introduce false information into material intended for publication or broadcast; nor will we alter photo or image content. Quotations must be accurate, and precise.

It means we always strive to identify all the sources of our information, shielding them with anonymity only when they insist upon it and when they provide vital information – not opinion or speculation; when there is no other way to obtain that information; and when we know the source is knowledgeable and reliable.

It means we don't plagiarize.

It means we avoid behavior or activities that create a conflict of interest and compromise our ability to report the news fairly and accurately, uninfluenced by any person or action.

It means we don't misidentify or misrepresent ourselves to get a story. When we seek an interview, we identify ourselves as AP journalists.

It means we don't pay newsmakers for interviews, to take their photographs or to film or record them.

It means we must be fair. Whenever we portray someone in a negative light, we must make a real effort to obtain a response from that person. When mistakes are made, they must be corrected – fully, quickly and ungrudgingly.

And ultimately, it means it is the responsibility of every one of us to ensure that these standards are upheld. Any time a question is raised about any aspect of our work, it should be taken seriously.

"I have no thought of saying The Associated Press is perfect. The frailties of human nature attach to it," wrote Melville Stone, the great general manager of the AP. But he went on to say that "the thing it is striving for is a truthful, unbiased report of the world's happenings ... ethical in the highest degree."

He wrote those words in 1914. They are true today.

For the full statement: <http://www.ap.org/newsvalues/index.html>