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Mellinger, Gwyneth and John Ferré (Eds.) *Journalism's Ethical Progression: A Twentieth Century Journey*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2020, 259 pp., \$95.00 (hardback).

Reviewed by Berrin A. Beasley, University of North Florida (bbeasley@unf.edu)

How the journalism profession arrived at its first code of ethics and its subsequent iterations is the focus of *Journalism's Ethical Progression*, an edited volume by Gwyneth Mellinger and John Ferré that charts the evolution of journalism ethics during the twentieth century. This progression is explained as the result of ongoing self-reflection by the profession of the tensions between its constitutionally protected freedom of the press and its higher goals of monitoring government, holding it accountable, and informing citizenry.

The maturation of the profession's definition of its responsibilities and associated ethical behaviors is revealed in the nine case studies presented in this book. They provide valuable insight into major social and political challenges experienced by the profession throughout the twentieth century and how the industry responded to these challenges, making this volume a meaningful contribution to the literature of journalism ethics. The book would also serve as an excellent supplemental text for upper-level undergraduate journalism students and for journalism historians who would appreciate the volume for its research-based approach that provides important historical context and analysis.

The case studies are presented in chronological order, focusing on individual people and moments important to the progression of the profession's ethical standards. It addresses the origins of the first journalism code of ethics and covers important topics of diversity, advocacy, labor rights, and the role of government in the evolution of journalism's ethical guidelines.

The first two chapters by Ronald R. Rodgers and Ken J. Ward are the mainstays of the volume. Remaining chapters focus on individual people, situations, and movements that illustrate the tension between personal interpretations of journalism codes

of ethics and the professional application of those interpretations. Each chapter is well-written and exceptionally sourced. Together they provide an understanding of the creation and evolution of journalism ethics wrought against the backdrop of two world wars, government interest, gender disparity, and inadequate newsroom diversity. They address the issues of social responsibility, conflict of interest, religious advocacy, objectivity, and the public's right to know, all topics as relevant today as they were in the previous century.

In the first chapter Rodgers anchors the book by explaining that the rise of industrialization and modernization fueled the expectation, from within the newsroom and from without, that journalists have a professional conscience. Rodgers's framing of journalists' newly perceived obligations paves the way for other chapter contributors to discuss the continually evolving definitions of social responsibility and professionalism.

Following Rodgers's chapter is Ward's account of the American Society of Newspaper Editors' development of the profession's first ethical guidelines, the 1923 Canons of Journalism. Ward's recounting of the development of the Canons and the controversy over its limitations provides important insight into why journalism codes of ethics function only as guidelines of behavior. This subject is all the more relevant today given the rapidly evolving demands placed on journalists by economic forces and the dizzying array of technologies used to disseminate information.

One constant throughout the progression of changing ethical expectations is government's interaction with the journalism profession, which is addressed in multiple chapters. Sometimes, as evidenced in Carolyn M. Edy's chapter on women's roles as reporters during World War II, gender

discrimination by the military and newsroom colleagues stymied the evolution of journalism ethics. In Mellinger's chapter readers will find an insightful analysis of the profession's attitude toward conflicts of interest following the Hutchins Commission's question of whether the press can be accountable to the public when favoring its rights over its responsibilities to that public. Patrick S. Washburn and Michael S. Sweeney's thorough investigation of Dean Jennings's firing analyzes a time when the First Amendment was used as a reason to deny journalists labor protections, and in her chapter Erin K. Coyle examines the growth of the people's right to know movement as a result of government secrecy, contextually recounting how this movement defined government transparency as crucial to the press' role as government watchdog.

Parallel to the profession's governmental considerations is the practical application of ethical expectations. Tim Klein and Elisabeth Fondren's

analysis of science and democracy, as proposed by Walter Lippman and John Dewey respectively, as evolving journalistic responsibilities is a timely read given today's struggle with misinformation and disinformation. Mellinger and Coyle's study of the American Society of Newspaper Editors' Goal 2000 initiative to increase newsroom diversity makes clear that bringing diverse perspectives into the newsroom is an imperative and ongoing need.

Journalism's Ethical Progression reminds us that when journalists in previous eras were faced with ethical challenges prompted by changing social and political circumstances, the profession engaged in self-reflection processes from which it emerged with revised definitions of journalism's roles and responsibilities. Students, historians, and practitioners seeking to contextualize today's journalistic ethical challenges would be well-served to read the lessons recounted in this book.