# PREFACE

As you glance through this book, you will notice its features—text, illustrations, cases, photos—represent choices the authors have made. I think it's as important to point out what's missing as what's there, and why. I'll begin with what's been left out and conclude with what you'll find in the text.

First, you'll find no media bashing in this book. There's enough of that already, and besides, it's too easy to do. This book is not designed to indict the media; it's designed to train its future employees. If we dwell on ethical lapses from the past, it is only to learn from them what we can do to prevent similar occurrences in the future.

Second, you'll find no conclusions in this book—neither at the end of the book nor after each case. No one has yet written the conclusive chapter to the ethical dilemmas of the media, and I don't suspect that we will be the first.

*What, then, is in the book?*

First, you'll find a diverse, up-to-date and classroom-tested compilation of cases in media ethics. Authors from many institutions and media outlets contributed real-life and hypothetical cases to this text to help students prepare for the ethical situations they will confront in whatever areas of the media they enter. We believe case studies are the premiere teaching vehicle for the study of ethics, and this book reflects what we think are the best available.

Second, the text binds these cases together and provides a philosophical basis from which to approach them. While it intentionally has been kept succinct, the text introduces students to the relevant ethical theory that will help eliminate "quandary ethics," which often results when cases are used as a teaching strategy.

Third, you'll find built-in discussion starters in the questions that follow each case. The questions at the end of the cases were written by the authors of each case, with the instructions that they were to be like concentric circles. The tightest circle—the micro issues—focuses only on the case at hand and the dilemmas it presents. The next circle—midrange issues—focuses on the problem in its context and sometimes manipulates the facts slightly to see if the decisions remain the same. The most abstract level—the macro issues—focuses on issues such as truth, equity, responsibility and loyalty. Properly used, the questions can guide discussion from the particular to the universal in any case in a single class period.

The book may be used either as the main text for a media ethics course or as a supplementary text for ethics modules in courses on newswriting, media and society, advertising and public relations and photojournalism. The book works well for

teachers who like to use the Socratic method in their classes or as resource material for lecture classes.

Our approach in this text is best illustrated by an anecdote from a class. One student had the last hand up after a particularly heated case study. When I called on her, she asked, "Well, what's the answer?" I was surprised that she asked the question, and I was surprised that I didn't have a ready answer. I joked my way out of the question by asking if she wanted "The Answer" with a capital "a" or a lowercase one. If she asked today, I'd respond differently. I'd tell her that the answer exists within her, but that it won't emerge in any justifiable form without systematic study and frequent wrestling with the issues.

That's what this book is about. The chapters direct you in some systematic way through the philosophy that has explored these questions for centuries. The cases will make you wrestle with that knowledge in scenarios not unlike ones you might encounter while working. Together, they might not enable you to find "The Answer," but they might help you find *your* answer.

For the authors and contributors,

Philip Patterson

## New to This Edition

The Eighth Edition of *Media Ethics: Issues and Cases* includes 29 new cases others have been updated. These are listed below and were written by academics and professionals who have personal knowledge of, or interest in the cases.

**Chapter 1** Includes four new chapter-opening scenarios each with a different example of ethical decision making.

**Chapter 2**

*Can I Quote Me on That?* by Chad Painter, Eastern New Mexico University

*News and the Transparency Standard,* by Lee Wilkins, University of Missouri

*NPR, the* New York Times *and Working Conditions in China*, by Lee Wilkins, University of Missouri

*Caught in the "WAR ZONE,"* by Mike Grundmann and Roger Soenksen, James Madison University

*Murdoch's Mess,* by Lee Wilkins, University of Missouri

**Chapter 3**

*A Charity Drops the Ball,* by Philip Patterson, Oklahoma Christian University

*YELP!!! Consumer Empowerment or Small Business Extortion?* by Lee Wilkins, University of Missouri

*The Facts Behind the Ads: Oregon Changes a Campaign,* by Lee Wilkins, University of Missouri

*Sponsorships, Sins and PR: What Are the Boundaries?* by Lauren Bacon Brengarth, University of Colorado at Colorado Springs

*Channel One: Commercialism in Schools,* by Rozalyn Osborn, University of Missouri, and Philip Patterson, Oklahoma Christian University

**Chapter 4**

*Whose Facebook Page Is It Anyway,* by Amy Simons, University of Missouri

*What Would Socrates Have Done? The Disappearance of Hillary Clinton* by Lee Wilkins, University of Missouri

**Chapter 5**

*Anderson Cooper's Not-So-Private Life,* by Lee Wilkins, University of Missouri

*Facebook: Should You Opt Out or In?* by Lee Wilkins, University of Missouri

*Politics and Money—What's Private and What's Not,* by Lee Wilkins, University of Missouri

**Chapter 6**

*The Truth about the Facts: PolitiFact.com*, by Lee Wilkins, University of Missouri

*WikiLeaks,* by Lee Wilkins, University of Missouri

*Control Room: Do Culture and History Matter in Reporting News?* by Lee Wilkins, University of Missouri

**Chapter 7**

*Who Needs Advertising?* by Lee Wilkins, University of Missouri

*Netflix: Not So Fast . . . A Response to Customer Furor,* by Lee Wilkins, University of Missouri

*Outsourcing the News,* by Lee Wilkins, University of Missouri

*Transparency in Fund Raising: The Corporation for Public Broadcasting Standard,* by Lee Wilkins, University of Missouri

**Chapter 8**

*The Case of the Well-Documented Suicide,* by Philip Patterson, Oklahoma Christian University

*What Do I Do First?* by Lee Wilkins, University of Missouri

**Chapter 9**

*News Now, Facts Later,* by Lee Wilkins, University of Missouri

*What's Yours Is Mine: The Ethics of News Aggregation,* by Chad Painter, Eastern New Mexico University

**Chapter 10**

Searching for Sugar Man: *Rediscovered Art,* by Lee Wilkins, University of Missouri

*Bob Costas and Jerry Sandusky: Is Sports Entertainment or Journalism?* by Lee Wilkins, University of Missouri

*Crowdsourcing a Book: John Lehrer, Bob Dylan and Nonfiction Truth*

by Philip Patterson, Oklahoma Christian University