

## Michigan Journalism Hall of Fame enshrines Charles with a boost from women's underwear

By John U. Bacon, '06

"What is your dream?"

So starts every candidate's journey for the Knight-Wallace Journalism Fellows Program. The man who asks this, Charles Eisendrath, is serious about making those dreams come true — and he's spent almost three decades building a program that has helped hundreds achieve them.

While Eisendrath's own dreams didn't include induction into the Michigan Journalism Hall of Fame — which wasn't founded until 1985 — that's what he will receive on Sunday, April 13, joining Helen Thomas, Ring Lardner and legendary *Detroit Free Press* editor Joe Stroud, among others.

Eisendrath left St. Louis for Yale and the University of Michigan, where he earned his master's degree in journalism. He started at the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, then moved on to *The Baltimore Evening Sun* and *Time* magazine, which sent him to Washington, London, Paris and Buenos Aires, where he served as bureau chief of Hispanic South America.

On a fall day in 1973, Eisendrath was walking across the street in Santiago, Chile, to interview Salvador Allende, when planes started bombing. In the words of *Time's* editor, "Tanks ... were advancing past (Eisendrath's) window — just across Constitution Square from the beleaguered Moneda, the Presidential Palace — and raking the hotel's façade with gunfire; Chilean army fighter-bombers were streaking overhead. For a while, guests were ordered into the basement for safety; when Eisendrath returned to his room, he found machine gun bullets lodged in his ceiling."

Former fellow Evan Halper, '12, takes it from there. "Charles had a worldwide



Charles Eisendrath, upper right, in his pre-hat-and-bowtie days, with his KWF '75 class. His field of study that year, when he was on loan from *Time* magazine, was "Problems of international ecological cooperation."

exclusive. Deadline loomed and he had no way to get his story out. All communication with the outside world was restricted amid the chaos."

How did Eisendrath finish the job? With women's underwear.

Halper explains. "Whenever he visited Santiago, Charles had delivered underwear to the ladies who operated the few international telephone lines in town. It was a precious gift in a town struggling with dry goods shortages. Panties often had to be acquired on the black market.

"When an international phone line

miraculously opened up amid the coup, one of those operators saw to it that Charles had access. The story made it to New York."

The traits Eisendrath would need years later to lead a very different mission were already on display: Old World charm, street smarts and a focus on the final outcome.

Two years later, Eisendrath left *Time* at the peak of its power to join the University of Michigan's journalism department. His colleagues must have thought he had left the game, especially when budget cuts prompt-

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# From the Head Fellow

— By Charles R. Eisendrath, '75

## A TALE OF THREE CITIES

It's hard not thinking about Dickens' famous opener about "the best of times ... the worst of times" when your annual itinerary includes cities famous for both times and your two dozen travel mates are journalism fellows, intellectual omnivores often encountering all for the first time.

When KWF began visiting Buenos Aires in partnership with *Clarín*, the paper (actually, its television properties) was flush with money and the city was bursting with new buildings and optimism — well, optimism Argentine style, "minus mal," or less bad in their mournful phrase.

That was 2000. We were also there during the coup of 2001, the arrest of *Clarín's* publisher in 2002 and a year later the arrest of the judge who had jailed the publisher for receiving allegedly stolen goods — two children adopted during the Dirty War. We witnessed the ruinous pegging the peso to the dollar and then the financial collapse leading to the largest national default in economic history. The comeback from that and, last December, for the government's partial dismemberment of the *Clarín* organization and a definite whiff of impending momentousness (another coup? another meltdown?) in the air.

Through all of this, I was struck that each year Argentine economic analysts compared their country with Turkey, which seemed odd to me ... and utterly ridiculous to our Turkish financial experts. After all, said the Turks, their economic projections started higher and were going pretty much straight up, like a ladder against a sturdy wall. Argentina's looked like a line drawn by someone who failed a Breathalyzer test.

Our Turkish news tours began in 2005, soon after power was assumed by a new party unusual for both its open religiosity and its fervor for joining the European Union. Even though in my view Turkey



simply is not part of Europe and I take a dim view of combining religion and politics, the democrat (small d) in me was pulling for them because they represented those long locked out of power.

Just how big a slice of the population became clearer with each succeeding election: AKP (Justice and Development Party) widened its victory margins in all of them and made the reasons for its popularity increasingly clear. Despite insistence on making it possible for women to express their piety (and also, to some, show subservience) by wearing head scarves at universities and offices, AKP outdid any secular party since Atatürk himself in promoting women's place outside the home. Each year, we saw more "covered" women and also whole gardens of skyscrapers, rising like hollyhocks from the city's low, gray skyline. "Welcome to our construction zone," became a common Istanbul greeting.

As in Buenos Aires, this year there was a powerful feeling of something unwinding and not just in Istanbul where, significantly, urban development set off the first major uprising against AKP. Tens of thousands turned out to protest turning the city's largest remaining green space/public protest site into a shopping center modeled on an enclosed Ottoman military barracks. Hundreds were tear-gassed in

June and several died. Aftershocks rolled on during our visit in February. By that time the target wasn't Gezi Square, it was Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan and AKP.

Sao Paulo was a comparative bower of optimism. True, a sustained boom had been partially deflated by China's decreased demand for the output of Brazil's farms and mines, and less easy money was reminding the country's have-nots of underlying inequities. Like over-the-top new World Cup/Summer Olympics stadiums while public transport and education go begging. Riots followed military-style pacification of "favelas" deemed dangerously close to the games. No one, however, was predicting cataclysm.

At this writing, with less than a week to go before Turkey's municipal elections, the political turmoil in Istanbul shifted from purported recordings of Erdogan ordering his son to quickly ditch millions of lira, the arrest of two cabinet ministers' sons for corruption to open warfare on the prime minister's erstwhile proponents in the Gullenist movement. Now it's Erdogan's clumsy attempts to block social media. Stocks dived, businesses protested, international opinion turned violently negative and Abdullah Gul, Turkey's president and Erdogan's chief AKP ally, came out opening against the effort as "silly."

In a series of petulant shout-outs, Erdogan sounded very much like the semi-professional soccer player he once was, arguing against the rules of the game when they cost him a goal. Speculation has it that he and President Gul might trade places a la Vladimir Putin and Dmitry Medvedev. Gul has recently sounded more centrist than Erdogan, or maybe just better at defense. That would figure. They once played for the same team, Erdogan on offense, Gul as the goalie. ▀

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Charles R. Eisendrath".

# LAURA HOLSON FINDS HER VOICE, LITERALLY

*The author, Priscilla Lindsay, is chair of the Department of Theatre & Drama at the University of Michigan.*

This is a love letter to Laura Holson, '14, who dropped into my life and my class in the fall of last year, and whose friendship I now prize. Laura has reminded me, through the fresh eyes with which she encounters the art of acting, of the elusiveness of the art itself. But let me start at the beginning.

The phone rang in early September. It was Jim Bernstein, head of Screen Arts and Culture, and a man I have come to know through his passion for my acting students, as they involve themselves in his film classes and his own students' directing projects. "Hello, Priscilla, I know you said your Voiceover Acting class was full in your last email, but I gotta tell you, this Laura Holson is a firecracker. She's a reporter for *The New York Times*, and she REALLY wants to learn about doing commercials and she REALLY wants into your class. Can you do me a favor?"

So I did. First day of class, in the bowels of the Walgreen Drama Center, in a room with a computer and a microphone hooked up for recording the work, 16 Theatre & Drama and Musical Theatre actors filed in, along with a 50ish woman



Holson

who exuded "uncomfortable." And she was, literally, uncomfortable, with a cast on one foot from a fall over the holidays. She sat right beside me at the long table, seemingly for some kind of protection, and her eyes huge with fear. The kids carried on animated conversations and laughed easily, the entire time making visual, curious passes at our "newbie."

Even though everyone shared stories, read copy cold at the microphone (pieces they'd never seen before), Laura spent the two hours in a kind of hell: too old, too self-conscious, totally out of her element. You see, Laura wrote for a living. She was a top-notch interviewer, but she (her



words) wanted to find her voice. Her real voice, as an actor.

In some ways Laura became the mascot for that class — always self-deprecating and always encouraging the class' affectionate joshing. If anything, she over-prepared the commercials and narration I gave them. Acutely aware of her voice in the headphones, Laura had a hard time forgetting about modulation and focusing instead on the "story" of each piece: the who, the what, the why. After a few classes she learned to take a deep breath and relax at the microphone, and she began to understand the concept of talking to a one-person audience — always the secret for a good commercial "read."

Often Laura accompanied me back up to my office after class and regaled me with stories about the other Knight Wallace fellows and their escapades on outings, camping trips, travel to Europe. I ate this stuff up: what an incredible bunch of brilliant folks — all together for a year on the U-M campus to do what they wanted, take any classes that caught their fancy and recharge their batteries. I wanted to meet them.

Laura is nothing if not passionate — about her work, about the world around her, about new challenges no matter how scary or daunting — and so when she asked me to take her on as a private

student for the winter term, to "really learn about acting," I did. We met once a week and I worked her through some basic Michael Chekhov exercises, some improv work, and finally, a monologue. She learned about the Big 10 Questions an actor asks of any character he/she plays; she explored three characters she invented herself, based on photographs she brought in to class. We tackled a speech from Sarah Ruhl's "Clean House" as our final Mount Everest.

Laura would write furiously the days and night before our class, putting down on paper her reactions to the character, recounting her own experiences, trying to unlock her emotions on paper. She proudly handed me her work the next day, talking fast and eating up the time so she wouldn't have to get up and actually perform. The trick, of course, was to stop "using words as a shield," she liked to quote me as saying, and start living those words in the present tense, in front of me, in an empty classroom.

That monologue from "Clean House," about a woman starting to come to terms with her parents' deaths, held the essence of Laura's triumph and frustrations with acting. She knew now what she wanted to do with the piece. Learning HOW to do that is the stuff of years of training. We finished up the semester's work with an hour in an audio studio, recording that monologue and two of her personal stories. She did well.

I finally got to meet the other fellows. They were the friendliest, most gracious bunch of folks I have met here at Michigan, outside of my own department and school. Laura made that happen. She wants to become a video essayist now, filming events and snippets of life around the world, and then narrating those stories with her own voice. She's all about people connections, the relationship of people to places, and places to memories. I love her writing. I came to love her voice. From now on, I'll be her biggest fan. ▀

# 'AN INCREDIBLE WRITER, STORYTELLER AND FRIEND'

By Harry Siegel, '11

Our friend Matthew Power, '11, who died at 39 of heatstroke while in Uganda for *Men's Journal* to write about a man walking the Nile, was an incredible fellow and also an incredible Knight-Wallace fellow.

Don't tell Charles, but Matt was collecting all through the fellowship year. He just couldn't stop finding good stories — they seemed to follow him, and over time it became obvious what seemed like good luck at first was the fruit of his curiosity, openness, intelligence and hard work. He took our trip up north, to Grand Rapids, and turned it into a brilliant *GQ* story about Art Prize and the DeVos family fortune. (Alec MacGillis also ended up with a great *Harper's* piece that came from the same trip, about the Meijer family — the Waltons of Michigan, basically — and their bareknuckle fight to open a mega-store in a one-intersection town near Traverse City.)

Matt lived walking distance from me in Brooklyn, and, we found out, he even married Jessica Benko, another fantastic journalist, on the same day that I married my wife, Sarah. But we had to go to Ann Arbor to meet. The foursome friendship continued in Brooklyn after our collective dream-ticket year came to its sad but inevitable end.

When he wasn't reveling in trivia — where Justin Pope would report in minutes after the fact with perfectly written AP-style dispatches detailing the group's latest win, thanks to those two and fellow trivia titan Todd Leopold — or talking over drinks, he'd be off exploring the ruins of Detroit, or spending time with Jess. The year was a chance to hold and develop thoughts, and Matt did just that.

He gave the talk marking the end of our fellowship, and it was perfect. After joking about how journalists are something like crabs, just with degrees from good colleges, he talked about how we'd gotten to know one another and come out of our



Matthew Power

"I suppose I've always felt like that about journalism though. Every time I cash a check, I feel like I'm putting one over on somebody. Luckily those checks don't even amount to sofa money for the media moguls that underwrite them, so nobody's noticed yet."

shells, to work together as journalists — our question sessions with the spate of dignitaries who came in were the best I've ever been involved in, with the group supporting and respecting each other's lines of questioning, something like listening to jazz musicians improvise — and enjoy each other as people, with everything quirky and strange and frustrating and

compelling that entails.

As to the fellowship itself, he said:

"The adventures went on, and it was all, of course, too much to absorb. The sheer volume of seminars, of interesting people brought in to be grilled, skewered, served up for our pleasure, was just mind-boggling. (It occurs to me how many journalism terms are food-based.) Politicians, writers, musicians, scientists, experts on every conceivable subject, and they all sat in that corner and we got to ask them whatever came to mind. This, to a room full of widely curious, wildly intelligent people, is about the greatest thing there is. When we had our evaluation forms to fill out yesterday, the list of seminar speakers ran eight pages. We'd often look to one another and shake our heads, chuckling: I cannot believe we get paid to do this. And I still can't believe it. Because it's absolutely insanely beautiful and weird that anyone would support something like this fellowship. I suppose I've always felt like that about journalism though. Every time I cash a check, I feel like I'm putting one over on somebody. Luckily those checks don't even amount to sofa money for the media moguls that underwrite them, so nobody's noticed yet. But to create a place like this for a collection of strangers from around the world, Charles and Birgit, and Patty and Mary Ellen and Candy and Melissa, you've wrought some wonderfully strange magic to make this happen."

Matt was an incredible writer, reporter and storyteller (not usually the overlapping categories we like to pretend they are), and friend, too — a guy who'd been everywhere and done everything but was truly happy — with that famous, big smile — to sit around and drink and joke, and hear your stories.

He was an inspiration to our group, as the only freelancer, as the one who I think was closest to the career he'd dreamed of and the voice he'd aspired to when he started in journalism. I'm going to miss the time we had with him, but will be forever thankful we had it. ▶

# KWF '14 REVEALS 'AHA' MOMENTS

**Petra Bartosiewicz:** “Cantering across the Argentine pampas after a delicious lunch of steak and wine, I looked at the fellows, my colleagues and now dear friends, and thought, ah, journalism!”

**Jenny Baxter:** “Being a KW fellow is like being part of a wonderful, extended von Trapp family. With them, you know you can climb every mountain.”

**Martin Bidegaray:** “I was an only child until unforgettable fellows and Birgit appeared in my life and gave me a new family that I will love forever.”

**Sylvia Colombo:** “I was amazed to find in U-M’s library sources for my study of the Brazilian monarchy that are unknown in Brazil!”

**Patrick Coolican:** “Watching your friend loudly argue with a government official in another country is exhilarating.”

**Ilja Herb:** “Take any class on any subject, subtract the stress, exams and deliverables, add some whiskey and like-minded people from all corners of the world — voila, welcome to expansive thought and learning, Knight-Wallace style.”

**Laura Holson:** “On March 12 at 10:22 a.m., I realized I had developed a skill for driving in snowstorms.”

**Michael Innes:** “Understanding the true, noble spirit of the fellowship by line-dancing badly, eating my first ever Denny’s, then passing out from lack of irony.”

**Si-haeng Jeong:** “It’s a life-changing experience as a journalist, a woman and a human ... as long as you open yourself to a whole new world.”



**Bonney Kapp:** “The pressure and never-ending deadlines disappear in Michigan, and with this gift of time and rich university resources, one can reflect, try new things and grow intellectually.”

**Ruhullah Khapalwak:** “The warm friends and great contacts I made and the many interesting things I learned compensated for the horrible freezing cold.”

**Louisa Lim:** “Having the luxury of time — to read, to learn, to listen, to think, to drink, to spend together — is an uncommon gift.”

**Curt Nickisch:** “From the fellowship’s travels in South America, reinforced in Turkey — realizing that to maintain democracy, force of habit may be just as influential as conviction.”

**Marcia Pledger:** “With new digital skills and swimming lessons, I’m learning to write my own story, tackling fears along the way.”

**Cynthia Rodriguez:** “Walking through the old West Side at night and not hearing or seeing a soul, was at first frightening. But I soon realized that without all the noise I could hear myself better.”

**Megha Satyanarayana:** “You’ll wake up. You’ll look around. And you’ll realize it’s OK to say no to eggplant. As long as you say yes to wine.”

**Toni Sciarretta:** “Learning that the printed word will be more necessary than ever in this (current) valley of misleading information. The challenge is how to answer this new demand.”

**Laura Starecheski:** “Seeing Greek myths reflected with equal power reading Cheever’s ‘The Swimmer’ aloud at Wallace House and rambling through Lycian ruins on the Turkish Mediterranean coast.”

**Alex Stone:** “What has astounded me most about the fellowship is how much I love the people in it. All of them. That never happens.”

**Scott Tong:** “‘What genes do you have?’ Charles asked at an October seminar. Another reminder to chase the family history no one else will write. Project under way.”

**James Wellford:** “The fellowship is an incubator for creativity and enquiry. The group is full of wisdom and humor. In the words of Argentine fellow Martin Bidegaray, we all are members of a lovely new family.” ▶

# DEMOCRACY SLOW TO MATURE IN TURKEY

By Megha Satyanarayana, '14

In the days before we left for Turkey, KWF '14 gathered in the bleak snow of Ann Arbor for a briefing on a country few of us had visited. We learned in depth how a fight over moving trees from Istanbul's Gezi Park blossomed in this young democracy last May into massive demonstrations about human rights. Police violence led to international condemnation of a prime minister many were calling authoritarian.

Yet, the average Turk wasn't alerted that Istanbul was up in arms. While the rest of the world watched the 24-hour coverage of the protests, the country's main broadcasters blacked out their coverage. One even ran a documentary about penguins.

We were ready, or so we thought.

Checks and balances, access to information and the power struggle between majorities and minorities were the key themes of our trip to Turkey, where in the last weeks of 2013, Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan was accused of massive corruption and responded by passing laws to rid the government of his critics. We arrived a few weeks before pivotal local elections, ready to see a young republic govern itself in crisis.

And within days, Erdogan passed an Internet censorship law aimed at quelling the social media firestorm that marked the previous months' protests.

Landing in Istanbul, in this most secular of Muslim nations, the fellows knew one thing to be true: The turmoil we would soon see was rooted in much more than a few beloved trees.

"I thought there was a disturbing degree of paranoia in what is one of the most beautiful countries in the world," said Jamie Wellford, '14, former photo editor of *Newsweek*.

We were traveling with an all-star cast, beginning with Michael Slackman and his boss at *The New York Times*, Executive Editor Jill Abramson, (also on the fellowship's board), who outlined the *Times*' international expansion plans. Amir Paivar, '13, also joined us from London to give a *BBC*



At the tomb of Ataturk, Turkey's founder, soldiers stand guard, completely still for three- and four-hour shifts. Photos by Michael Innes

*Persian Service* perspective on Iran's internal developments.

Up-to-the-moment interpretation of Turkey's tumultuous politics came from our host, Ferhat Boratav, who somehow found time from his duties as chief editor of *CNN Turk* to be with us every day. He ferried us around the country, explaining how an empire-turned-democracy that straddles two continents could at once be secular and religious, nationalist and global, peaceful and violent. With local elections on the horizon, he arranged for us to meet leaders from the main political parties, complete with a briefing book to put the struggle in perspective.

We met with the ruling AK Party, united in their belief that the accusations against the prime minister were the work of their former allies, the supporters of imam Fetullah Gulen. Words were chosen carefully. Answers were never direct.

We met their main opposition, the more secular Republican People's Party, or CHP. They spoke readily of alleged corruption but we failed to hear how they would fix government in the country they once ran. The spin was frustrating.

"For a country famous for being physically divided, it's sad but somehow appropriate that the political land masses are now being washed apart by a sea of rhetoric and

distrust," said Michael Innes, '14, of *BBC World Radio* in London.

We criss-crossed the country, going to the Kurdish city of Diyarbakir to meet with leaders of the Kurdish BDP — Peace and Democracy Party. We flew to Ankara to tour the tomb of the secularist Ataturk, the father of modern Turkey.

We saw a country of people angry about corruption but hesitant to change a political leadership that has overseen tremendous economic growth.

"I felt like I was in a very active democracy," said Si-Haeng Jong, '14, a political reporter for *Chosun Ilbo*, a daily Korean newspaper. "Many people are very active and interested in democracy and politics. (Political involvement) was higher than expected."

But then we saw a country where media was seemingly controlled by the government, a place where being critical could cost you your job, or even your freedom.

"Over and over we heard them defend government actions and claim unconvincingly that journalists were in jail not for what they had written or said, but for breaking other unspecified laws. The denials were disturbing and the danger and intimidation that journalists face were never more crystal clear," said Cynthia Rodriguez, '14, an urban policy reporter at *WNYC* in New York.

We toured *CNN*'s office, the *Hurriyet* newsroom, and then met with the heads of *Zaman*, the Gulen-powered daily. Most of the people we talked to felt the ruling AK Party was falling prey to paranoia and that Erdogan was becoming too authoritarian.

But few meetings were as powerful as the one we had with former fellow Yavuz Baydar, '04, fired from the pro-government *Sabah* newspaper for penning a critical editorial in *The New York Times*. In the July piece, he lambasted media giants, owned by people close to the prime minister, as undermining democracy and freedom. After losing his job, he and other journalists started the independent media site *P24*. We gathered in a tiny office, listened to his recount of the year's events, and hoped *P24*



Vendors delivered the instructor rolled up in a rug and the executive editor of The New York Times declined an invitation to learn belly dancing with fellows and partners — left to right, Scott Tong, Leila Navidi and Megan Reed — whose talent proved uneven.

would survive any effort to silence it.

War between governments and journalists were nothing new to us, having spent December in Argentina and watching the government's effort to dismantle *Clarín*. In between that fight in Turkey, we were grateful to decompress with a trip to Sabanci University, a top science and engineering college, and to sightsee. History came alive as we entered Hagia Sofia, the church-turned-mosque, and modern life came alive as we watched prayer at Suleymaniye Mosque.

Poignant moments came in Diyarbakir as we entered a 14th century Armenian church that in the words of its director, "has no more Armenians to pray in it." As the minority was purged from the country, we learned how families tried to spare their children's lives. On the far eastern side of Turkey, along the banks of the Tigris River, the Kurds, Turks and Armenians of Diyarbakir and the surrounding states have long fought for their toehold in the Cradle of Civilization.

"I'll never forget Ferhat's story of Armenian parents giving their daughters to Muslim families. And when you're there, sitting outside by the old church walls and

drinking tea, 1914 starts to come alive. Empire building is such a distant concept to Americans, full of connotations and preconceptions from far away. Maybe going there in person is the only way to really get it," said Scott Tong, '14, of *Marketplace Public Radio*.

That violence came home to us as we met the leader of Ka-Mer, the women's organization that grew out of the conflict between Kurds and Turks. Nebahat Akkoc shared her story with us — her husband killed in the violence, she herself tortured in prison, and how, after her release, she vowed to create a way for women to escape the violence around them. Ka-Mer now has offices all over Turkey and has helped women start businesses as a means to independence.

We left Diyarbakir grateful to better understand the history of Turkey, its people and their struggles.

After eight days, as we left this amazing country, its incredible Bosphorus and its proud people, we understood that even if the conflict is about more than trees, for a government that can't see the forest for those trees, a budding democracy will take a long time to mature. ▀

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\*Includes gender identity and gender expression



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— Charles enshrined, continued from page 1

ed Michigan to fold the department in 1979. In fact, Eisendrath had entered his most productive phase — though few would have predicted that at the time.

When Eisendrath took over the Michigan Journalism Fellows Program in 1986, it was heading the same direction as the journalism department that spawned it. With a mere \$30,000 in the bank, a borrowed classroom for its home and no trips, the program looked to be drawing its last breath.

It appeared Eisendrath had embarked on a fool's mission, if not a career-killer. But he had other ideas. He envisioned what the program could be, long before anyone else could see it.

"I only knew I wanted to make this the best journalism fellowship program imaginable," he told me. "I didn't know what the specifics were. We filled those in along the way. I just knew it had to be highly desirable, and it had to work. So that's what I set out to do."

When Michigan started another round of budget cuts, Eisendrath made a crucial decision: instead of relying on the university for his program's survival, he would bet on himself, his staff and his friends, years before the word "development" meant fundraising.

"No one wants to back a loser," he once told me. To attract winners, he decided to make the program look like one — even if that required fabricating a few Potemkin villages. With a confidence that exceeded circumstance, Eisendrath sold his vision of an exciting, bold and unapologetically fun program to candidates and donors alike,

who started coming before he'd built it.

Chief among them was Mike Wallace. When he told his colleagues Michigan had a first-class journalism fellowship worthy of their support, they were not inclined to argue. With Mary and Mike Wallace's help, Eisendrath bought a former professor's dilapidated house, an old building with a dusty, outdated interior, but solid bones. He and his wife Julia restored the home, then gave it a journalist's flair: framed articles on the fellows and the fellowship, an array of political cartoons and caricatures of guest speakers — a long list that has included university leaders like Nicholas Delbanco, Ken Fischer and the presidents themselves, and national names such as Madeleine Albright, Daniel Okrent and Ken Auletta.

In 2002, Eisendrath gave the former stepchild a proper name, the Knight-Wallace Fellowship, in honor of the Knight Foundation and Mike Wallace. Then he added staff — notably Candace Liepa, Mary Ellen Doty, Patty Meyers-Wilkins and Birgit Rieck — and trips to Northern Michigan, Buenos Aires, Sao Paulo, Istanbul and Moscow, where the fellows met with Mikhail Gorbachev.

Each wave of improvements has drawn more journalists from the world's best newspapers, magazines, networks and now blogs, and lured them away from Michigan's peer programs at Harvard and Stanford. The program's board members reads like a who's who in journalism, while the 494 graduates include Charles Gibson, '74, Pulitzer Prize winner Michael Vitez, '95, and Liz McMillen, '98, *The Chronicle of Higher Education* editor, plus in-state stars like *Bloomberg* automotive editor Jamie Butters, '06, Chris Carey, '06, who created

the groundbreaking *Sharesleuth.com*, and *Detroit Free Press* columnist Rochelle Riley, '08. In Eisendrath's 28 years at the helm, the program has included at least one Michigan resident every year except one. KWF graduates encourage their colleagues to apply, which keeps the program's roster robust.

On the side, if you will, Eisendrath created the Livingston Awards, which honor the nation's most talented young journalists. Christiane Amanpour, Thomas Friedman, Ira Glass, Michele Norris and David Remnick have all won the Livingston, and returned to tell their stories at Wallace House.

Three decades ago, journalism was thriving, while the Michigan Journalism Fellows Program was dying. Today, journalism is in crisis, while the Knight-Wallace Fellowship has never been healthier. With a \$56 million endowment, it's built to stay that way.

If the Knight-Wallace program is not the better of Harvard's and Stanford's, it is now at least their equal, and is poised to surpass them — something no one would have bet on in 1986. Well, almost no one.

During their two-semester sabbatical, hundreds of Knight-Wallace fellows' careers have been rescued, souls refreshed and life-changing work completed, the kind you can't finish after working long days in a newsroom, like book proposals, screenplays, even business plans. They have already produced thousands of award-winning articles, and enough books to fill the Wallace House library. In the decades ahead, the future fellows and their proteges will multiply that many times over, a model of journalism at its best.

That was Charles Eisendrath's dream — and he has achieved it. ▀

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