

Kathleen F. Kiely '77
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At-Large Alumni Trustee

Kathy Kiely '77 is the Lee Hills Chair in Free-Press Studies at the Missouri School of Journalism where she brings the experience from her lifetime in journalism to the classroom to “help the next generation make fact-based journalism viable again.”

Coming from a family of journalists, she had chosen Princeton because it did not have a journalism school, thinking to try other options. The *Daily Princetonian*, however, was soon her “eating club and college, and laid the groundwork for what became not only a career but a vocation.” The lone woman on her managing board, she gained experience that would serve her well in later years when she was one of the early women chiefs of a newspaper bureau in Washington, D.C.

For twenty years after her Princeton graduation, Kiely covered big stories as a correspondent and Washington Bureau chief for regional newspapers, spending 1990-91 on a Knight Fellowship at Stanford as part of a sabbatical program for mid-career journalists. There she audited MBA classes and took advantage of proximity to Silicon Valley to learn more about technology.

In 1997, Kiely shifted to the national arena to become Washington correspondent, first for the *New York Daily News*, then for *USA Today*, covering Congress, national politics, and other major stories, including unrest in the Middle East. Mindful of the tech developments she observed while at Stanford, she pioneered the use of multi-media in news at *USA Today*. She served on the Congressional Standing Committee of Correspondents for two years and chaired the National Press Club Scholarship Committee, which provides scholarships to minority high school students interested in journalism. She also went back to the classroom, earning an MA in Interactive Journalism at American University in 2008. The program allowed her to explore ways to fuse “the best of old-fashioned, shoe-leather reporting with digital tools.” When she taught at Princeton for a semester as a Ferris professor in 2009, her goal was not only to

enable her students to use these tools, “but to get them to think critically about their implications for society.”

Kiely left *USA Today* in 2010 to move into the management side of journalism, and over seven years served as an editor for a number of national outlets. She also had a brief stint as Washington news director with *Bloomberg Politics*, but resigned in protest “over the company’s refusal to cover Mike Bloomberg’s incipient presidential campaign the same way we did everyone else’s.”

While in Washington, D.C., Kiely taught several semesters as an adjunct professor at both George Washington University and American University, and spent 2017-18 as a journalism lecturer at the University of New Hampshire. She was also a National Press Club Institute of Journalism Press Freedom Fellow, organizing events around free speech issues and advocating for journalists who have been jailed or threatened for their work. Two years later, Kiely helped organize letters from Princetonians in support of Maria Ressa ’86, the journalist currently targeted by the government in the Philippines. This campaign made her “more acutely aware than ever of the power of Princeton’s world-renowned brand to do good.”

She continues to write occasional columns for national papers. In a September 4, 2020, column for *USA Today*, she broke the news about Pentagon plans to shutter the venerable military newspaper *Stars and Stripes*. Outraged responses caused then-President Trump to reverse the decision.

Kiely has also been a Reunions panelist several times over and was a speaker at the first “She Roars” conference. Her deepest involvement as an alumna has been as a member of the *Daily Princetonian* board of trustees, a role she served for over a decade. She cites as a happy example of the marriage of old-fashioned journalism and digital technology a project she worked on at that time: “A fellow board member and I launched a fundraising effort that allowed University Archivist Daniel Linke to digitize every print issue of the *Daily Princetonian*, going back to 1876.”