

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW WITH CATE BARRON

Interviewed by Ford Risley

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Pennsylvania Newspaper Journalists Oral History Program
Department of Journalism
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Cate Barron Interview

- Risley: Okay. It's November 16, 2020. I'm here in Mechanicsburg --
- Barron: Hampden Township, yes.
- Risley: -- Interviewing Cate Barron for our Newspaper Journalists Oral History Program. So, we'll just start at the beginning. Tell me when and where you were born and a bit about your family.
- Barron: I was born just sixty miles west of here in Lewistown, Pennsylvania, and I grew up there. Went to Lewistown High School, went to Georgetown [University] in Washington. That was seeing the world a little bit back then. I still have family up in Lewistown. I have a brother and sister there, and another sister who's in the Lehigh Valley. For the most part, we've stayed pretty close to home.
- Risley: What did your parents do?
- Barron: My dad was a lawyer and my mother owned a restaurant for several years but primarily was a housewife. My dad always wanted me to go to law school, but I wanted to get out of college and go to work. Lawyers and journalists, I think, tend to butt heads a lot. We both think we can do each other's jobs. We had a wonderful relationship when I was working up in Lewistown at the same time he was [practicing] law there. My brother is now the senior judge in Mifflin County, so he followed in his footsteps, where I did not. But no regrets.
- Risley: How did you become interested in journalism?
- Barron: I just fell into it, Ford. I mean, I have to confess it wasn't a lifelong goal of mine or anything in my heart when I was growing up. I went to school and majored in English and got out in 1978. What was I going to do with an English degree? Even back then, it was a tough sell. I was home for a couple months, working for my mom at her restaurant, when I heard an ad on our local radio station, WMRF, for a news director. I thought, maybe I can do that. That sounds like fun. So, I went into the station and applied and was on the air two days later. The scariest thing I ever did in my career.
- Risley: You had no background in radio?

Barron: No background. I winged it the whole time and did three newscasts a day, plus work on Saturdays. I learned literally by the seat of my pants how to do news. Most fabulous experience possible. I think I can say I owe my career to Frank Troiani, who was the owner of the station who took a chance on me. He hired me because when he asked me who the Mifflin County commissioners were, I knew. That was the sole job interview question [laughter].

Risley: You at least knew the area.

Barron: I did, and it's a region of the state that I love so much. It was just a fantastic way to start out in journalism. I worked at the station for a little over two years. I got to know the other journalists in town, the reporters at the weekly newspaper, the *County Observer*, and the reporters and editors at the *Lewistown Sentinel*. At the time, back in the late 70s, news was really in its heyday. The companies were making a lot of money. Newsrooms were flush. The *Sentinel* was owned by Buckner News Alliance, which was a very progressive news company, and had wonderful editors: Bill Mahon, who later went to work for Penn State, and Jim McClure. I learned how to craft news stories when I was at the station by watching what they did. After a while, Jim offered me a job at the *Sentinel* and I took it.

Risley: What year was that?

Barron: 1982. About three years after I was at WMRF.

Risley: What do you do at the *Sentinel*?

Barron: I was hired as a business reporter just because that's the job that was open. I really wanted to do breaking news. I learned how to craft news stories with Brad Siddons, Jim McClure, Bill Mahon. I cut my teeth on journalism there, not in school. I did that until 1985. I knew after a few years, I wanted to go somewhere a bit bigger. So I answered an ad that the *Patriot-News* had for an assistant city editor to run their Lebanon operations. To go to Harrisburg was a big jump. I cried through my going away party at the *Sentinel* because I'd loved it there. It was such a very warm, collegial atmosphere to learn journalism.

We were talking about work during COVID. I think the journalists that are hardest hit by not being in the office, in a newsroom, are the young journalists who are right out of school and need to work side by side with the pros who really knows what they're doing, a Charlie Thompson or a Matt

Miller. They can hear how they interview people and how they track down sources. So much of journalism is what you learn by doing. It really is.

Risley: So, you worked in the Lebanon bureau at the *Patriot-News*?

Barron: I worked in Harrisburg, but I was in charge of Lebanon, a brand new bureau the *Patriot* was launching. I would drive to Lebanon one day a week and supervise that crew, including Nancy Eshelman, and Gary Lenton, who's now at the *Central Penn Business Journal*. City editor Dale Davenport had hired me. I'll never forget walking into the newsroom on Market Street in Harrisburg. It was this giant, cavernous place where they actually had a copy boy to run dummies downstairs to composing. It was such a big jump for me going from Lewistown and a little tougher atmosphere. But I really liked it. I've had at least a dozen different jobs in my career here. I've been with the company for thirty-five years -- a really long stretch.

Risley: What was it like moving from the *Sentinel* to the *Patriot-News*? I mean, just in terms of the pace and everything.

Barron: Let's see, how would I describe it? It was much more intimidating, but it was really fun too. When you're in your 20s, it's a whole different animal. We would do a lot of hanging out after work. The *Evening News* was the afternoon paper; the *Patriot* was the morning paper. I was on the desk for the morning paper. We would close up shop at around 1 a.m. and race out to buy pitchers and close the night at the Harris House. There'd be a good dozen of us sitting in there yakking after hours. Back in those days, we worked a crazy night shift, like 3-11, but it was really 3 to about 2. You tended to hang out with the folks that you knew in the newsroom.

The news in Harrisburg was on a different level. For example, we had an editorial board process where the governor would come in, and our U.S. senators. You wouldn't have the same experience in Lewistown. It was also a really big staff. I think Lewistown probably had maybe two dozen people in the newsroom back then. When I went to the *Patriot*, I think there were about 150 people in that newsroom. I worked my way up, coming in as an assistant city editor then joining the assignment desk. The next big job for me was as editor of the Sunday paper which, at the time, had a circulation of 200,000. It was what they called a "porch thumper" and the biggest paper between Philly and Pittsburgh. I was in charge of Sunday for a number of years and really enjoyed that work.

Risley: When did the two newspapers merge?

Barron: In 1996.

Risley: And how did that change things?

Barron: Well, the *Evening News* and the *Patriot* were very competitive. Reporters and editors used to hide stories from each other and try to scoop each other. The *Evening News* was definitely the smaller of the two and its demise was kind of a natural progression. Nobody was laid off. They were just absorbed by the morning paper.

Risley: So you were Sunday editor?

Barron: I was Sunday editor, which could be a very frustrating job though because I had a staff of two and couldn't really direct news coverage, which has really been my passion. I love to brainstorm. I love to plan coverage, story assignments, things like that.

Risley: You were only a staff of two?

Barron: Yeah. We worked with stories that the city desk would have assigned throughout the week. I would decide which ones should go where, plan the front, plan the sections. Back then, we had about eight sections to the paper, so, you would do a lot of sections every week. I'd work Tuesday through Saturday. And my assistant and I would bang out all the sections, including some live Saturday nights. It's amazing what you could get done back then. You'd send your stories down to the printers in the composing room electronically. They'd come out on big strips of type. The printers would wax them, cut them out, and put them on the page templates according to grids editors had hand drawn on dummy sheets. You didn't have to do electronic pagination work back. It was more about story editing.

Risley: So what did you do after that?

Barron: John Kirkpatrick came in as editor in 1991. He succeeded Ron Minard. Ron had been a very laid back type of editor. Kirk was hard charging. He had just come from the *San Francisco Examiner*. The *Patriot* was transformed from a rather sleepy cash cow into a really terrific paper during his tenure. I was moved into positions where I could make more of an impact. We got a lot more aggressive to the point where we were breaking a lot of stories on the bigger guys in the state. And the quality of the paper skyrocketed. The Newhouse family, owners of our newspaper group, had invested in excellent

editors, really upping the quality of all their papers across the country. I was fortunate to be here when that was going on.

Risley: What memorable stories did you all have?

Barron: Well, going back to my days in Lewistown, I'd started at WMRF just a few weeks before the accident at Three Mile Island. I remember the AP wire machine clattering in the station's hallway and wondering if I'd end up staying on the sound board doing the news while everyone else evacuated! At *The Patriot*, there were tough stories including [State] Treasurer Bud Dwyer's suicide. A lot of the government watchdog stories that we're really proud of. The late-night pay raise the legislature gave itself. Jan Murphy and Charlie Thompson worked on that and broke Bonusgate. Quite a few scandals up on the hill. The Nickel Mines Amish schoolhouse shooting. And, of course, the Sandusky scandal.

Risley: So let's talk a little bit about the move to online and the internet. Talk about how did the *Patriot-News* embrace that, and then the ups and downs of that.

Barron: It was very difficult, as it was for every media company. We got out in front pretty early. I mentioned Nickel Mines because that was the first time -- and that was in 2006 -- when I remember us realizing, hey, we can't hold stories for print. People need to know *now* what's going on. And it totally upended the news cycle. When you worked for a newspaper, you worried about your deadline for the next day or for later papers. You had one deadline that you had to hit, or a couple if you were zoned, but you could take much longer to craft your stories and get them ready for publication. We noticed with Nickel Mines that it was a constant process on our website. People would keep coming back again and again to read the latest developments. That really brought home how important that medium was going to be.

The same thing happened all through that first decade of the 2000s. If there were big weather events you would see your traffic online shoot up. People wanted news immediately. You could not hold anything. I'll tell you it was it was pretty revolutionary for us. It's what really positioned us for our most renowned story, which of course was the Sandusky scandal in 2011. The day we first broke the story, back in spring of that year, we held it to make sure that it got in the paper before we put it up online. That was the last time we did that.

Risley: And why did you want to do that?

Barron: First of all, we were the only ones that had the story and it was just in our DNA. We always held the big stuff for the paper, then published it online. Back then, print had supremacy. You would tend to the paper first and then worry about your little online audience. As we continued to cover Sandusky through that summer, we started putting stories online first, and we would see that readership skyrocket. When the story finally broke in the national media that fall, we wanted to remain in front of developments. We kept pushing stories out and saw our online audience grow. And, at the time, it didn't seem to impact our print readership. That was a huge lesson in the power of digital journalism. Again, we'd cut our teeth on some other stories that were online first, digital first. But Sandusky was really where we put things into gear.

With the Sandusky story, there were many, many judgment calls we had to make. And it was a very precarious story to report, especially when we were out there by ourselves for eight long months. And you'd get into these binds where maybe you weren't sure about something, or you had to be able to react immediately because of the demands of online. You couldn't stew over things. Our lawyers were on speed dial because we had to be able to respond to stories and post them a lot more quickly than in the past.

Risley: I want to come back and talk about the Sandusky story more, but a couple things before we do that. What was the decision for the name PennLive?

Barron: That was done by AdvanceLocal, our parent corporation. We were really fortunate because some of the other Newhouse sites were branded very locally. For instance, *syracuse.com* now serves all of New York state. *Cleveland.com*, same thing in Ohio. I am *so* glad that we weren't *Harrisburg.com*, which we could have been very well. Name determined destiny for us. PennLive now has readers in every county of the state and is one of the biggest news websites in Pennsylvania. Until 2012, PennLive was a separate company. The *Patriot-News* and PennLive were separate. PennLive had its own staff of editors and reporters and managers.

Risley: And why was that done?

Barron: I think part of it was that if it didn't work, they could shed the company and it wouldn't impact the *Patriot-News'* bottom line. Now, of course, it's our most prominent brand. Last year, when we rehabbed the press plant, we wanted to put new signage on our building, which is right along the I-81 highway. It's like a giant billboard lit up at night. And we only had so much room to put on the sign. We could have put PA Media Group, which is the company that

we've been under now since 2012. Or, *Patriot-News*, which is what the old sign was because the presses are housed here. But we went with PennLive because that's the company that most people respond to now. It dwarfs, it *dwarfs* our print readership

Risley: When did you really start to see that?

Barron: Online has been growing incrementally for the last fifteen years. But we've only started watching the numbers since we took PennLive in under PA Media Group's wing, which was 2012. Since 2012, it's grown at least fivefold in audience. Last month, we had 16 million content views, which translates to about 10 million unique visitors. Uniques are how many screens are looking at the site and are a better gauge of how many people are reading PennLive. We've grown into the biggest Pennsylvania-based news website in audience, far outpacing the big guys in Philly and Pittsburgh. And it's because back in 2012, we decided to truly be a digitally forward company. That was the eminent wisdom of the Newhouses in deciding early on that digital was the future. And we took the very scary, very painful decision of cutting the *Patriot-News* back to three days a week, back in January of 2013.

Risley: Talk about that decision.

Barron: It was all about what the Newhouses saw as our future, which was digital. Certain different local markets had decided to go all in and do this. New Orleans infamously went first, and we went right after New Orleans. John Kirkpatrick and the Newhouses decided that Harrisburg was going to be another market for this, and let's go and make the cut. It was all about focusing 90% of our attention on digital, and take the resources that go toward a seven-day-a-week paper and plowing them into managing the website. When we cut the paper back to three days a week, people were very upset, very upset. But in hindsight, it was the right thing to do. I literally teared up the first day I went out on my porch and there was no paper, except for the *New York Times*, which I still get every day. But it's why we're the biggest website in the state right now with only fifty people in our newsroom, compared to a lot bigger companies. We are laser-focused. While other groups said they were going digitally forward and digitally first, we really did. And it was a huge leap of faith. I wish we published the paper seven days a week to this day. But we could not afford to do both, not to be a digital powerhouse and run a print operation daily.

Risley: I'm sure. When did you become editor?

- Barron: In 2012. I followed David Newhouse, a brilliant journalist who left for a corporate role shortly after we won the Pulitzer. We were still the *Patriot-News*, seven days a week. That August, the decision was made to go to three days a week in 2013. I was editor for about nine months, then was named vice president of content. We all got digitally-oriented titles that I still end up having to explain.
- Risley: Okay. So let's talk about the Sandusky story. Just walk me through it from the start.
- Barron: We had been hearing rumors about Sandusky for almost two years, before anything broke. Jan Murphy and Charlie Thompson held a stakeout at the Attorney General's offices in Strawberry Square in downtown Harrisburg where we'd heard a grand jury was seated to look into Sandusky. We couldn't get anything. Everybody was really quiet. We had even tried the sports angle, and nobody was talking there either, even though rumors were flying. In the winter of 2010, reporter Pete Shellem came to his editor, Mike Feeley, and said there's a really strong reporter up at the *Centre Daily Times*. Her name is Sara Ganim and she's beating me on stuff. She's really good. You might want to see her next time you have a job open. In January 2011, we hired Sara when a job opened on the police desk.

The first day she comes into work, David Newhouse, Mike Feeley and I pulled her into an office, and said, "Okay, what do you know?" Sara was a few steps ahead of us. She was operating up in Happy Valley and had talked to a lot of people up there. So we had Sara doing cops and also trying to find out what was going on with Sandusky for a couple months. She covered some pretty big, unrelated stories for us to on the cops beat. Then she was able to track down the mothers of some of the victims who would talk to her. I've *never* seen a reporter like her, straight out of journ school. After a while, Sara got so many leads on Sandusky that we were able to break a story concerning allegations of indecent assault involving a teenage boy and that he he was being investigated by a grand jury. The story ran in March 2011, and infamously, drew little reaction. I think AP did a 20-inch story on it. But nobody else had it, nobody else followed through. The silence was deafening. We went all through that summer of 2011 with nobody else on it except us. Sara would publish stories and talk to more families of victims, but no one would go on the record. There were at least three sources on everything we published. We were so careful. I am proud of that. It was vetted very, very well by Patricia Clark, who was our legal counsel with Advance.

Sara had been working on a bunch of stories to develop after the grand jury presentment came out. It gets filed in November. All hell breaks loose, media all over the country are on the story. We were able to remain on top of it through the next few months, in great part because Sara's such an intuitive reporter. She would always be working ahead. She would propel the story forward while everybody else was just trying to play catch up on the details that had already happened. I remember a Sunday night when Mike and I were in the newsroom. This was in December. [Joe] Paterno had left, [Graham] Spanier had left. It was that interregnum between Sandusky's arrest and Paterno's death. Two reporters from the *Wall Street Journal* came in and wanted to talk. "We've just been up in Centre County, in State College. We can't get anything. Nobody will talk to us. How are you doing this?" At that point you had to be so locally sourced to get anybody to talk to you because, as you well know, Happy Valley closed ranks.

We took a lot of heat. I had stopped to see my family in Lewistown. We're sitting in this restaurant and the table behind us was talking really loudly about the damn *Patriot-News*. "How could they do this? They're ruining Penn State." I just bit my tongue. But it was upsetting to so many. Just so wrenching. My parents are both Penn State grads. Half the newsroom had connections. Sara was a grad. But it had to be done. We had absolutely no regrets doing that story. It was a better university when it was over.

Risley: You're absolutely right. So, what was it like to win the Pulitzer Prize?

Barron: It was wonderful to win but you know, there was so much more to that experience. David, Mike, Sara, and I became this team that just kept plowing away. We were all in the trenches for weeks on end. But, we're very proud of what we did and there were so many places where we could have gone wrong. There was that weekend in January 2012 when several news outlets said Paterno had died when he indeed had not. We waited, and we waited, and we waited for a confirmation. We were able to reach a family member who told us it hadn't happened. We were cautious, but we were also looking at the strength of our work to power us through that.

Risley: How did you balance the paper and online during the whole Sandusky story?

Barron: It was pretty much all about online and that was so new for us. But every night we would meet over the paper. Joe McClure, Jim's son, and a bunch of other people were on the desk. There were some wonderful designers and paginators and editors on the paper. And there were a lot of us back then. We would take the old classic paper dummies, fan them out on the conference

table, and figure out how we were possibly going to package everything. Online was absolutely vital. But the paper was doing these wonderful [packages]. We had the fronts for all the papers judged in the Pulitzer papers on a conference room wall. Joe Hermit's photo work is up there, our sports guys, Bob Flounders, Dave Jones, Sara, everybody is represented. Matt Miller, Charlie Thompson, Ivey DeJesus. There were so many reporters. It was such a team effort. Mike Feeley, who was city editor, was cut loose just to work with Sara because it was that much of a lift. I remember Ron Southwick raised his hand and ran the election that November for us because so much else was focused on Sandusky. It was like that 24/7, and just such brilliant work from that team. I'm so proud of them.

Risley: So, what would you say is the role of the *Patriot-News* and PennLive in the city and the state?

Barron: We've always been known as the capitol newspaper, which is partly why we took so much heat when we went to three days a week. People would throw that at us, 'Oh, but you're the capitol city paper, and you're doing this?' We still have a very strong, seasoned reporting contingent up at the capitol. The newsroom is such a great mix of newbies and veteran reporters that have been here with us for a long time. And I'm really proud of that, but we also have added firepower lately. We're founding partners with the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, WITF, and the *Trib* out in Pittsburgh, in group called Spotlight PA, which does investigative work out of the capitol. We contribute a reporter to that and some monetary help. That newsroom has grown incrementally and provided so much more firepower up the capitol. And this is at a time when most of the nation's statehouses are seeing their press crews just wither away.

We have, I'd say, two and a half reporters up there as well as the Spotlight crew. But Pennsylvania has been really fortunate. Pennsylvania's an interesting state for media and I think some of the people you've interviewed talked about this. We're seeing a little bit of a change of the guard, but we all know each other really well. The editors across Pennsylvania, for so many years, have been very active in their press organizations, PSNE and PAPME. We all knew each other. For the last ten years or so, we would band together on several right-to-know lawsuits because there's more power in numbers. Plus, you get to split the legal bill.

The *Patriot*, when I first started here, circulated in thirty-two counties. But delivering was expensive and readers began migrating to the website. Distribution was whittled down to Dauphin, Cumberland, Perry, a bit of Schuylkill, a bit of York. Conversely, PennLive started out with its audience

reflecting our print footprint, then exploding to cover the whole state. It's interesting. A couple years ago, I saw a heat map of alums for Penn State — where they were located in Pennsylvania and on the East Coast. It almost mirrors our readership. A lot of them came for Penn State football because we own that coverage, and stayed for other things on PennLive. And so we owe a lot of our size and breadth and reach to Penn State alumni and Penn State football fans following us on the site for sports and then staying.

We decided last spring to really power up to cover as much breaking news as possible with the pandemic. And people responded to that. We cover other things, obviously, but we really did a lot of pandemic reporting. Our huge growth in readership for this content pushed us to the top of the state rankings, and is a reflection of the fact that we're a trusted source of news. And my god, Ford, it's been so many years of being put through the grinder, you know, with the news media being ranked-with lawyers and used car salesmen on trustworthiness. People now realize more than ever that they can come to PennLive for news that they can trust. And during the pandemic, what news is more vital? It was about your health and your life and your family. Through all this horrendous pandemic, one thing that has been rewarding has been the fact that our audience trust us enough to come to the site again and again every day.

Risley: You talked a little bit about the importance of covering Penn State sports, especially football. Why has that always been important, and what's it meant to the paper?

Barron: We have a veteran crew that's covered Penn State football, and was there through the Paterno years when it really started to get big. And on through today. And we also are willing to spend the money to get them there. And we are traveling on the road as we can during COVID because we feel it's really vital to be there. That's what our readers are interested in.

It's not like the NFL where a reader is either a Pittsburgh Steelers fan, or Philadelphia Eagles fan, or Ravens. Right here, we're bifurcated. But Penn State is this entity that indeed binds all of Pennsylvania. So Penn State just makes a lot of sense. I did a little survey: two-thirds of the people working in this company had some connection with Penn State. Either they graduated from there, their kid was going there, or they went up to games.

Risley: So how have things changed for women in the newspaper business during your career?

- Barron: I think that journalism's always been an interesting, challenging career for women. I've been fortunate in the people that I've worked for have been very supportive of women, starting with John Kirkpatrick, and then David Newhouse, and Jim McClure. Those three really didn't think twice about putting women into positions where they were influencers.
- I can only count on a couple instances where I really had push back. I remember a guy calling up on the desk when I was assistant city editor, and he was mad about something, and I was getting ready to handle the call with him, and at one point, he goes, "Wait a minute. I want to talk to a man! I want somebody in charge." But I can only count on one hand the number of times that that's happened. I do try to mentor women in the business. And there's still a lot of ways to go. It is not a job for the timid of heart. And I'd also say that, back in the day, there was no work-life balance. I have been incredibly fortunate. I married a guy in the industry too who has been an equal partner.
- Risley: So what's it been like to move into the publisher position? How's that changed?
- Barron: I've been at it a little bit over a year and the thing I've really enjoyed the most is really getting to know how the sales operation works. As you well know, it used to be never the twain would meet, where news was very, very separate from sales. The last few years, we've been talking to each other, at least! There's still that healthy division between departments to abide by ethical standards of journalism. But it's been interesting to me to just see how damn hard the sales staff works. And what a difficult job it is. The sales reps have to be out there putting their skin in the game every day and take a lot of no's. When you're in sales, and your ego and your livelihood is out there on the line every day. I just respect them so much and I'm so impressed with this team. That's the other thing, when I moved into the publisher job, I knew that I would be inheriting a really great staff here. It's not me, it's the people that are here. They're just absolutely phenomenal.
- Risley: How would you describe yourself as a manager?
- Barron: The COVID restrictions have been tough for me because I am definitely a walking around manager. I like to have face-to-face meetings, look people in the eye, drop in on people. I most enjoy brainstorming sessions. Sometimes I can be a little too much 'ready-fire-aim' if I don't watch out. But as far as a manager, I'd like to think that I really try to put the people first and then the job that they have to do. I like to think that I listen.

Risley: What would you say are your weaknesses?

Barron: Short attention span. I can be impatient. I have a really bad habit of emailing people at 2 a.m. if I happen to get up and think of something. And on weekends. I never let it alone. I have to work on that. The publisher job been interesting for me, and it's been a challenge to me. I also can get sucked back into doing my old job because I have such a love for the newsroom. But there's a whole new crew in charge: Burke Noel, Teresa Bonner, Ron Southwick, Paul Vigna. And they're really great at what they do. I have to let them go. So, that's been something that's been hard for me.

Risley: What's it been like to shrink the newsroom and shrink the size of the company?

Barron: We downsized appreciably back in 2012. The newsroom went from about 130 to 80. And now we're down at around fifty. Some people left, and we just didn't fill, but there were a lot of layoffs, too. There were several buyouts. And some people did really well with buyouts, and they're still in the area doing other things, either in other media companies or in PR, or some other jobs. It was very difficult. But, we had to do it for the health of the company. I mean, the media has just been walloped, as you know. We're seeing papers close left and right. We have very good friends at the *Middletown Press and Journal*, which was the best weekly newspaper in Pennsylvania, for a number of years running. They had to close up shop this last summer. COVID was the last straw. It was already very tough to make money in this business climate.

The internet has been so disruptive. We've benefited in that we've seen our readership, as I've talked, just bloom. But it's also a lot harder to make money in online advertising than in print. And print, in the meantime, keeps going down and keeps going down as readers' habits shift. Now, again, we have fortunately been able to keep pace with the shift to websites, to social media, to Facebook. Three years ago, we carved out a small video studio from the newsroom. We knew video is going to be ascendant going forward and sure enough, it is. It's always trying to get ahead of where your readership is. You have to keep moving, or you die, but it's very difficult. The places that remained print-centric, that have really clung to print and not developed digital, are at peril right now. They really are. It's hard for us, but we're gonna' get through this. And it's because we have that strong digital base.

Risley: What's kept you going?

Barron: In general? You mean like me personal or the company?

Risley: You personally, in managing during these different times.

Barron: I love this company and am so proud of the people here and how they are of such value to readers and advertisers. You know, I've been here forever but in many different jobs. And that's been really good. Because it's never boring. I'll tell you, Ford, there's not a day that I don't want to get up and get to work.

Risley: Well, is there anything you'd like to add that we didn't discuss?

Barron: I was on a webinar last week that one of our editors, Paul Vign,a pulled together for PNA called Capitol Crash Course. It was for about two dozen journalism students from around the state. Little schools, like Messiah, bigger schools like Pitt and Penn State. Paul got a bunch of really great people in, the speaker of the house, a lobbyist, head of the office of open records. We had John Micek, our former editorial page editor who's now running a website, and Jan Murphy, our wonderful watchdog reporter at the capitol. And it was a bunch of hours on Zoom talking about the powers at play in the capitol. The media, the lawmakers and lobbyists, and the different bureaus. The enthusiasm and spirit I heard from those students on that webinar, was so exhilarating and so affirming of the wonders of this kind of work. You know, it is a mission. I really do believe that, and I didn't think I understood that when I first started out. I was just doing it because it was an interesting job. But you're doing good for people. And it's so necessary now more than ever. To hear all those young, enthused voices from people that want to get into the business and want to make their mark. As troubled and as burdened as it is these days, I still have great hopes for this industry.

Risley: That's great. Thanks so much.

Barron: Thank you.