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1-20-2017

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#### Recommended Citation

Office of University Communications, "GWU Professor Offers Insights on the Unique Relationship Between the President and the Media" (2017). *Gardner-Webb NewsCenter Archive*. 712.  
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# GWU Professor Offers Insights on the Unique Relationship Between the President and the Media

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Office of University  
Communications

January 20, 2017

## *Dr. Bob Carey Shares Perspectives on Historical Dynamics of the Presidency and the Press Corps*

BOILING SPRINGS, N.C. – Whether contentious or complimentary, the relationship between media outlets and the U.S. President is as varied as the individuals involved. Members of the media understand that each inauguration can usher in significant changes related to the frequency of—and access to—presidential press conferences, photo opportunities, speeches, and more.

photo of Dr. Bob Carey

Photo by Heather Pendergraft

“Throughout time, we have had different changes in technology,” said Dr. Bob Carey, GWU Professor of Communication and chair of the Department of Communication and New Media Studies. “But it’s very interesting to consider how the nation’s leaders have utilized those tools of technical communication in their presidency.”

From Franklin D. Roosevelt’s radio “Fireside Chat” broadcasts to John F. Kennedy’s use of television, American presidents have learned to harness the power of modern media technologies to convey their messages and generate support among the voting population. Recently, President Donald Trump’s administration has discussed the possibility of closing or relocating the White House Press Room, which would impact approximately one-third of the reporters and news bureaus that constitute the Washington Press Corps.

“There have been presidents who have had adversarial relationships with the press, but whether it is to this extent, I don’t know,” Carey reflected. “This is going to be a unique time—how President Trump handles the media will be interesting. I don’t think we’re going to see a wide-open presidency. I think it’s going to be a little more controlled. It will be interesting to see what his administration allows, and who he allows.”

Although many consider President Obama to be very open, some members of the press have resisted his one-photographer-takes-all-the-images approach. “The press has definitely pushed back against that,” Carey noted. “The White House basically has complete control over all images released. Some outlets have refused to print them because they view it as public relations propaganda.”

Carey also notes that social media has in many ways completely changed the way news is reported—as well as what—or who—creates news. “Because of changes in technology, anyone can decide they are a journalist. There’s fake news on both the right and the left,” he stated. “You have to discern that and have an idea of what’s going on. There is a responsibility on each individual to check the sources and make sure the information is reliable.”

To listen to the complete WGWG.org interview with Dr. Bob Carey, click below.

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