I’m glad to have this opportunity to thank you.

Only lately have I realized how much I have to thank you for.

Since I left my own university many, many years ago, I believed in the primacy of journalism.

Thomas Jefferson put it:

*Were it left to me to decide whether we should have a government without newspapers or newspapers without a government, I should not hesitate a moment to prefer the latter.*

So, in the beginning was the word, the journalistic word.

No need to worry about the flood of nonsense produced by false prophets or errant governments because true words would cut through any din.

Find true words. Publish true words. And wait.

Everything will be OK.

But now as I grow so long in the tooth I realize how important you are.

Words, no matter how scrupulously reported, are impotent without minds with the capacity to receive them.

Thank you for opening your students’ eyes to worlds far different than their own,

To history that proves the hazard in a well-traveled lie,

To the rigor it takes to think outside the norms of tribe and party,

To the tiresome nature of propaganda dressed up as advertising and public relations.

Thank you for instilling the habit of mind and hunger for truth that want journalism and allow it to function.

Earlier, when reading Jefferson, I hadn’t noticed the line that follows his famous papers-without-government quote.

“But I should mean,” he wrote, “that every man should receive those papers & be capable of reading them.”

Now I see, in the beginning was the professor.

Thank you.