

PREFACE

How do you measure a person's impact on an industry when his genius is in leading people, molding them into a team that produces a truly exceptional visually driven newspaper, day after day, year after year?

Contests are one yardstick. His paper dominated the National Press Photographers Association quarterly picture editing clip contest for years. The NPPA and the Society of News Design repeatedly recognized the paper for best use of photography. Impressive awards indeed, but they still fall short of recognizing the scale of this editor's accomplishments. That's because Bob Lynn led not one, but two newspapers to visual excellence. Along the way he created a culture that helped one newspaper in particular – The Virginian-Pilot in Norfolk – to sustain that level of excellence not only while he was there, but for more than a decade (and counting) after he retired. His legacy extends from coast to coast, where his former employees are making other newspapers better by applying the photographic and leadership skills they learned at the Virginian-Pilot.

Perhaps the best way to measure the impact Bob Lynn has had on the newspaper industry is in the words of his co-workers, competitors, former employees and mentors. Their thoughts capture the qualities that make Bob's lessons important not only for future visual editors, but for managers in any field charged with harnessing the talents of creative people:

“What Bob provided was a kind of soil where I could grow myself completely and utterly in a way that I had never experienced before. The environment that he created was incredible – a photographer’s dream! I was in this really charged up environment that was all about excellence and risk taking and – yes! – fun. Up until then I always felt like my hands were tied, that I had to adapt to someone else’s ideas. But Bob just untied my hands the minute I got there. It was like he freed me up. He did it with a lot of love. I know it’s funny to talk about love in this context, but it’s true. It was such a special time. Those years formed so much of who I am and I treasure them.

- **Beth Bergman Nakamura**

Hired by Bob as a Virginian-Pilot photographer
Now at The (Portland) Oregonian

“Bob Lynn was my boss for 10 years. He knew when to challenge me in a positive way and he knew when to stand back and let me do the best job I knew how. We formed a management team that achieved excellence we could feel each day. The atmosphere at the paper was not always bliss, but with Bob’s support, my feeling was we could work out any difficulty. I will always remember this era at The Virginian-Pilot as one of the best in my working life.

- **Alex Burrows**

Hired by Bob as a Virginian-Pilot picture editor
Retired in June 2007 as director of photography

“Bob Lynn was a great boss. He hired the best creative people to do the work. He always encouraged risk-taking. He inspired people to be understanding and considerate of one another. And he always stepped in quickly when problems arose. He never raised his voice or showed anger. The Virginian-Pilot’s reputation as a great paper where people truly care about each other is his enduring legacy.

- **Sam Hundley**

Artist, projects designer and illustrator, The Virginian-Pilot
Hired by Bob twice, in 1984 and 1994

“Bob Lynn hired me 30 years ago for my first job in photojournalism. My first day was because of another photographer’s last day. When Bob took over at the Charleston Gazette, one of the staffers he inherited was Lew Raines, an older photographer with limited ability. Bob could ask the paper to fire Lew, or he could spend a great deal of time bringing Lew’s skills up to par. He chose the latter. Bob tells Lew’s story in Chapter Five of this book. There is a les-

son in that story — how you treat people. It is a lesson Bob taught me, one that stays with me to this day. Bob did the right thing. He always has.

- **Randy Olson**

National Geographic magazine photographer
Bob's second hire at the Charleston (W.Va.) Gazette

“With the help of Ohio University photojournalism professor Chuck Scott, I persuaded Bob Lynn to move from his home state of West Virginia to Norfolk. He was urgently needed at the Virginian-Pilot. Photo assignments were being shot by a veteran, dispirited staff. Pictures were being edited by editors who lacked talent and training in visual journalism. Progress was rapid and Bob's personal job skills were important in the transformation that followed. Yet I believe the decisive ingredient was his leadership ability. He found more talent in the existing photo staff than any of us would have predicted. Talented photographers and editors from elsewhere proved eager to work for and with Bob. Technical skill alone could never have achieved so much.

- **Frank Caperton**

Former executive editor of The Virginian-Pilot
Retired editor of the Indianapolis Star

“Bob's early work as a reporter who made pictures at The Los Angeles Times and the Cincinnati Enquirer helped bridge the chasm between word and picture people. Playing both fiddles gave him a perspective few photographers share and paid off with enhanced credibility in his work as a picture editor. Later his dedication to photojournalism was tested when he drove 300 miles roundtrip from Cincinnati to Athens twice a week to attend 8 a.m. graduate classes at Ohio University. After driving back to Cincinnati, he worked the night shift. Bob's masterful ability to hyper-motivate photographers and influence editors paid off in Charleston and Norfolk. His ambition, intuitiveness, imagination, enthusiasm, inspiration, leadership and hard work built photo operations of distinction.

As we say down home, he done good.

- **Chuck Scott**

Founder and director emeritus,
School of Visual Communication, Ohio University

“When Bob came to Norfolk I was apprehensive and also determined not to get lost in the shuffle ... I thank Bob Lynn for the years

I was able to spend as one of his photographers. His patience with me and my quick temper taught me some self-control. His fairness in giving everyone a chance also served me well in the end. I have come to believe he was the best boss I ever worked for.

- **Robie Ray**

Long-time Virginian-Pilot photographer, now retired

“Never before or since have I worked with someone so dedicated to pictures and their powers to tell a story. Bob’s approach to photojournalism has always been to strip away the excess and get to the heart of the matter. He’s wanted me, and all his photographers, to grow as photojournalists but, more importantly, as people.

- **Lawrence Jackson**

White House photographer, Washington, D.C.

Hired by Bob as a Virginian-Pilot photographer

“I have often felt that the media, because of space constrictions and reader preferences, inhibit creativity. Bob Lynn refused to be inhibited. Not only did he challenge his newspaper editors and readers with bright, daring photos and news accounts, but he excited them. Read his message. It is not just for yesterday, but for use every day.

- **Leo Chabot**

Former chief photographer of the Charleston Gazette and retired Sunday editor of The Lawrence (Mass.) Eagle-Tribune

“The lesson I learned from Bob, and what I think about even when dealing with my children, is everyone has the potential to succeed given the right encouragement and support. Bob just assumed everyone would do well and he was rarely disappointed. He’s a carrot, not a stick, kind of boss. And we all loved him for it. He was the type of boss one could argue with strongly, but he never held it against you. He backed his shooters 100 percent, in the field, as well as in the newsroom. We weren’t only photographers, we were also journalists. Bob treated us the way he treated his family, with respect, giving fatherly advice, pride in what we did and encouragement when things got rough. We loved him for it. Twenty years later, the Virginian-Pilot photographic family still gets together for reunions, and each time, it’s like we’ve never been apart.

- **Karen Kasmauski**

Former staff photographer at The Virginian-Pilot

Long-time National Geographic photographer

Bob Lynn retired from The Virginian-Pilot in 1997, but his expertise remains very much in demand. He taught photojournalism for several semesters at Syracuse University, including a term in London. He has consulted at newspapers and conducted workshops in Australia, Singapore and across the U.S.

He has always been a master at balancing life and work. Bob devotes a considerable amount of time to family and friends; he *is* retired, after all. Fortunately for the industry he never quite left, Bob has also been finding time to write this book.

Editing *Vision, Courage & Heart* has been a personal learning experience. I consider myself a reasonably successful visual leader. While I was director of photography at the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette we received our fair share of recognition, including national awards for picture editing and photo usage. Staff photographer Martha Rial won the Pulitzer Prize for news photography. But looking back now, I realize how much better we could have been if I'd read this book *before* I took that job, instead of after I left the newspaper to teach at Penn State. My loss is your gain, because now you have Bob's book in your hands.

Start reading!

- Curt Chandler