Dear friends,

The above quotation from our co-founder is as relevant today as it was when the first edition of the Inquirer rolled off the presses. Almost two centuries later, the core purpose of our organization – to serve the people of the Philadelphia region – has remained the same.

Over the past decade, however, much has changed at the Inquirer. Years of ownership change and financial turmoil have taken their toll, but thanks to the vision and generosity of the late H.F. “Gerry” Lenfest, we have emerged on stable footing.

Now a public benefit corporation, the Inquirer is locally owned by the non-profit Lenfest Institute for Journalism. A first-of-its-kind partnership, this means we have no shareholders, hedge funds or out-of-town corporate parents. Any profit we make goes back to sustaining our mission. All of us – our reporters, editors, salespeople, pressmen, drivers and digital technologists – answer to no one but you, the people.

Gerry Lenfest asked, “Where better than Philadelphia to invent the future of a free press?”

We have set out to define what that future looks like. We have unified the newsrooms of the Inquirer, the Daily News and Philly.com, and have hired a strong crop of new journalists to infuse the organization with needed skill sets and talent to propel us into the future. This makes the Inquirer more diverse and more relevant than ever, and allows us to tell the story of Philadelphia – and all Philadelphians – from new and multiple perspectives.

Along with increasing the diversity and depth of our coverage, in the coming months we will launch “Spotlight PA,” a much-needed joint investigative news project with 12 full-time journalists who will shed light on issues of statewide importance, and “The Upside,” a new section dedicated to positive, feel-good stories about our community.

What was once literally just a “newspaper” is now a multi-platform news report – in print, digital, voice, video and more – delivered every day, at all hours.

On the following pages, you will find a snapshot of the new kind of investigative and service journalism we have produced, most of it in just the past three months. These stories are also collected at Philly.com/inquirer2019, where you can experience multimedia and interactive graphics that enrich their presentation.

Even bigger changes are coming in the year ahead and we promise to keep you informed of them. In the meantime, please let me know how we are doing at TerryAMA@inquirer.com.

Sincerely,
Shoobies, Locals and The Schmoozer
IN SYNC WITH PHILLY

In a two-part series, the Inquirer followed Hazim Hardeman, Temple’s first Rhodes Scholar, on his journey from North Philly to Oxford. Spotlighting Hardeman’s path from a tough neighborhood with one of the city’s highest violent crime rates to earning one of the world’s most celebrated post-graduate awards, staff writer Susan Snyder’s profile dives into Hardeman’s journey and what has driven him to make sure his path is not so unusual in the future.

From a North Philly Lot to the Hottest Beach in Town
YES, THERE IS A NEW FAUX BEACH IN THE HEART OF NORTH PHILLY

Staff writer Cassie O’Weiski took you inside the new “beach” in North Philly, where hundreds of party-goers turned out for the New Beach Club in Swampoodle — once a parking lot adjacent to an auto body shop, transformed by owner Chris Knight and a crew of like minds.

The New Comcast Tower
IN SYNC WITH PHILLY

The Inquirer’s Pulitzer Prize winning architecture critic Inga Saffron profiled Chuck Leiber, dubbed “the Schmoozer” and expats sent memories and moments using the hashtag #downaShore; a summer at the Jersey Shore. Shoobies, lifelong locals and boardwalk a ride with the shoobies, setting out to capture what it’s like to spend

The Road to Rhodes
THE UNLIKELY ROAD TO RHODES SCHOLAR

In a two-part series, the Inquirer followed Hazim Hardeman, Temple’s first Rhodes Scholar, on his journey from North Philly to Oxford. Spotlighting Hardeman’s path from a tough neighborhood with one of the city’s highest violent crime rates to earning one of the world’s most celebrated post-graduate awards, staff writer Susan Snyder’s profile dives into Hardeman’s journey and what has driven him to make sure his path is not so unusual in the future.

A Slow-Drip Housing Crisis
FROM DREAM HOME TO NIGHTMARE

An Inquirer investigation by staff writers Caitlin McCabe and Erin Arvedlund based on interviews with more than 40 people, including nearly two dozen homeowners, attorneys, inspectors, builders and construction experts, as well as a review of thousands of pages of legal filings, uncovered that Pennsylvania is the epicenter of an industry-wide epidemic of poor housing construction.

RESULTS: The reporting found that rushed production, undertrained workers, lower-quality materials and lax oversight by builders and code inspectors have left at least 650 homeowners in at least 55 zip codes in houses so damaged by water that each requires tens of thousands — sometimes hundreds of thousands — of dollars in repairs.

Toxic City, Toxic Schools
DANGER: LEARN AT YOUR OWN RISK

The Toxic City Investigative series exposed the ongoing struggle to protect Philadelphia’s children from environmental harm. Our reporters examined lead paint in old homes, contaminated soil in one-industrial neighborhoods; and unhealthy conditions in public schools.

RESULTS: After two years of reporting, the five-part Toxic City series led to four new protective laws: 770 families tested for $15.7 million,

Revealing Gun Violence’s Blast Effect
THE HIDDEN TOLL OF GUN VIOLENCE

Inquirer staff writers David Gambacorta and Helen Ubiñas uncovered the hidden toll of gun violence in America, detailing how shooting victims face lifelong disabilities and financial burdens. The duo’s reporting outlined that gun violence survivors face an average of $46,632 in medical costs with little to no assistance. Many do not know, where to turn, and even if they do, there are few viable assistance programs.

RESULTS: Our report was amplified by a long NPR Morning Edition story featuring our reporters, bringing national attention to these important, often-ignored topics. Also in response, numerous paralyzed gunshot victims connected with one another over their shared stories of struggle. Experts at a Philadelphia teaching hospital have also started an in-depth study of patient data for gun violence survivors.

Combining Newsrooms to Uncover Abuse
CATHOLIC BISHOPS FAILED TO POLICE THEMSELVES

An Inquirer and Boston Globe joint investigation into Catholic clergy sex abuse revealed that more than 130 bishops had faced accusations of covering up their own sexual abuse or abuse by priests in their dioceses.

RESULTS: The report sparked a national conversation among Catholic bishops about how to better hold themselves accountable. It also led to the chairman of the National Review Board, which advises bishops on sex-abuse policies, to criticize the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops’ suggested reforms as “incomplete.”

Uncovering Abuse, Sparking Change
A FAILURE TO PROTECT: SEXUAL MISCONDUCT

Starting with an investigation into sexual harassment allegations against prominent drum corp director George Hopkins, staff writer Tricia L. Nadolny spent a year reporting on abuses in drum and bugle corps, uncovering numerous cases of teachers who had been disciplined for misconduct with students and then went on to work in drum corps.

RESULTS: Nadolny’s work led to national reforms in the youth activity, including a requirement that corps have sexual harassment and misconduct policies and other safeguards. Hopkins resigned as director of the cadets and in November was charged with two counts of sexual assault.

Data Reveals Disparity
POT’S BURDEN

Even though marijuana possession has been all but decriminalized in Philadelphia and large swathes of Pennsylvania, misdemeanor arrests are way up statewide and in South Jersey, with African Americans increasingly making up a disproportionate share. Police also are providing misleading arrest data to the FBI.

RESULTS: The NAACP pushed for reform in Plymouth Township, where arrests went up 50%, with blacks bearing the brunt.

Craig LaBan’s Ultimate Dining Guide

No one chronicles the rise of our culinary stars, the decline of others, and the constantly-evolving neighborhood dining scene like restaurant critic Craig LaBan. This year, he assembled a new top 25, his favorite classics, and a new guard you need to know about in his 2018 Ultimate Dining Guide. Get reintroduced to LaBan’s trusted favorites, plus check out his bold new discoveries and more than 200 recommendations in Philadelphia and the suburbs.

#OurPhilly

We love when our readers show us the park that their family walks through every weekend, the black puppy in their neighborhood, or the historic stretch they see every morning on their commute to work. Tag your photos with #OurPhilly for the chance to be featured in the Inquirer Morning Newsletter on the philly.com/curiousphilly Instagram channel, and on Philly.com.
Securing the future of a free press in Philadelphia and nationwide

Local news is the promoter of shared knowledge, the champion of homegrown triumphs, the guardian of everyone’s rights, the watchdog on power. Local news is the lifeblood of free and fair communities.

That’s why The Lenfest Institute for Journalism is committed to preserving journalism in Philadelphia and across the nation. The Lenfest Institute was created by the late H.F. “Gerry” Lenfest to build viable, replicable business models for sustainable local news enterprises, starting here in the birthplace of American democracy.

And the cornerstone of our enthusiastic investment in local news is The Philadelphia Inquirer, which is owned by the non-profit Institute, and is dedicated to public-service journalism.

The Lenfest Institute is collaborating with journalists, entrepreneurs, civic leaders and philanthropists to secure the future of a free press. Journalism requires new business models, powerful innovations and diverse audiences. We’re working throughout local news, in Philadelphia and beyond, to crack the code on a sustainable future for this vital civic resource.

Our sole mission is to save local journalism, and to meet that goal we’re focused on three core priorities:

High-Impact Journalism - Quality, in-depth reporting remains the fundamental value proposition between local news organizations and their communities. Over the past two years, Lenfest Institute investments helped double the size of the Inquirer’s investigative news team and enabled the Inquirer to pursue indispensable, public-benefit journalism.

News Technology & Innovation - To survive and to thrive, local news enterprises must be nimble, tech-enabled and committed to constant innovation. Investing in the technical muscle of news organizations and introducing new tools to improve customer experience, audience engagement and operational efficiency, are all key to business sustainability. The Institute is providing both capital and technology expertise to help the Inquirer serve readers with a best-of-breed digital news experience.

Diverse, Growing Audiences - Diverse and inclusive newsrooms attract diverse and growing audiences. Our investments in newsroom diversity, community listening projects and multi-cultural news media address one of journalism’s biggest challenges. The Inquirer and The Lenfest Institute share a long-term commitment to creating a newsroom that is as diverse and vibrant as the city it serves.

The Lenfest Institute is working hand-in-hand with The Philadelphia Inquirer as we embark on our transformation. We are proud of what we have accomplished and optimistic about our bright future together. And, like any transformation, we couldn’t do it alone. Thank you to these leadership donors who also believe that a strong local press is fundamental to our democracy.

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