

RE: Nomination to Indiana Journalism Hall of Fame
Bryan Moss, Photojournalist
Corydon, Indiana

August 26, 2011

Dear Committee,

Bryan Moss became my mentor in 1990 when he hired me at the San Jose Mercury News. He was the director of photography and I was a photojournalist turned-designer two years out of Indiana University School of Journalism. I dreamed of becoming a picture editor. He took a chance on me.

Bryan showed me how to listen to photographers and how to speak with newsroom colleagues. He taught me how to slow down and see what truly is important, trust my instincts and be an advocate for photographs.

His voice still rings authentically in my head during edits, projects and stories. "There's a reason you keep coming back to that frame." "You know what to do. Just do it." "What is it about the word 'no' that confuses you?"

Another story of chance needs to be told: In 1991, a young Vietnamese man, Thu Ly, called Bryan. He had seen the photographs in the newspaper and wanted to know how he could work at the paper. Bryan invited him in and asked him to bring his work. Thu Ly arrived with several framed photographs tucked under his arms. He spoke a little English and was living out of his car. He fled Vietnam at the end of the war and had been struggling since. Thu Ly became our photo lab tech. Bryan took a chance on him.

Many years later, Thu Ly became the photographer for Viet Merc, the newspaper's highly successful (at the time) Vietnamese language weekly publication. He thrived, made good pictures and continued to grow. Until recent layoffs, Thu Ly worked at the Mercury News nearly 20 years.

Bryan leads by example in which to live meaningful lives – not just in photography – but also through life. The years I worked with Bryan became the cornerstone of my career, and the lessons learned continue to influence important choices I make today.

I encourage The Committee to award Bryan Moss a place in the Indiana Journalism Hall of Fame.

Sincerely,

Sue Morrow
Photo Editor | Designer | Multimedia Producer
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Subject: Fwd: Bryan Moss nomination letter
Date: Tuesday, October 4, 2011 8:22 AM
From: Lawrence Taylor <injournalismhof@gmail.com>
To: Kurtis Beavers <kjbeaver@indiana.edu>

----- Forwarded message -----

From: randy west <randywest@insightbb.com>
Date: Wed, Sep 7, 2011 at 9:32 AM
Subject: Bryan Moss nomination letter
To: ijhf@indiana.edu, Bryan Moss <bmass@lifeincorydon.com>

BRYAN MOSS IJHF NOMINATION LETTER

Sept. 7, 2011

Mr. Lawrence Taylor
Executive Director
Indiana Journalism Hall of Fame
Ernie Pyle Hall
Bloomington, Ind.

Back in the 1970s, when it was owned by the Bingham family, The (Louisville) Courier-Journal was one of the nation's great newspapers in almost every respect. One day I walked into the lobby of the impressive C-J building at Fourth and Broadway, and there was a nine-by-six-foot black and white photograph of a sweet little girl, seated and looking up, in profile. She was holding a rag doll and a very tolerant kitty. It was perfect.

I was a rookie country newspaper editor at the time, but I remember wondering: how many powerful metropolitan newspapers would put a larger-than-life-size photograph of an innocent little girl in its first-floor lobby, next to the elevators, where everyone, coming and going, would see it? (The photo was also published in LIFE magazine and graces the cover of one of Bryan Moss's books.)

This is one example of Bryan's extraordinary abilities as a photojournalist and, later, photo editor/coach, director of photography and educator. His no-posed-picture work made you stop and look. It wasn't just good, it was stunning, museum-quality art. And he did it on a daily basis at creative, trend-setting photo newspapers all over the country. (Together he and his wife, Mary Jo -- a gifted photojournalist, writer, editor and artist in her own right -- have

worked at 16 newspapers from New York to California, battling nepotism rules for 20 years.)

When his news and feature pictures were published in the Indiana section of the C-J during the turbulent Seventies, Bryan was named Indiana's Photographer of the Year twice and runner-up twice. When the C-J ran a powerful series of stories in 1976 on the forced desegregation of the Louisville schools, the Corydon native was part of the photo team that won a Pulitzer Prize. He went to Washington, D.C. on his own time to cover the protest of Nixon's inauguration; he covered the anti-war movement, the drug culture, rock concerts, and senior citizens trying to make it on a fixed income.

In the fall of 1989, when Bryan was on his second day as the new director of photography at the San Jose Mercury-News, his newspaper building started to shake: the whole Bay Area was being traumatized by a massive earthquake as the World Series was about to begin. The editorial team won a Pulitzer for its coverage.

But in addition to covering the big stories of his time, Bryan probably took the most pleasure in covering the small stories because he believes ordinary moments in ordinary people's lives are of utmost importance and need to be documented. That singular, humanitarian photo philosophy is one reason why he took his own time to spend four YEARS with the Fremont (Calif.) High Class of 1992. He covered all aspects of their lives, from freshman orientation to graduation. Each Monday in a hallway, he posted his best photos from the previous week. The students couldn't wait to see them. They would crowd around him -- and never fail to criticize them either! Instant feedback from a critical audience. Bryan produced a book, "The Class of 1992," that same year and considers it one of the highlights of his career.

When Bryan was working for The San Francisco Chronicle, he was designated the "Season of Sharing" photographer. Season of Sharing was The Chronicle's Christmas season fund-raiser for needy people. The newspaper identified specific people in need, did stories about them during the holiday season, and asked readers to donate money. One season the paper raised \$1.6 MILLION. "I like to think the photographs were an important part of why we were able to raise so much money," Bryan said. One of his pictures (from 1988) is part of this nomination.

As Bryan moved up the professional ladder to managerial positions, he impressed upon his staffers that newspapers must do more than publish photos of wars, wrecks and tragedies. Staffers should spend less time in office meetings and more time with their readers, documenting their daily lives in sensitive, thoughtful ways because, he says, fundamentally we are all more alike than we are different. We all want to satisfy basic needs: good health, a decent job, security for our family, and so on. Therein lie thousands of important stories.

Bryan, now 66, believes that he has helped influence a generation of photojournalists through his work as a photo editor and coach, director of photography, photojournalism instructor at Indiana University Southeast in New Albany, at workshops and judge at innumerable photo contests.

Bryan believes with good reason that newspapers today don't have the time, resources or

inclination to give their photojournalists constructive criticism and feedback. In 1993, Bryan and Mary Jo started the private White Cloud Photo Workshop, perhaps the only one of its kind in the U.S. Photojournalists who are accepted -- one at a time -- are invited to bring contact sheets of one month's work -- every single frame -- to the Mosses' rural home outside Corydon for a very careful one-on-one examination of how he or she thinks and works. By the time the "students" return home, Bryan says, they will probably have a fresh and more caring approach to their craft.

2006 was an important year for Bryan Moss. First, he retired; then he wrote, designed and published an elegant but accessible "primer" on the magic of photography called "Photosynthesis." He describes the basics of photography, using some of his own favorite pictures, plus those of others like Ansel Adams and Henri Cartier-Bresson.

More recently, because Bryan first and foremost loves to photograph ordinary people doing commonplace things in extraordinarily touching pictures, Bryan started "lifeincorydon.com <<http://lifeincorydon.com>>," which reveals just what you would expect: his pictures of daily life in Corydon. You can see them on the Internet. "Taking pictures is what I do, it's who I am," he says, "but there's also the aspect of giving back to the community," and that is very important to him.

Bryan grew up in Corydon, Ind., and attended Indiana University in Bloomington, earning a bachelor or arts degree in journalism. (He and Mary Jo met in the darkroom at Ernie Pyle Hall.) One of the early positive influences on his life and career was the late Dr. Wilmer Counts, a legendary photojournalism instructor at I.U. and a member of the Indiana Journalism Hall of Fame. I don't think Wil would have ranked the many good students who flocked to his classes, but I'm sure he would have said that Bryan is one of his best.

Sincerely,

Randy West
Corydon, Ind.

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Lawrence P. Taylor, Executive Director
Indiana Journalism Hall of Fame
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