



Dr. W. Richard (Rik) Whitaker

SJSU Broadcast Journalism Professor, 1972 through 1977

W. Richard (Rik) Whitaker is also an emeritus Professor of Journalism and Broadcasting at Buffalo State College. He came to the college in September 1984, and served as Chairman of the Department of Communication (formerly Journalism, Broadcasting and Speech) from 1984-93. He retired in 2007. He was previously in Egypt, where he spent three years as an associate professor of Mass Communication at The American University in Cairo, serving as Chairman of the Department of Economics, Political Science and Mass Communication from 1982-84. An associate professor of Mass Communication and graduate coordinator at Central Missouri State University from 1977-1981, Dr. Whitaker also taught at San Jose State University (1972-77), Ohio University (1969-72) and West Virginia University (1968-69).

A native of San Francisco, he was graduated from San Jose State College in 1964 with a B.A. in Radio-TV Journalism. He joined KNTV television in San Jose in 1963 while completing his degree requirements, working first as a news reporter-film editor-photographer, then becoming late night news producer-director. In 1967, he took a position at KXTV television in Sacramento, Calif., as a news photographer, where he covered the state capitol. He left later that year to begin graduate study at the School of Journalism at the University of Oregon, and began work in 1968 at KVAL television in Eugene, Ore., as late night news producer, taking graduate classes by day and working nights and weekends for the station. He received his M.S. in Journalism from Oregon in 1969 while teaching at West Virginia University.

He returned to San Jose during the summer of 1969 and worked for the *San Jose Mercury-News* on the rewrite desk and as a general assignment reporter. He began doctoral study at Ohio University that September, teaching part time while taking courses, then joined the staff of the *Athens (Ohio) Messenger* in late December 1969 as a Sunday editor, responsible for laying out the front and late pages for the paper's two Sunday editions.

He worked with the newspaper on a full-time basis during the summer of 1970, and his coverage of community events following student rioting at Ohio University the previous spring won the newspaper an award from the Ohio Newspaper Publisher's Association. Whitaker continued his association with the paper until mid-1971 when he took on additional teaching assignments while working on his doctoral dissertation, "Warren G. Harding and the Press." He received his Ph.D. in Mass Communication in June 1972, then returned to San Jose. While teaching at San Jose State, he worked as a part-time reporter for the *San Jose Mercury-News* from 1972-73 and 1976-77. He contributed news analysis articles to the *Athens Messenger* while in Cairo, and was an associate producer with a family-owned video production company in San Jose as a writer, photographer and consultant from 1974-86.

Teaching specialties were media writing and international communication, but he also taught everything from introductory survey courses in mass media and society to graduate seminars in communication. He has taught feature writing, broadcast journalism and production, mass communication history, ethics, audience effects, political communication and propaganda, communication theory and research, and communication and national development, and he supervised the completion of a number of graduate theses.

Dr. Whitaker had a lengthy relationship with the United States Naval Reserve, beginning with two years of active duty with the Navy after high school aboard the refrigeration storeship *USS Pictor*, where he made two trips to the Far East in 1959 and 1960. He received an honorable discharge in 1964 as a Quartermaster third class. Commissioned in 1974 as a Lieutenant (j.g.), public affairs, he was affiliated with Reserve units in San Francisco, Kansas City, Mo., Buffalo, N.Y., Erie, Pa., and New York City, and participated in public affairs training duty in San Francisco, Philadelphia, Washington, Boston, Indianapolis, Norfolk, New York City, and at sea. He was the public affairs officer aboard the helicopter assault ship *USS Nassau* when the first Pentagon press pool was mobilized for an exercise off Honduras in 1985. He retired as a Commander in December 1994.

Dr. Whitaker has, with two co-authors, written an introductory newswriting text, *MediaWriting: Print, Broadcast and Public Relations*, 2nd ed., published by Lawrence Erlbaum Assoc. in 2004. A third edition is in preparation. He has published articles in the *Encyclopedia of New York State*, *History of the Mass Media in the United States*, *Journalism Quarterly*, *Journalism History*, *Middle East Review* and *Northwest Ohio Quarterly* and contributed book reviews to *Journalism Quarterly*, *Journalism History*, and *Public Relations Review*. A past member of the history and radio-TV divisions of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, he presented four papers at the national conventions. Articles written for the Navy have appeared in such diverse publications as *The Curator*, for museum directors, *U.S. Navy Medicine*, and the *Naval Reservist News*. He was a member of the Foreign Press Club in Cairo, Egypt, and has served on the boards of directors of the Buffalo chapter of the Society of Professional Journalists the Buffalo-Western New York Council for International Visitors, and the Western New York Bed & Breakfast Assn.

A resident of Buffalo, N.Y., he is married to the former Ramona Pando Kinser and has two children: Christina, Columbia, Maryland., and Christopher, who owns a computer software consulting firm, DesignStream, in Singapore. Since 1990, he and his wife have owned and operated a bed and breakfast inn in their home, (www.beaufleuve.com) a restored Queen Anne Victorian built in 1881.