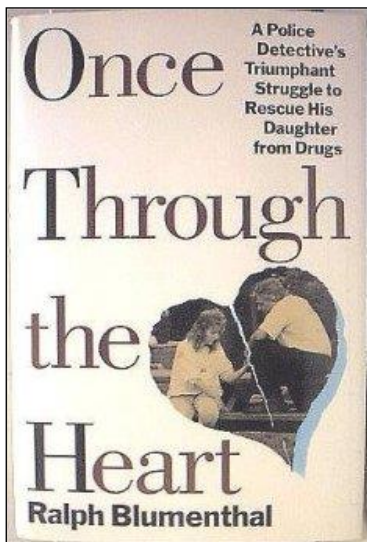


RALPH BLUMENTHAL

Class of 1963

Inducted 2010

Ralph Blumenthal has seen fit to have just one boss practically his whole journalism career — The New York Times. He started working for the paper as a campus stringer while he was editor of The Campus at the College and was hired fulltime as a news clerk in 1964, the year Lyndon Johnson was elected president, and the Beatles sang “I Want to Hold Your Hand.” In 2009, after 45 years at The Times, he retired. In between, he was a foreign correspondent (Germany and Vietnam), a national correspondent based in Texas, an investigative reporter, a metro reporter in New York and a culture reporter. Some Times people esteemed him just as much for his talents as a roastmaster, an amalgam of George Jessel spiced with Don Rickles. Whenever anyone left The Times or just moved desks, he was the go-to guy for a well-timed barb.



Starting as a foreign correspondent at 26, Blumenthal covered the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia, the rise of neo-Nazism, the German economic miracle, and the Vietnam War and its spread to Cambodia. As an investigative reporter, he delved into corruption and organized crime, and produced a series on Nazi war criminals hiding in America that resulted in laws making it harder for persecutors to enter the country. He got the first tip about Kurt Waldheim’s secret past. Other highlights in his investigative career: Uncovering corrupt dealings and cocaine use by Brooklyn Congressman Fred Richmond; exposing questionable financial dealings by Geraldine Ferraro, the 1984 Democratic Vice Presidential nominee, and her husband; highlighting the Tawana Brawley racial hoax; reporting and reconstructing the first World Trade Center bombing, which won The Times a Pulitzer Prize for spot reporting; co-authoring a series on the fatal crashes of USAir planes that prompted new safety procedures; and probing the

Sotheby’s and Christie’s antitrust scandal.

Evidently finding the pace of daily journalism too relaxed, he wrote five books during his reporting days, including “Miracle at Sing Sing” (2004) about the prison’s warden; “Stork Club” (2000), a history of the checkered boite; and “Once Through the Heart” (1992), about a narcotics detective’s effort to rescue his own daughter from drugs. He has earned numerous awards, including a Guggenheim Fellowship, the Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism Alumni Award and the Worth Bingham Prize for distinguished investigative reporting.

Following his departure from The Times and influenced by his student days at CCNY, Blumenthal turned to teaching. “I’m very indebted to the education I got and what I learned as an editor and reporter at the City College Campus,” he said. Adding that he “always had a very soft spot for CUNY,” he joined the faculty at Baruch College in 2010. He taught basic journalism courses as well as courses in public administration and is a distinguished lecturer in Baruch’s Special Topics department.

