

Nº 2

COLUMBIA BRAZIL HISTORY

THROUGH THE EYES OF THE PRIZE:

Brazilian Journalism and the Maria Moors Cabot
Prizes at Columbia University



Yours sincerely,
Godfrey H. Cabot



COLUMBIA GLOBAL CENTERS | RIO DE JANEIRO
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DEDICATION

To the Cabot Prize-winning journalists from Brazil
who have done so much to contribute to
inter-American understanding

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To our readers,

The Columbia Global Centers | Rio de Janeiro has been engaged in research dealing with the interactions between Columbia University and Brazil over the many years of their shared history. In Volume 1 of this series, published in 2020, we produced a broad overview of the long arc of this history entitled, simply enough, *Columbia Brazil History*.¹ That initial 2020 attempt to cast light upon history generated a curiosity on our part to go further into a fascinating past now somewhat shrouded by the mists of time.

This present Volume 2, which we are proud to present to our readers, looks at interactions between the Columbia School of Journalism and the press and media in Brazil over a more than eighty-year period. We have done so using a unique Columbia University angle by viewing the lens of the Maria Moors Cabot Prizes, often referred to as “the Latin American Pulitzers”. Cabot gold medals and citations have been awarded annually since 1939 for excellence in fostering improved inter-American relations through honest and truthful journalism.

At the time that the Cabot Prizes were established in 1938, they were the only such awards exclusively to honor journalists in the Americas, especially those whose work

fostered improved inter-American relations. While noteworthy prizes for inter-American journalism have emerged over the years, including from the Inter-American Press Association which the Cabot awards helped to launch, these Cabot Prizes were the first such awards and still today they stand unmatched in terms of the prestige and recognition conferred upon the honorees.

Created in a period in the history of inter-American relations closely identified with FDR’s Good Neighbor Policy, the Cabot Prizes have cast a wide net throughout the nations of the Americas in search of journalistic excellence. Over many decades during which the awards have been faithfully curated by the Columbia School of Journalism, awardees have been selected from the vast majority of the countries of the Western Hemisphere.

More than 50 Brazilian editors, publishers, and journalists, including non-Brazilian nationals dedicated to coverage of Brazil, have been recipients of the Cabot gold medals and special citations. The first two Cabot gold medals were awarded to Silvia and Paulo Bittencourt of *Correio da Manhã* in 1941. The most recent Cabot (at the time of this writing) went to Eliane Brum, a freelance journalist for the Brazilian version of *El País*, who was honored in 2021.²

1. Columbia Brazil History Vol. 1 is accessible [here](#).

2. The list of Brazilian winners through 2020 can be found on the website of the Columbia School of Journalism [here](#).

Our motivation from the outset of this project was that retracing this long historical arc of awards to Brazilian journalists was in itself a story that would need to be told. Part of the story is the evolution of the press and media in Brazil over more than 80 years. The Cabot committees' choice of Brazilian honorees also charts a path from the early emergence of media empires knitting the vast country together, to journalists who resisted dictatorial rule, and to the emergence of a professional press in times of globalization as well as polarization fostered by fake news.

Stepping back from press history as such, we hope that our approach shines a light on the role of the Brazilian press as a pillar of democratic institutions through the decades, including through strange and troubling times in Brazil. Through it all, the ideal of truthful and honest journalism has survived in Brazil. We hoped that an updated look at the Cabot Prizes would provide for us an untapped vantage point to understand something of how this tradition emerged.

We have tried in this modest volume to strike a careful balance in our narrative. We wanted to provide for non-specialists in Brazilian history a broad overview of the evolution of quality journalism, as it was understood at the time, and also an appreciation for the importance of the institution of the Cabot Prizes in not only reflecting, but also fostering this evolution. Accordingly, the first two chapters retrace the historical context. We first look at the early history of the Cabot awards themselves to understand the thinking and the ideals that led to the creation of an institution that has survived for more than 80 years. A second

historical chapter then shifts the focus to Brazil more specifically in an attempt to situate the press within the major historical periods with a mention of the historically most noteworthy Brazilian Cabot Prize winners along the way.

In addition to a broad overview of the Cabot Prizes themselves and the Brazilian press, we also wanted to tell stories about at least some of the journalists who have been awarded - the lives they led (or are still leading), their own individual contributions to the highest journalistic standards, their bravery when confronted with censorship and persecution, and even the ways in which they may have fallen short of their own ideals. From more than 50 Brazilian journalists honored over the years, we eventually selected a sample of 16 individual journalists for special profiles. We tried in each of these profiles to focus on individuals without losing sight of how these contributed to the growth of a free press in Brazil.

This volume has been assembled through the efforts of a small, highly dedicated group of Columbia University students drawn from various schools and programs of the University. We would like to acknowledge and thank each of them: Kerianne Leibman, Franco Graff Jordão de Magalhães, Sabrina Huang, and Pedro Siemsen Giestas. They had an influence in every part of this publication and were the authors of the individual case studies of selected Cabot winners which form the heart of this book.

We owe an immense gratitude to the staff at Columbia University Libraries who generously guided us through a dense forest of archival materials, especially the historical records of the Cabot Prizes so

carefully preserved in the Rare Books and Manuscript Library at CUL. We are grateful to Jocelyn K. Wilk, Joanna M. Rios, and Socrates Silva Reyes for their support and encouragement.

Special thanks are extended as well to our Board of Advisors to this project, a group which includes past Brazilian winners of the Cabot Prizes, academics, and friends of the Columbia School of Journalism. We wish to acknowledge the following individuals: Patricia Campos Mello, Rosental Calmon Alves, Ricardo Gandour, Paloma Contreras, and Abi E. Wright.

We would also like to thank Samambaia Filantropias, our institutional partner which promotes projects in the areas of freedom of speech and aims to strengthen and spread the debate on freedom of expression in Brazil.

The appearance of this publication coincides with the tenth anniversary of the founding of the Columbia Global Center in Rio de Janeiro. The Global Center strives to be a physical and intellectual hub for Columbia students and faculty in Brazil, building bridges between Columbia and many partners. This study of some of the Columbia School of Journalism's links to Brazil reminds us that others before us at Columbia have sought to build strong bridges in order to bring the world closer together in the pursuit of shared human values.

Thomas J Trebat
Maria Eduarda Vaz

Rio de Janeiro
January 2023

INTRODUCTION

HOW THIS BOOK IS ORGANIZED

This publication was organized by the Columbia Global Centers | Rio de Janeiro with the goal of understanding the historical significance of the Columbia School of Journalism to the development of a free and independent press in Brazil. To keep our task manageable, we decided to focus on the Maria Moors Cabot Prizes and on some of the Cabot Prize winners from Brazil.

The four main chapters in the book were done in collaboration with Columbia University students who spent the summer months of 2022 as “virtual interns” in the Columbia Global Centers | Rio de Janeiro. These virtual internships were an initiative of the network of nine Columbia Global Centers to provide meaningful summer experiences for Columbia students whose summer plans were disrupted by the Covid-19 pandemic and its aftermath.

By the summer of 2022, many restrictions imposed by the pandemic on human interaction and travel had eased, but those were still an impediment. Our small team of student researchers was spread over three continents with different time zones and never met in person as a group. Their interaction was restricted to online platforms and video interviews with our Board of Advisors.

Our great stroke of luck was the ability for some of the students to access the Rare Books and Manuscripts Library at Columbia. The students combed through boxes and boxes of archival materials on the Cabot Prizes from their inception through the late 1980s. Their efforts made this a better book and also yielded much more historical detail than we could fit within the final version. All that these students did informed our broader understanding of the historical

importance of the Cabot awards and the contributions of the Brazilian Cabot winners. Our students also used archives still held in the School of Journalism and other online sources, including the rich trove of materials in Portuguese available through digital newspaper archives and other platforms.

Chapter One is devoted to the early history of the Maria Moors Cabot Prizes at Columbia University, mainly focusing on the late 1930s and the 1940s. This turns out to be a story of the productive interactions over many years between John (“Jack”) Cabot, a State Department diplomat with vast experience in Latin America, and Dean Carl Ackerman, a truly transformational dean of the Columbia School of Journalism who assumed that office in 1936.

Cabot provided keen insights into the ebbs and flows of inter-American press relations, observed how the press could be doing more to promote international peace and understanding, and resolved to try to do something about it. He named the prizes for his mother, Maria Moors Cabot, who died in 1934, and persuaded his father, Godfrey Lowell Cabot, to provide the original endowment and annual support for the prizes.

Dean Carl Ackerman was only passingly acquainted with the press in Latin America when he first met John Cabot, but Ackerman quickly became convinced of the importance both of the Prizes and of the great attractiveness of basing the awards at Columbia and in New York City, the media capital of world. Of course, as a Dean of a professional school hard strapped for financing in that Depression era, Ackerman was keenly aware that the philanthropy of the Cabot family could enhance the School’s programs and visibility. In retrospect, it is somewhat remarkable that the vision and the protocols first imagined by Ackerman and Cabot more than eighty years ago have stood the test of time.

In Chapter Two, we survey the broad sweep of press history in Brazil from the late 1930s to almost the present day, calling as much attention as possible to the role of selected Brazilian Cabot Prize winners in the story. This chapter sets forth the main historical periods in Brazil, including the highly repressive Vargas era which lasted from the 1930s until the early 1950s, initial experiments with democracy and press freedoms in the late 1950s and early 1960s, the traumatic, at times horrifying, experiences of the press during the Brazilian military dictatorship unleashed from 1964 to 1985 and, finally, the period of press professionalization ushered in by the liberal democratic constitution of 1988. This more contemporary period also encompasses Brazil's adaptation to the rise of digital journalism and social media outlets as well as the floodtide of hate speech and fake news which has afflicted the nation in a special way.

Chapter Three is, in many respects, the originally intended heart of this publication. It recounts the individual stories of 16 Brazilian Cabot winners, including the reasons for their award selection, their life stories after the award was received, and their significance in the growth of the highest journalistic standards in Brazil and the Americas. We did make one exception to our practice of focusing on Brazilian winners to include two distinguished Argentine journalists from the 1970s period who also confronted fierce military repression.

The Columbia student interns were the authors of these case profiles and their effort in doing so shines through. Kerianne Liebman rescues the memory of Silvia Bittencourt, the first Brazilian and the first woman to be awarded the Cabot. She also contributes a fascinating case study of Francisco Assis Chateaubriand, a true "Citizen Kane" of Brazil, its first "media baron." Franco Graaf Jordão de Magalhães looks with great care at those journalists honored with Cabots during the military rule in Brazil, highlighting Cabot winners such as Alberto Dines, Carlos Castelo Branco, and Alceu Amoroso Lima. These fought

bravely and creatively to uphold journalistic standards and to inform the citizenry even at the grave risk of imprisonment and death. Sabrina Huang brings our attention to the work of noted Cabot winners in the contemporary period, most of them investigative journalists and, most notably, most of them women journalists, including Miriam Leitão, Dorrit Harazim, and Patricia Campos Mello.

Chapter Four is an effort by the two co-editors to tie the different pieces of the narrative together, to offer reflections on the historical significance of the Cabot awards, and to suggest new lines of research that could be further developed in future publications. The Cabot awards are remarkable in many ways, especially in their endurance over many decades and the continuing care and rigor that goes into the selection of the awardees. The particular criteria for awards changed over the years, of course, and were expressed in different ways in different historical periods. Above all, however, the Cabot awards succeeded in at least two major areas. The awards did call global attention to the best in Brazilian journalism at a time when the outside world paid too little attention. In addition, the awards provided encouragement to journalists to adhere to the finest journalistic standards and even, in numerous cases, provided these journalists with a measure of personal protection in the face of censorship and repression at home.

Finally, appendixes offer the reader a comprehensive list of all Brazilian Cabot awardees from 1941 through 2021, a sweep of eighty years of history. We also offer photos culled from the Columbia Rare Books and Manuscripts Library and other sources which help us to see some of the winners themselves, the sometimes quite elaborate ceremonies of their inductions, and to understand how much the award has meant to the winners and to Columbia University itself.

The Editors



THE EARLY HISTORY OF THE MARIA MOORS CABOT PRIZES AT COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

From the website of the Columbia School of Journalism, we learn the following about the Cabot Prizes: “The Maria Moors Cabot Prizes are the oldest international awards in journalism and were founded in 1938. Its purpose was stated rather simply from the beginning. The prizes recognize journalists and news organizations with a distinguished body of work that has contributed to Inter-American understanding.”¹ The School notes, with justifiable pride, that the Cabot Prizes are the oldest journalism prizes in the Americas. The prizes have been awarded every year since 1939, a remarkable run for any prize. Awardees have come from the majority of countries in Latin America and many others based in the United States or Canada. The initial funding for the awards was provided by Godfrey Lowell Cabot, a Boston industrialist and philanthropist². This initial funding, later supplemented and enhanced by an endowment from Cabot in the form of common stock in his company, has provided the financial underpinning for the Cabot Prizes to the present day. G.L. Cabot’s descendants are still active participants in award deliberations and in the annual Cabot dinners.

This much is generally known about the historical background. This chapter tries to trace more of the early history behind the awards, why they were based at Columbia, what was happening in the world at the

1. <https://journalism.columbia.edu/cabot#:~:text=The%20Maria%20Moors%20Cabot%20Prizes,contributed%20to%20Inter%2DAmerican%20understanding>. Accessed on November 3, 2022. The same source goes on to explain the contemporary (2022) basis for selecting awardees, one which weighs the contributions of individual journalists to freedom of the press in the Americas. “The Cabot Prizes Board looks for exceptional and courageous reporting that impacts society, and evidence of commitment to important stories over the course of a long and distinguished career. They are particularly interested in hearing about journalists and news organizations that have made a sustained contribution to Inter-American understanding through their coverage of the Americas. The board also seeks to honor journalists who have taken active roles in upholding freedom of the press in the Americas. Although awards have been given to publishers and other managers, the board is especially interested in honoring individual journalists.”

2. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Godfrey_Lowell_Cabot



Godfrey Lowell Cabot, circa 1920. [Source](#)

time, and the then-prevailing state of inter-American press relations. Our work here has been immeasurably assisted by drawing upon an M.A. thesis in history presented to the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill in 1969. The author was none other than Henry Sweets Ackerman, a grandson of Dean Carl Ackerman who was the single most important individual at Columbia in the establishment of the Maria Moors Cabot Awards and their endurance through time³. Henry Sweets Ackerman based his research on archival materials at the Columbia University Libraries and also interviews with knowledgeable sources, including his grandfather,

3. Henry Sweets Ackerman: “A History of the Maria Moors Cabot Prizes: Experiment in Inter-American Journalism, 1938-1956. A thesis submitted to the faculty of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in the Department of History. 1969. Thesis accessed through Rare Books and Manuscripts Library of Columbia University.

Dean Ackerman, and also John (“Jack”) Cabot, the son of Godfrey Lowell Cabot.

Press coverage of Latin America by newspapers and other publications in North America had long been subject to notorious ebbs and flows in the decades leading up to the creation of the Cabot Prizes. Such coverage as did exist gave little importance to the major publications based in the region and tended to be biased toward reporting of political unrest and natural disasters, to the extent the North American press provided any coverage at all. Few North American publications had correspondents based in the region, for example, although some did, including *The New York Times*. The Cabot awards were an attempt to change that dynamic by calling attention to the finest publications and journalists working in Latin America in the hope that improved dialogue within the inter-American press would contribute to friendship and understanding in the hemisphere during troubled times for the world.

While numerous high-profile inter-American press gatherings were held in the early decades of the twentieth century, very little had actually been accomplished by 1938, the year the Cabot Prizes were announced by Columbia. Sweets Ackerman observed that the main problem for the lack of communication and dialogue was the “relative ignorance of U.S. journalists about their southern neighbors.”⁴ A number of schools of journalism in the United States, as early as the 1920s, had tried to address this gap in their curricula. Pioneering efforts were made by the journalism faculties at the University of Missouri, for example, and at the University of Wisconsin in attempts to introduce inter-American content into their instructional programs. Apparently, these early initiatives in journalistic education failed to gain much traction or financing.

John Cabot, Godfrey’s son, was a diplomat for the U.S. State Department. Early on in what was to become a very distinguished career, the younger Cabot was based in Latin America. From 1927 through

1935, his State Department assignments took him to Santo Domingo, Mexico City, and, finally, Rio de Janeiro (1932-35). Along the way, Cabot struck up friendships with U.S. journalists based in the region, including one Joseph L. Jones of the United Press. Impressed by how little Americans seemed to know or care about Latin America, Cabot became convinced that something needed to be done to address endemic issues affecting inter-American press relations.

Moreover, he realized that his family probably had the financial resources to have an impact in this field if it chose to employ their funds to this end. This was especially so after his mother, Maria Moors Cabot, died in 1934, leaving an inheritance in trust for her children. By about this time, Cabot had settled on the idea of creating some sort of cash prize that would honor journalists working on issues of inter-American relations. Cabot believed that honest and truthful reporting about the region would promote in North America a “sympathetic understanding” and appreciation of the “educational, journalistic, and cultural resources of Central and South America.”⁵



John Moors Cabot, circa 1952. [Source](#)

4. Ibid., p. vii.

5. Ibid.

Columbia entered into Cabot's evolving plan somewhat due to a fortuitous circumstance. Cabot left his assignment in Rio in 1935 to take up a new diplomatic post in Washington, D.C. en route eventually to a posting in The Hague. While visiting New York in February 1936, a common journalist acquaintance, the same Joseph L. Jones of the United Press, arranged for Cabot to have lunch with Dean Carl Ackerman of the Columbia School of Journalism. It turned out to be a consequential encounter.

As John Cabot described the idea of the prizes to Ackerman, he was attracted to the idea of basing the program at a major university based in New York City. A home at such a prestigious university in the media capital of the world would give the prizes greater visibility and prestige, and also protect the granting of the awards from manipulation for political or ideological purposes. Furthermore, the Journalism School's enormous global reputation as the longtime steward of the Pulitzer prizes added to the attractiveness of a partnership with Columbia. In Henry Sweets Ackerman's recounting, "John Cabot saw a lively dean in Ackerman and a school with a reputation under him."⁶

From Ackerman's point of view as a new dean of a struggling professional school at Columbia, the possibility of endowment support from the Cabot family must have held strong appeal. At about the same time that Cabot and Ackerman first met, Godfrey Lowell Cabot was already making large philanthropic contributions to endow programs at both Harvard and MIT. Surely that munificence to Columbia's peer institutions did not escape Ackerman's notice. In fact, shortly before meeting John Cabot for the first time, Ackerman had sought significant funding for the Journalism School from Lucius Nieman, the wealthy founder of the *Milwaukee Journal*. That funding, intended to raise the standards of journalism, ultimately went to Harvard where it supported the Nieman Fellowship program.

Differently from Cabot, Ackerman in the mid-1930s had only a passing acquaintance with journalism in

6. Henry Sweets Ackerman, op. cit., p. 4.

Latin America, including brief assignments years earlier in Santo Domingo and Mexico City for *The Saturday Evening Post*. Ackerman would, of course, become deeply familiar with the region and its journalists as a result of the Cabot Prizes. Starting in the late 1930s, he would make annual trips to the region every year until he retired from Columbia in 1956. These trips to Latin America were elaborate affairs, bringing Ackerman into contact with the elites of journalism and public life while generating for him and for the School of Journalism ample press coverage in the region.



Dean Carl Ackerman of the Columbia School of Journalism, circa 1940. Source.

John Cabot was aware from the start of his negotiations with Columbia that his career at the State Department was a factor to take into consideration. He was concerned that calling attention to journalists or to publications might be seen to be endorsing opinions on the matters of the day that could conflict with the foreign policy of the United States. As it turned out, after the inauguration of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt in 1932, the thrust of U.S. foreign policy toward Latin America took a favorable turn for Cabot.

FDR's signature initiative in Latin America was the Good Neighbor Policy, an attempt to improve inter-American relations following decades of U.S. neglect

or outright interventions in the affairs of its southern neighbors often for no higher purpose than to further narrow U.S. commercial interests.⁷ This new policy approach predisposed the Roosevelt Administration and the State Department to look favorably upon the idea of prizes for Latin American journalists the very purpose of which was to foster improved inter-American relations.



Getúlio Vargas (sitting on the left) and Franklin Delano Roosevelt (sitting on the right), Rio de Janeiro, January 1936. Source: CPDOC/ GV foto 035/2.

Yet toward the end of the 1930s, the Good Neighbor Policy was besieged by external pressures descending on the region. European news services had begun to make many inroads in Latin America and the major newspapers in the region had a tradition of closer professional relations with Europe than with the United States. By the late 1930s, German and Italian diplomatic and commercial interests in Latin America had become quite clearly a source of concern to FDR and his Secretary of State, Cordell Hull.

The State Department could see that the creation of the Cabot Prizes, especially if not connected in any way with U.S. cultural policy, could prove to be a useful means of countering the rising influence of potential enemy states. After more than three years of halting efforts by Cabot, and numerous trips by Ackerman to Washington

to consult with government officials, it became evident by early 1938 that the State Department at the highest levels had no objections and that the clearance or forbearance that Cabot sought was forthcoming. This acquiescence on the part of the State Department was important as neither Cabot nor his father wanted to run the risk that their association with the awards might compromise the younger Cabot's career in diplomacy.

Ackerman played a role in this lengthy back and forth dialogue with the State Department although he expressed frustration from time to time with the complexity of government decision-making. He did secure important support for the Cabot awards to be based at Columbia from Assistant Secretary of State Adolf Berle, a long time member of the Columbia Law School faculty and a key member of FDR's so-called "braintrust."

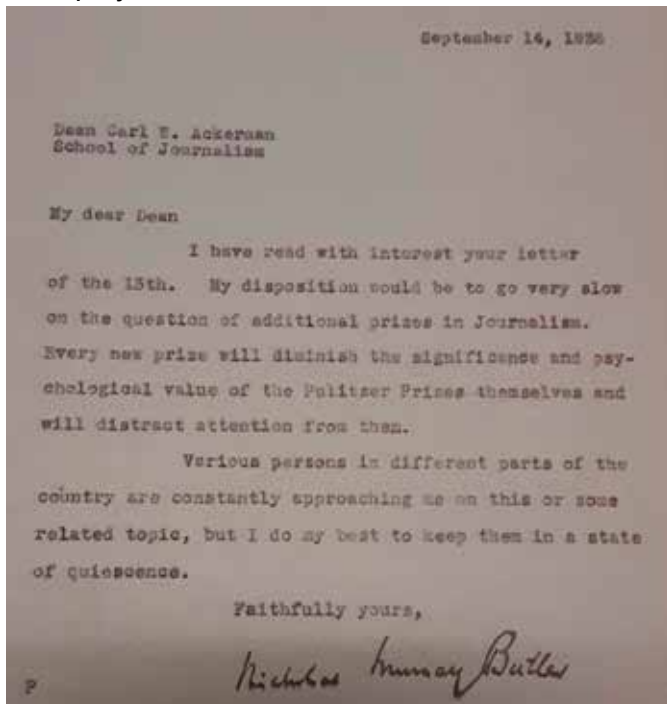
Obtaining Columbia's approval to host the prizes was also not without its moments of drama and uncertainty for Ackerman. Apparently discouraged as a result of his initial conversation with the Columbia authorities, he put off an immediate pursuit of the possibility. Ackerman's main field of interest was global public opinion and he sought funding for various initiatives from external funders to study public opinion in Asia and elsewhere. He had put off a planned trip to Latin America in 1936 meant to familiarize himself with the region and its newspapers and publications.

President Nicholas Murray Butler of Columbia was initially somewhat cool to the idea of the Cabot awards coming to Columbia. In a 1936 letter to Ackerman, Butler expressed his concern that the new awards might diminish the luster associated with the Pulitzers. He wrote: "Every new prize will diminish the significance and psychological value of the Pulitzer Prizes themselves and distract attention from them."⁸ (See his letter reproduced below.) Butler was well aware of the large-scale support that G.L. Cabot had provided for Harvard and MIT in the 1930s for academic programs not related to journalism. Butler pushed to

7. The classic reference is: Bryce Wood: *The Making of the Good Neighbor Policy*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1961. A line from FDR's inaugural address in 1933 recalls the essence of the Good Neighbor Policy: "The policy of the good neighbor - the neighbor who resolutely respects himself and, because he does so, respects the rights of others—the neighbor who respects his obligations and respects the sanctity of his agreements in and with a world of neighbors".

8. Source: Letter from Nicholas Murray Butler to Dean Carl W. Ackerman, dated September 14, 1936. Accessed in the Archives of the Rare Books and Manuscript Library of Columbia University.

see if the Cabot family's support could be used instead to fund his other presidential priorities at Columbia. Matters within Columbia stood there for a good while following the initial brainstorming sessions between John Cabot and Carl Ackerman in 1935-36. The Cabot award project seemed to lie dormant.

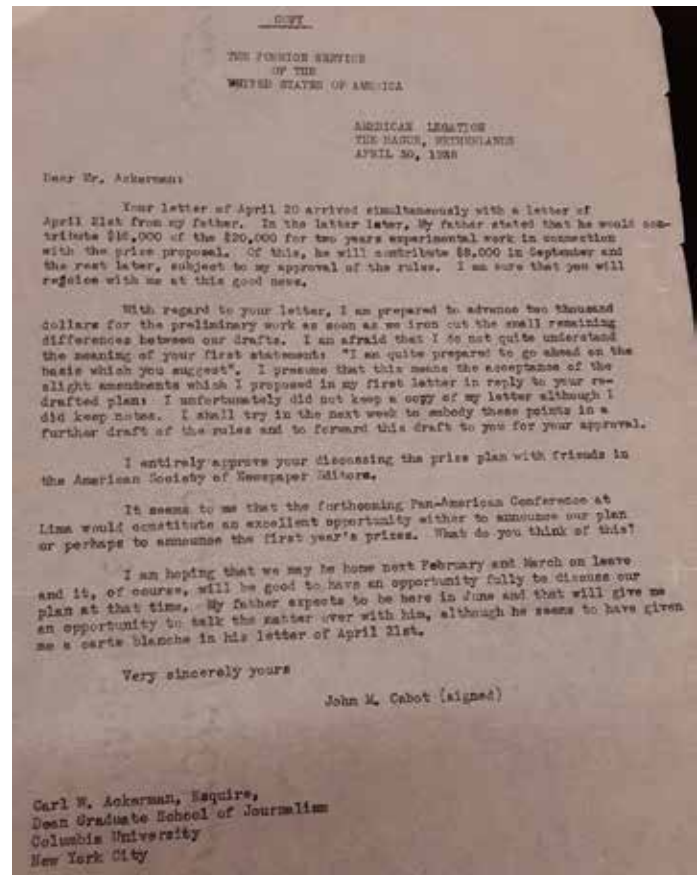


A 1936 letter from Nicholas Murray Butler to Dean Carl W. Ackerman expressing his concern that the new awards might diminish the luster associated with the Pulitzers. Source: Accessed in the Archives of the Rare Books and Manuscript Library of Columbia University.

Whatever impasse threatened at Columbia, this dissipated once John Cabot was able to convince his father to provide at least the initial funding for the first several years of the Cabot Prizes until its long-term viability could be established. John Cabot had been understandably concerned about his father's giving capacity in that Cabot had only recently in the mid-1930s made the large grants to Harvard and to MIT and, therefore, might not have the capacity to provide additional funding for Columbia.

It may not have been as difficult as the younger Cabot thought to obtain the approval of his father. According to a letter from the younger Cabot to Ackerman, Godfrey Lowell Cabot agreed in principle in April 1938 to provide most of the financing needed to underwrite the first two years of the Cabot awards program, pending completion of a longer-term project. (See letter from

J. Cabot to Carl Ackerman reproduced below.) Godfrey Cabot agreed to provide \$8,000 per year for those first two years to launch the Cabot program with an additional \$2,000 to be provided by his son⁹. The elder and younger Cabots then promised to Ackerman that funding to provide the estimated \$10,000 in annual costs would be provided once agreement was reached with the University on the details of the program.



A letter to Carl Ackerman from John M. Cabot dated April 30, 1938, the first firm indication of the family's intention to underwrite the awards. Source: Accessed in the Archives of the Rare Books and Manuscript Library of Columbia University.

Once the Cabot family had agreed to provide financing, Carl Ackerman found President Butler of Columbia to be receptive to the idea of basing the program at the School of Journalism.

In a letter to Butler dated May 10, 1938, Ackerman informed Butler of the family's agreement to provide for "two years of experimental work in establishing the Cabot Prizes in Journalism for distinguished international public service in North and South America."¹⁰ Ackerman

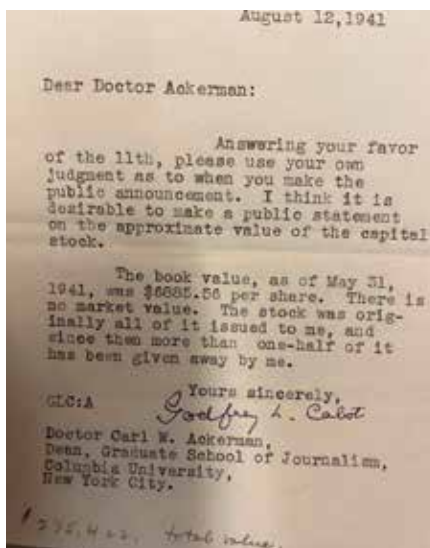
9. In 2022 dollars, this 1938 figure of \$10,000 would be almost \$200,000.

10. Letter from Dean Carl Ackerman to President Nicholas Murray

would have gone on to tell Butler that the family also would provide funding in this same amount of \$10,000 annually. Butler raised no further concerns. According to Ackerman himself in an interview many years later, "Cash on the barrelhead convinced him."¹¹

Over the summer of 1938, while John Cabot was still based in The Hague, the procedural details of the Maria Moors Cabot Award were carefully worked out between the family and Ackerman. The final agreement was signed by G.L. Cabot and Ackerman on August 5, 1938. The Columbia Board of Trustees, at its meeting in October 1938, formally approved of the project.

Within a few years following the agreement, the elder Cabot endowed the prizes with an additional gift to Columbia in the form of stock in his company. This donation to create a permanent endowment was valued at about \$280,000 at the time and came on top of annual giving which continued for some years after the awards were established. In all, the value of the Cabot grants to Columbia was on the order of at least \$320,000 at the time, or \$6.4 million in current 2022 dollars, and quite possibly might have been in excess of this amount.¹²



Note from Godfrey L. Cabot to Dean Carl Ackerman dated August 12, 1941 confirming the endowment funding for the Maria Moors Cabot Prizes. Accessed in the Archives of the Rare Books and Manuscript Library of Columbia University

Butler dated May 10, 1938. Accessed in the Archives of the Rare Books and Manuscript Library of Columbia University.

11. H.S. Ackerman, op cit., p. 37.

12. Further research is needed on the exact financial dimensions of the Cabot grant to Columbia. Godfrey Cabot in the mid-1930s had made donations on the order of \$12 million (2022 dollars) to each of Harvard and MIT to endow academic programs.

Launching the Awards Program in 1938-39

John Cabot and Carl Ackerman were in late 1938 in a position to act quickly to launch the new institution of the Cabot Prizes. Ackerman by this time had brought himself more up to speed on the difficulties and also the quality of the press in Latin America. With supplemental financial support from John Cabot, Ackerman had made a lengthy trip to Latin America already in 1937 to make a preliminary assessment of potential Cabot honorees and to secure influential backing in the region for the idea of the awards. Ackerman met with senior educators and public officials, including presidents, in the 1937 trip that included Panama, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Argentina, and Brazil, a visit amply covered by the local press. In Lima, Ackerman received an honorary doctorate; in Santiago, he made an important radio address, and so on. It became clear to Cabot and Ackerman both that a receptive climate existed in Latin America for improving inter-American relations and that the initial Cabot awards would be well received and broadly disseminated by the press in the region.

Cabot and Ackerman rather quickly were able to block out the main guidelines for the operation of the program, including the size of the stipend (\$1,000 at the time or about \$20,000 in today's currency), a gold medal, travel reimbursements, general criteria for selection, and so forth. While some thought was given from the outset to creating an outside board of advisors to make the selection of the awardees, in practice Ackerman and Cabot appear to have made the decisions, although Ackerman was careful to consult with other Columbia faculty. A particular concern for Ackerman was with the selection of the first journalists to be awarded, as this would set the tone for future selections and for the overall reputation of the new program.

Again by the force of circumstance, the Eighth International Conference of Pan-American States was scheduled to convene in Lima in December 1938. Cabot earlier in his April 1938 letter to Ackerman had urged Ackerman to take advantage of the gathering to announce the program. Columbia promptly agreed. Accordingly, Ackerman traveled to Lima where he

addressed conference attendees and the press on December 5, 1938. H.S. Ackerman quotes the Columbia press release which marked that day:

“Through the generosity of Dr. Godfrey Lowell Cabot, a public-spirited citizen of Boston....from two to five prizes will be awarded annually by Columbia University to publishers, editors, or writers in the Western Hemisphere, who, by their professional achievements, shall advance sympathetic understanding among the peoples of South, Central, and North America.”¹³

The First Cabot Awards in 1939

The initial press reaction in Latin America to the Columbia announcement was overwhelmingly favorable. The press in Latin America, at least the larger publications, sensed the reciprocity inherent in the Cabot Prizes, i.e., that the prizes would boost the Latin American press. The leading publications in the region were hard-pressed to compete in the global news businesses. They struggled to professionalize, to improve technology, to separate opinion from news reporting, and to develop their own reporting on the world outside of Latin America. The immense recognition that would come their way with a Cabot award could enhance the reputations of the publications considerably and open new avenues for growth.

With the wind seemingly at their backs, Ackerman and Cabot then turned their attention to selecting the first honorees and conducting the first awards ceremony already in 1939. Ackerman, by now well versed in the state of the press in Latin America, settled upon six prominent individuals at the following publications: *La Prensa* and *La Nación* in Argentina, *El Comercio* (Lima), *El Mercurio* (Santiago), and, from the United States, *United Press* and *The New York Times*. All of these publications were, in Ackerman’s estimation, clearly “first class and deserving.” Ultimately, two individuals were selected for the inaugural 1939 awards: José Santos Gollan, the Sunday editor of *La Prensa* in Buenos Aires and Luis Miró Quesada, President of the Board of *El Comercio*

in Lima.

It is interesting that no Brazilian publication made even the short list of potential awardees in 1939, though John Cabot had urged Ackerman to consider adding a Brazilian candidate and offered additional funding in order to do so. Some consideration was given to Francisco Assis Chateaubriand, owner of *Diários Associados*, but, ultimately, Ackerman did not think his publications rose to the journalistic standards of the other South American candidates. Ackerman’s reluctance to select a Brazilian publication in the first round of Cabot awards was due to the heavy hand of press censorship during the dictatorship of then-President Getúlio Vargas.¹⁴ As we will see in the following chapters, the first Brazilians to be awarded the Cabot received their honors in 1941. Chateaubriand himself was eventually honored in 1945. It was only after Vargas left office that Brazilian nominees began to appear in greater numbers.

Gollan and Miró Quesada, the 1939 winners of the Cabots, were received at Columbia in truly grand style, setting a tradition for pomp and circumstance that would characterize the Cabot awards ceremony for many years to come. The two received a huge welcome in New York and not just at Columbia. Ackerman arranged for a banquet at the Waldorf-Astoria in their honor with 300 guests and featuring welcoming remarks by New York City Mayor Fiorello LaGuardia. An award ceremony similar to Columbia commencement exercises was conducted at Low Library with guests selected from among 5500 invitees. The awardees also made a trip to Washington, D.C. where they met with Secretary of State Cordell Hull and were received for a private conversation with President Roosevelt himself. A luncheon in their honor was held at the National Press Club in Washington and still more gala events were scheduled stretching over ten days.

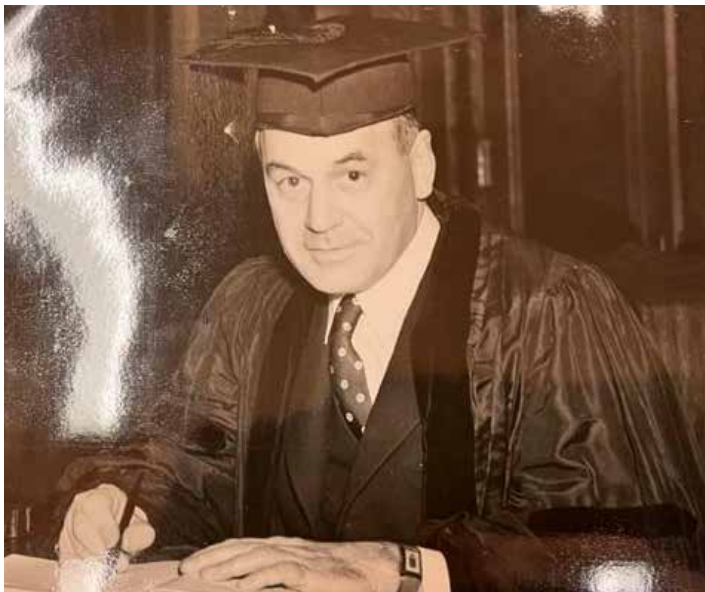
The main campus event was the actual Cabot Convocation on the evening of November 8, 1939. Dean Ackerman’s comments at the event revealed the globalist mindset at Columbia School that lie behind

13. H.S. Ackerman, op cit., p. vi.

14. We return to this issue of press censorship in Brazil in Chapter Two.

the awards:

"It is our good fortune at Columbia University to be among the first universities in the United States of North America to rediscover South America. For the greater part of three centuries the educational orientation of many institutions of higher learning, from New England to the Pacific Coast, has been predominantly national or European. The bonds of culture have been developed along longitudinal lines. We have become accustomed to look to the East for the frontiers of knowledge...In recent years, it has been increasingly evident that the frontier of knowledge and culture is not an arc across the Atlantic but a circle around the world. By enlarging our perspective of education we are rediscovering South America."¹⁵



Jose Santos Gollan, Sunday editor of La Prensa in Argentina signing the guest book at Columbia University on November 8, 1939. Accessed in the Archives of the Rare Books and Manuscript Library of Columbia University.

In the Aftermath of the Launch

Ackerman and Cabot made their first mark in 1939, creating precedents and traditions that would influence everything about the future of the Cabot awards from selection of candidates to the pomp and circumstance

15. Statement by Dean Ackerman at the Opening of the Cabot Convocation, November 8, 1939. Accessed in the Archives of the Rare Books and Manuscript Library of Columbia University.

of the award ceremonies. The Cabot awards continued annually through all the years of World War II and through the end of Ackerman's deanship at the School of Journalism which occurred when he retired in 1956.



The Cabot awards were marked by ceremonies similar to Columbia commencement exercises, complete with caps and gowns. In this photo from the Cabot convocation from 1953, President Grayson Kirk is seen with the awardees, including Carlos Lacerda of Brazil. Godfrey Lowell is second from the left in this photo. Dean Carl Ackerman is on the extreme right. Source: Accessed in the Archives of the Rare Books and Manuscript Library of Columbia University.

Some of the procedures from the early years served Ackerman and Columbia quite well. The State Department proved to be a discreet and reliable source of information on the quality of journalism throughout the Americas. Ackerman was able to count on numerous faculty colleagues at Columbia for their advice on annual candidate selection. He was able to leverage support and engagement of President Butler at Columbia and of Butler's successor, General Dwight D. Eisenhower, assuring a prestigious reception for the Cabot awardees and greater visibility for the awards in New York and in the United States. Godfrey Lowell Cabot continued to be a frequent participant in the annual events, launching a Cabot family tradition that has continued through the years. The photo on the next page depicts G.L. Cabot with General Dwight D.



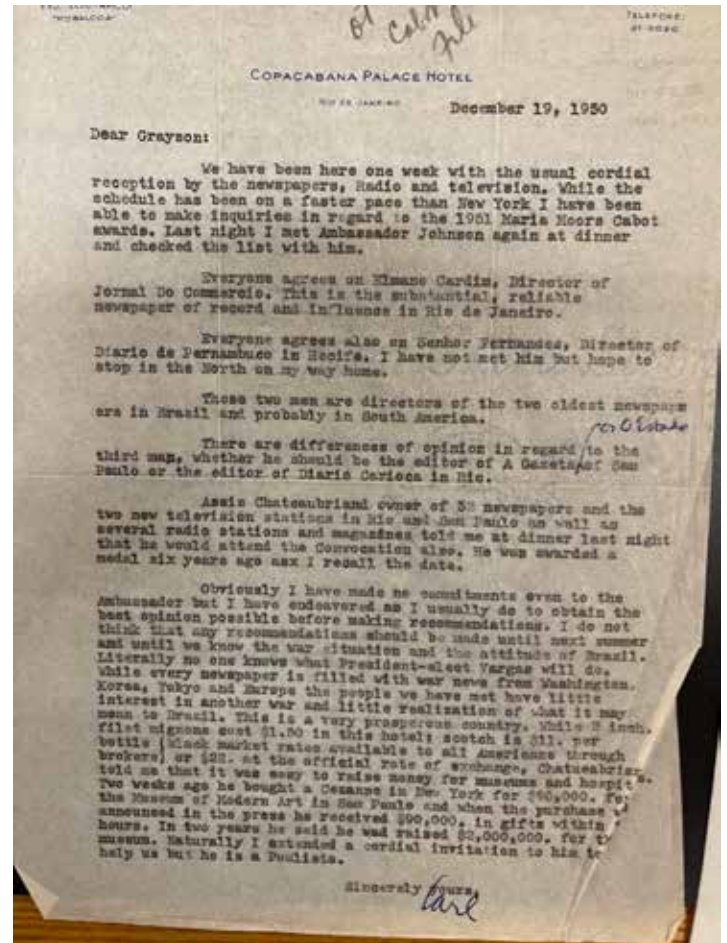
G.L. Cabot (right) with General Dwight D. Eisenhower, then President of Columbia. Source: Accessed in the Archives of the Rare Books and Manuscript Library of Columbia University.

Other Cabot traditions at Columbia also took root in those early days. Just as Ackerman and Cabot had hoped, previous Cabot medallists became important and visible advocates and spokesmen for the awards. Francisco de Assis Chateaubriand won the gold medal in 1945, then attended all or most of the award ceremonies in New York until illness overtook him in the early 1960s. Assis Chateaubriand helped to facilitate trips by Ackerman to become acquainted with regional newspapers throughout Brazil.

For the first ten years of the awards, the individuals honored tended to be owners or directors or editors-in-chief of the largest, best known, and nationally circulated publications. Few of the awardees in the first decade were really working journalists as such and some of the awardees, as we shall see in Brazilian case studies in Chapter 3, did not always in their later careers live up to the highest standards of honesty and truth. Nonetheless, awarding the owners and managers of leading publications served Columbia well by causing these publications to become better known outside of Latin America while adding to the prestige and newsworthiness of the awards. Awarding an owner or an editor-in-chief assured ample awareness in their home country.

By the early 1950s, Columbia made efforts to broaden its eligibility criteria to consider newspapers and journals from the interior regions, not just from the

capitals. Ackerman continued to travel annually and to work assiduously to diversify the nominee pool while sticking to the high standards of honest and truthful journalism. We attach a typical letter from Ackerman written during his trip to Brazil in 1950 which describes his efforts to maintain the momentum and the prestige of the awards.



A late 1950 letter from Carl Ackerman to Provost Grayson Kirk of Columbia describing his efforts to find candidates in Brazil other than those working with the best known newspapers. Source: Accessed in the Archives of the Rare Books and Manuscript Library of Columbia University.

Almost all of the early awardees were men, a tradition that proved more resistant to change. One exception did occur to the standard practice of recognizing male owners and publishers to receive the Cabots. As we have seen, Ackerman in 1941 selected Silvia Bittencourt of the *Correio da Manhã* as the first woman to be awarded and she was, in fact, a columnist and working journalist who went on to gain distinction for her coverage of Brazilian troops fighting in Italy during World War II.

Some of the honorees turned out to be quite controversial selections. Archival material suggests a negative reaction to the selection of a Cuban journalist, also in 1941, who was thought to identify too closely with the Falange parties in Spain, known for their anti-democratic beliefs. Demonstrations on campus protested at the award ceremony. Ackerman responded in this case similarly to other cases in which criticism of his selections arose. He insisted that the awards went only for fine journalism, and did not take into account the political persuasion of the awardee. It may have been as well that such criticism as did arise from time to time was in fact welcomed for it indirectly called attention to the prestige and importance of the Cabot Prizes.¹⁶

Reflections on the Early History of the Cabot Prizes

After the enormous enthusiasm that greeted the announcement and initial Cabot selections in the 1940s and early 1950s, it was only natural that the event itself would begin to attract less attention as time went on. But, obviously, Ackerman and Cabot had set very firm foundations for the institution of the Cabot awards at Columbia. How otherwise could the awards have continued for more than eighty years while still going strong?

Part of the answer could be the extraordinary lives and times of these two individuals themselves. When Ackerman created the awards at Columbia in the 1930s, he was very early in his deanship of the School of Journalism which lasted until 1956. Nor did he rest on his laurels and allow the Cabot program to drift. Ackerman was personally invested in the success of the awards and the broader purpose he believed that they served. He made annual trips to Latin America every year from 1937 to 1956, often to considerable acclaim in the region. In the early 1950s, Brazil took the step of awarding him its *Cruzeiro do Sul* medal, Brazil's highest honor for a non-citizen awarded to him in recognition of his contributions to promoting friendship between Brazil and the world.

For his part, John Moors Cabot advanced steadily in the ranks of the State Department, rising to become Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs in 1952 before being posted as U.S. Ambassador to no fewer than five countries including Colombia from 1957-1959 and Brazil from 1959-1961¹⁷. Later, under Presidents John F. Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson, Cabot was U.S. Ambassador to Poland.

Other dividends derived in good measure from the establishment of the Cabot Prizes at Columbia. The Inter-American Press Association, founded in Mexico City in 1943, could be said to owe its creation to the momentum created by the Cabot awards. Many of the early officers of IAPA were, in fact, Cabot honorees.

The Cabot awards also launched a period of close and important connections between the School of Journalism at Columbia University and then nascent schools of journalism in Latin America where such schools hardly could be said to exist as late as the mid-1950s. Particularly close relationships were established with a journalism school in Venezuela, for example, and vestiges of these early Columbia connections remain in Brazil and Argentina, as well as elsewhere in Latin America.

16. H.S. Ackerman, op. cit.

17. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Moors_Cabot



AN OVERVIEW OF BRAZILIAN JOURNALISM IN THE MODERN ERA

Historical Context

This chapter constructs a timeline for the non-specialist to understand the main eras in the modern history of the press in Brazil. It is a prelude to help understand the context for the case studies of Brazilian Cabot winners presented in the following chapter. Therefore, the historical timeline takes us back to the early 1930s in Brazil and concludes with the present day media landscape. The box chart below sets out the broad historical periods which shaped, and were shaped by, the press in Brazil.

1945 - 1945	The Vargas Era and the Estado Novo
1946 - 1964	Experimenting with Liberal Democracy
1964 - 1985	Brazil Under Military Rule
1985 - 1988	The Transition to Democracy
1988 - 2022	A New Constitution and the Modern Era

1930-1945

The Vargas Era and the Estado Novo

The first decades of the twentieth century were a transformative period for Brazil, brought about by the gradual spread of industrialization in a once rural society, advances in global transportation and communication, European immigration, the growth of cities and the rise of a middle class. Literacy grew, albeit slowly, with the spreading reach of the educational system. Newer forms of civil society emerged, such as labor unions and political movements. Modern means of transportation, including telegraphy and faster ocean vessels, plus the growth of world demand for

Brazilian natural resources, brought Brazil closer to the world.¹

Newspapers and magazines began to flourish as well in this early twentieth century milieu due to the improvement in education, including institutions of higher education. Local and regional news publications began to penetrate into even the smaller and more remote areas of the vast country. Soon, ambitious editors and publishers were putting together media associations that gathered together these regional publications into an umbrella corporate structure and began to assert dominance in the Brazilian media landscape.

With the growth in their readership, the large media conglomerates became more powerful political actors as well, whose favors were to be courted by government officials and whose opposing views were to be repressed. The larger and more widely circulated newspapers, then and still now referred to in Brazil as a *grande imprensa*, began to expand and test the boundaries of influence, shaking off what one author referred to as “an exaggerated degree of respect for constituted authorities” that had marked press behavior in earlier eras in Brazil.²

A *grande imprensa*, what in English might be called the mainstream media, began to set itself apart from the rest of the Brazilian media industry distinguishing themselves in terms of their circulation, longevity, managerial and technological capability, and financial strength. They were responding to the demands in Brazil for more accurate information, rather than political indoctrination by their owners, a clearer separation between news and opinion, and for greater

1. "Politics in Brazil, 1930-1964: An Experiment in Democracy."

The narrative in this chapter also benefited considerably from the following volume by the same author: Thomas Skidmore: *The Politics of Military Rule in Brazil, 1964-85*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1988.

2. Source: Christopher George: "Press Freedom in Brazil", *Index on Censorship*, Vol. 1, Issue 1, 1972, pp. 39-45.

international coverage. Many of the most noteworthy twentieth-century publications in Brazil traced their origins to this exhilarating phase, including *O Estado de São Paulo*, *Jornal do Brasil*, *O Globo*, and *Diário das Notícias*.

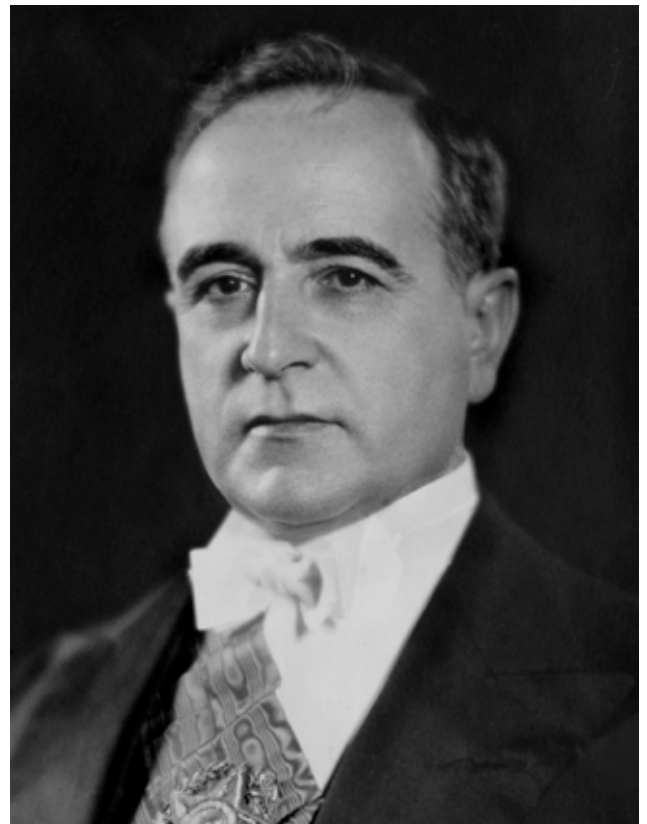
Politically, the 1930s in Brazil was a decade marked by the rise of Getúlio Vargas, a politician from the State of Rio Grande do Sul in the south of Brazil. Elected to the presidency for the first time in 1930, Vargas was a populist reformer challenging the old order in Brazilian politics of the industrial and rural elites from the Center-South. Vargas would come to dominate Brazilian politics for the next fifteen years. While elected in a democratic vote, he became increasingly authoritarian and anti-democratic as Brazil struggled with the ideological turmoil that rocked the world in the 1930s. In Brazil, fascist-inspired groups influenced by movements in Germany, Italy, and Spain battled socialists and communist organizations influenced by the Soviet Union. Occupying important ground in the middle of the political spectrum were those who clung to ideals of a liberal democracy and a constitutional order who increasingly looked to the United States and the reforms pursued by the Roosevelt Administration.

One of Brazil's first modern politicians, Vargas was keenly aware of the power of the press to influence public opinion. Using a variety of tools of censorship and repression, he moved from early on in his long term in office to reign in editorial opinions in the mainstream media, now including newer forms of communication such as radio and film. A number of the larger Brazilian publications of earlier eras did not survive this era of repression while others, including the venerable *Jornal do Brasil*, did so only by changing ownership and editorial stance.³

Vargas' control over the press took different forms, ranging from payment of bribes to commercial economic pressures to outright violence against non-compliant publications by his henchmen. The economic sanctions were subtle, but very effective. The Brazilian federal government controlled the import of newsprint into Brazil and import duties, which were

assessed daily, could vary in accordance with the government's view of the reporting and editorial opinion of the publication. For friends of the government, the government could waive the newsprint duty altogether.

For those in the press who did not toe the government's line, however, the imposition of the import taxes could be ruinous. Francisco de Assis Chateaubriand's chain of newspapers, the *Diários Associados*, took an increasingly critical stance toward Vargas in the 1930s and paid a heavy price. Chateaubriand himself was imprisoned briefly and his media empire came close to bankruptcy. (We will see that Chateaubriand became a Cabot gold medalist in 1945, but only after the Vargas-era repression of the press had eased.)⁴



Getúlio Vargas, official portrait, 1930. Source: https://pt.wikipedia.org/wiki/Get%C3%BAlio_Vargas.

While the payment of bribes and actual violence against newspapers continued to be in practice, the Vargas government innovated by establishing in 1931 its own source of information for public dissemination known as the *Departamento de Imprensa e Propaganda* (DIP, 1931)⁵. After several reconfigurations, DIP

4. See Chapter 3 for a profile of Chateaubriand.

5. Literally, the Department of Press and Propaganda.

3. Skidmore. *op. cit.*, p 48.

became by the end of the 1930s powerful means of government control of what news and information the public received.⁶

In 1937, Vargas orchestrated a “self-coup”, creating new powers for himself and the Federal Government under an authoritarian-populist regime known as the *Estado Novo*. The Vargas Constitution of 1937 redefined the role of the press in Brazil in line with government views, treating the press legally as semi-official entities of the government itself and journalists as public employees and, therefore, subject to government regulation.

Vargas’ grip on power and on the press slipped very gradually during World War II. Only one statement from the opposition to Vargas, a relatively mild call (in 1943) for redemocratization, escaped the censors’ notice and came to the attention of the public before 1945.⁷ However, the grind of the war years took a toll on Vargas’ control. As Brazil had joined the Allies in actual combat missions during World War II, the contrast between the Brazilian government fighting for democracy abroad while repressing it at home became more glaring.

Slowly at first but accelerating quickly by early 1945, more and more civilian calls for freedom of speech and free elections escaped the censors’ control.⁸ The mainstream newspapers by this time had turned against Vargas and, with the active involvement of the military, helped to ease the way for his negotiated removal in 1945. It was the dawn of a new and more democratic era in Brazil.

1946-1964

Experimenting with Liberal Democracy

While unshackled from the censorship of the long Vargas period, the major newspapers in Brazil were poorly prepared to assist in the construction of democratic government in Brazil. While modernizing influences were at work - spreading literacy, a more

demanding readership, more news contacts abroad, the rise of radio and television journalism - some of the older practices persisted into the late 1940s and 1950s. These press practices - the tendency to praise friends and to damn enemies, to extract bribes for favorable news coverage, and so on - limited the press’ potential role in the democratization process underway.

In all, the 1946-1964 period was one of relative press liberty. The new 1946 Constitution, which replaced the authoritarian Vargas version of 1937, included many guarantees for civil liberties, including freedom of speech. Despite occasional conflicts with the authorities, no newspapers were closed during this period. In the 1945 election, the media backed the center-right candidate, General Eurico Dutra, who was also supported by the Armed Forces. The media leaders included such figures as Assis Chateaubriand of *Diários Associados*, Herbert Moses of *O Globo*, and Paulo Bittencourt of *Correio da Manhã*.

At this time, as in the United States, the main newspapers took an anti-populist and anti-leftist orientation which put them often at odds with all the presidents of Brazil prior to 1964. The owners and publishers reacted strongly to the newly legalized Communist Party of Brazil. (The post-1945 atmosphere of triumph over fascism, and the U.S.-USSR alliance during the war years, had breathed new life into the PCB and raised the profile of its leader, Luis Carlos Prestes.)⁹ Most of the major publications - *O Estado de São Paulo*, *Correio da Manhã*, *Jornal do Brasil* and others - adopted centrist or center-right editorial positions. Only one, Samuel Wainer’s *Última Hora* which was launched in the early 1950s, dared to take a more populist stance and to align with candidates from the left, including with Getúlio Vargas who returned to presidency in 1950.

Two individuals in particular, both eventual Cabot medalists, stand out as emblematic of the Brazilian press during this pre-1964 period: Assis Chateaubriand of *Diários Associados* and Carlos Lacerda of *Tribuna da Imprensa*.¹⁰

6. Skidmore, op cit., p. 36.

7. Ibid.

8. Ibid, p. 49.

9. Ibid.

10. Both are profiled in Chapter 3.

Francisco de Assis Chateaubriand Bandeira de Mello (Cabot Prize 1945)



Assis Chateaubriand, 1957. Source: https://pt.wikipedia.org/wiki/Assis_Chateaubriand

Assis Chateaubriand, popularly referred to as Chatô, was an almost larger than life figure in the emergence of modern Brazilian publishing. Rising from relatively humble origins in rural northeastern Brazil, Chatô assembled Brazil's first media empire as the owner of newspapers, magazines, radio and television stations. All the while, he remained an active journalist and columnist immersing himself in the political turmoil of the day. He obtained the license to operate Brazil's first television network, known as TV Tupi, and soon had television stations throughout Brazil, complementing his far-flung chain of regional newspapers and magazines. In short, Chatô was a sort of Brazilian "Citizen Kane" whose influence in the media and in politics in Brazil was unprecedented in his own time.

At the height of his influence, Chatô operated very shrewdly, if not always ethically. The support of his media group could make or break careers of politicians and he knew how to extract recompense for favorable coverage. When Getúlio Vargas returned to office in 1950 in a democratic election, it was thanks

in part to Chatô's support, although soon enough he turned against Vargas. When Juscelino Kubitschek, the architect of Brasília, was elected by a minority of voters in 1956, he faced opposition to his taking office. Sensing an opportunity, Chatô and his media group came to his rescue.

Constantly under financial pressure to keep *Diários Associados* solvent, Chatô was not above blatant extortion as in the many cases in which companies which did not pay to advertise in his outlets would find their products the subject of unflattering headlines and news articles. Chatô was a multi-dimensional person who could seem to be everywhere. He was the founder of the Art Museum of São Paulo, spent time as a senator in the Brazilian congress, and served for several years as Brazil's Ambassador to the U.K., all the while somehow keeping his farflung Brazilian media empire afloat financially. He even remained active in writing columns for his many newspapers and magazines for years after a devastating stroke made him bed-ridden in the early 1960s. The media empire he built did not survive for long following his death in 1968.

Carlos Lacerda (Cabot Prize 1953)



Carlos Lacerda, circa 1950s. Source: <https://www.camara.leg.br/deputados/130732/biografia>

A generation younger than Chatô for whom he worked at one point, Carlos Lacerda was one of the most brilliant and most controversial figures in the history of the Brazilian press. His influence was at its peak in the decade of the 1950s and up until the military coup in 1964. Lacerda's power base was his Rio-based newspaper, *Tribuna da Imprensa*, whose pages were filled with such powerful invective against so many elected officials of the day that Lacerda became known as "the destroyer of Presidents."

During Getúlio Vargas' second term as president (1950-1954), Lacerda became the most extreme spokesperson for the center and center-right opposition gathered in the UDN party. Lacerda was "the master of political invective" whose main publication, *Tribuna da Imprensa*, was a vehicle for anti-Getulista propaganda and soon was calling for his ouster from office and wholesale reform of democratic institutions¹¹. The Brazilian press in those days lived through a period of intense polarization with battles between *Tribuna da Imprensa* (allied with other anti-Vargas publications) and left-leaning *Última Hora* which alone among widely circulated publications provided support for Vargas.

An economic crisis in Brazil worsened during 1954, arousing popular unrest and the ire of the military which feared an erosion of its wages. With Vargas under pressure, some of his supporters took aim at Carlos Lacerda, who was thought to be the leading edge of the opposition attacks. In July, Lacerda was the target of a would-be assassination attempt by Vargas supporters, though these acted without Vargas' authorization. Lacerda was only slightly wounded. Soon enough, he became even more violent in his attacks on Getúlio, many of these delivered by radio as Lacerda assumed a martyr's cloak.¹²

The political tables soon turned in a completely unexpected way. Confronted with demands from the military that he step down permanently, rather than simply take a leave of absence, Getúlio Vargas committed suicide in the presidential palace in

Rio on August 24, 1954. Popular reaction was overwhelmingly supportive of Vargas. Lacerda was forced to flee the country until the reaction subsided. Delivery trucks for *O Globo* were attacked and burned. To some extent, Vargas had extracted a measure of revenge on his enemies.

Back from exile and reinserting himself in Brazilian politics, Lacerda resumed his criticism of most of Brazil's elected presidents who succeeded Vargas. When in 1960, voters turned to another populist president, Jânio Quadros, former Governor of São Paulo, Lacerda was among his fiercest critics, helping to ease the way for Quadros to resign from office after only the first year of his term. Quadros' successor, Vice-President João Goulart, a leftist politician, proved unable to gain widespread support following his mishandling of yet another economic crisis. Once again, a sitting president faced implacable opposition from Lacerda, and the rest of the mainstream press for that matter, until the military took matters into its own hands in March 1964 with devastating consequences for civil liberties in Brazil for decades to come.

1964-1985

The Press in Brazil During Military Rule

Brazil by 1964 was a country gripped by economic crisis, especially a high rate of inflation, and polarized around right-left lines. Goulart, the accidental president, had long been looked upon with suspicion by Brazil's military leaders for his leftist leanings, though in truth he was more of a populist who tried his best to rule from the center. The staunchly anticommunist military was convinced that Goulart was intent on a socialist revolution in Brazil along Cuban lines. They imagined a Brazil beset by internal enemies, including labor and student groups, peasant organizations, intellectuals, artists, and even important parts of the Catholic Church.

Goulart was on shaky ground politically from the outset. The failure of his unpopular anti-inflation plan added to his difficulties in 1963-64. Beset by his problems and influenced by the rise of other populist politicians who seemed to channel considerable popular support, Goulart veered much more sharply toward the

11. Skidmore, op. cit., p. 124.

12. Ibid.

radical left in his waning days in office in 1964. This proved to be a serious misjudgement on his part. He had overestimated his basis of popular support.¹³

The civilian opposition to Goulart was led by many of the leading newspapers, including *O Estado de São Paulo* under its owner Julio de Mesquita Filho. Lacerda joined in the general criticism, of course, but so did the editorial opinion of other leading media figures of the time, including Chatô and the *Diários Associados*, Roberto Marinho of *O Globo* (Cabot medalist 1965) and Manuel Francisco Nascimento Brito of *Jornal do Brasil* (Cabot medalist 1967).

When the military coup finally took place in March 1964, with Goulart and other populist leaders forced into exile, the Brazilian mainstream press was practically unanimous in its support. In retrospect, this may have created the impression that the overthrow of the Goulart government was the result of citizen mobilization rather than the military takeover that it turned out to be. Many in the press, in fact, may have looked forward to the convening of democratic elections in 1965, as soon as the military leaders had re-established civil order. The temporary disruption of democratic government to prevent a communist takeover must have seemed like a reasonable price to pay.



O Globo's front page on April 2, 1964, says "Goulart ran away and democracy is being reestablished. Mazzilli takes office." Source: [link](#)

Only Samuel Wainer of *Última Hora* opposed the military coup, though he was promptly forced into exile and his newspaper fell into terminal decline. Only a few established journalists in the mainstream press dared to speak out in the early days following the coup. One of these was Alceu Amoroso Lima (Cabot Medal 1969), a distinguished columnist for *Jornal do Brasil* and a prominent Catholic lay leader whose reputation may have been too much for the military leaders to confront directly.¹⁴ As early as April 1964, just weeks after the military takeover and in the midst of the repression that followed, Amoroso Lima was warning of the dangers posed to democracy by the rise of the radical right to power.

Following the arrests of leading figures in the arts, sciences, and education, the press began to be more critical of the military government. Once again, Carlos Lacerda attempted to organize popular support and called for a prompt return to civilian rule, presumably with himself in a leading role, though it was clear by this time that Lacerda's influence had peaked. Within a few years, Lacerda himself was bundled off into exile.

Once it became clear that the military rule under Marshal Castelo Branco was to be prolonged, the military became less tolerant of press opposition which threatened popular support for the coup. In the years following 1964, the military hardened its stance against the press and other opponents. In 1967, Castelo Branco was succeeded as president by Marshal Arthur Costa e



Front page of *Correio da Manhã* (January 1, 1964). Source: [link](#)

13. Ibid.

14. <https://bibliotecadigital.fgv.br/dspace/handle/handle/10438/2096>

Silva, a much more hardline officer with less tolerance for dissent. In 1969, Costa e Silva gave way to General Emílio Garrastazu Médici, perhaps the harshest of the hardline military leaders.

Thereafter, censorship of the press and public opinion tightened considerably, though initially it was ill-coordinated. Censorship became more repressive late in 1969 with the issue of a fearsome decree known in Brazil as Institutional Act No. 5 which formalized censorship and shut down the Brazilian Congress which had been allowed to function during the first five years of military rule. When Congress eventually reopened some months later, it did so without any of the opposition deputies, many of whom fled the country. Supreme Court justices were forcibly retired. Leading academics, including Fernando Henrique Cardoso, were dismissed from the federal university system and forced into exile.

For the Brazilian press, the years after 1969, in particular, were marked by censorship, prison, torture, and even death. Censorship, which had been ill-coordinated and done in an *ad hoc* manner previously, was institutionalized to outlaw any criticism of the government authorities, their decrees, and the armed forces. The censors prohibited in particular the publication of any news of workers' or student movements. In practice, all media in Brazil became subject to censorship by military courts.

Taking a leaf from Vargas' propaganda playbook from the 1930s, the military invested heavily in a public relations effort in the early 1970s, taking advantage of a stronger than expected rebound in the economy and the resulting improvement in Brazil's global standing. The public relations effort sought to reassure the public that, despite some possible excesses in the battle against internal enemies of the state, the armed forces had brought a measure of peace, security, and international prestige to Brazil and that its role had been fundamentally constructive.

The message, subtly and effectively delivered, was turbocharged by television channels which by the early 1970s were available in a large and growing

number of Brazilian homes. Many of these channels were controlled by *Organizações Globo*, under Roberto Marinho who himself had been awarded a Cabot Gold Medal in 1965. It remains a sensitive point in Brazil to this day that Globo's massive expansion nationwide into television was made possible by a close and friendly relationship with the Médici government. Favorable regulatory rulings underpinned the lucrative expansion. While almost all Brazilian publications within a year or two had turned critical of the 1964 military coup, *O Globo* did not get around to admitting its tragically mistaken editorial opinion until 2013.

The other side of the coin of the government's successful public relations campaign was a much stricter approach to press censorship starting in the early 1970s. The military clamped down hardest of all on any reporting that would discuss military affairs, the intra-military politicking that out of the public view would determine the presidential succession. Yet other newsworthy topics were prohibited as well, such as reporting on student and labor groups or any bad news about the economy and, of course, any news about armed resistance groups that posed a threat to military rule.

Police censorship was particularly harsh on the press and focused on the most influential communications, particularly television where even shows featuring musical performances by artists known to be hostile to the military regime were prohibited. While television proved somewhat easier to control, in large part because the channels depended upon government authorization to operate, the mainstream media was another matter. In this case, censorship ranged from periods of "self-censorship" to prior censorship by the police of all materials to be printed in each day's edition.

Rather famously, the news outlets most carefully scrutinized via prior censorship, including *O Estado de São Paulo*, *Jornal da Tarde*, and *Jornal do Brasil*, protested censored articles by publishing in their place long excerpts from classic Brazilian and Portuguese poets or publishing elaborate recipes on the front pages, often for inedible meals. The reading public ascertained

the not so subtle critique of prior censorship.

Cabot Medalists and the Resistance to Censorship

A number of the Cabot medal winners at Columbia were writers and editors with the mainstream media who constantly probed and tested the military's limits in terms of self-censorship. We mentioned earlier the case of columnist Alceu Amoroso Lima (Cabot medalist 1969) whose voice and influence the military was more reluctant to challenge.

Editor-in-Chief Alberto Dines (Cabot medal 1970) of the *Jornal do Brasil* and the paper's most widely read political columnist, Carlos Castello Branco (Cabot medal 1978) forged a much more critical stance toward the military regime and paid the price in terms of imprisonment by the authorities. Fernando Pedreira (Cabot medal 1974), with backing from the Mesquita family which owned the paper, pushed *O Estado de São Paulo* into a leading role in testing the limits of censorship in the 1970s.

As a whole, despite personal bravery by many journalists, censorship and self-censorship were largely effective in muffling an important voice of civil society. The military's underlying narrative of an efficiently governed and economically prospering society went unchallenged in the mainstream media in Brazil in the 1970s. While the greatest harm was done by self-censorship, hardline elements within the military were not above resorting to imprisonment, torture, and murder to reinforce caution in the written media.

One of the most notorious cases from this dark era of the mid-1970s was the arrest and murder in 1976 of 38-year old television journalist Vladimir Herzog who had worked both in television and as a correspondent for the BBC. Hearing that was accused of communist ties, Herzog voluntarily turned himself into the military authorities to respond to questioning. Yet once in military custody of the Second Army in São Paulo, he quickly succumbed to extreme torture methods and died almost immediately after his arrest. No one believed the Army's explanation of suicide.

Herzog's funeral, an ecumenical service organized, at some risk, by the Archdiocese of São Paulo, was one of the first public signs of resistance to the random brutality of the military. The death and funeral of Vladimir Herzog were widely covered in the press and a large crowd gathered. Herzog's murder did serve the hardline military's broader purpose in the short-term by reminding all of the consequences for journalists who would not fall into line. Yet from the mid-1970s on, dissent began to emerge and the press, or at least parts of it, began to find its voice.

Press Resistance: The Rise of the "Alternative Press"

With the mainstream press (a *grande imprensa*) effectively controlled in the 1970s, Brazilian journalists sought other outlets in the so-called alternative press (a *imprensa alternativa*). For a time, these publications could take advantage of the gaps in press censorship, at least until they became more widely read by a public eager for more factual sources of information. The most widely read of these alternative publications was *Pasquim*, a satirical publication that appeared weekly, but there were other examples as well, such as *Opinião* and a publication by the Archdiocese of São Paulo. The brave journalists who wrote for this alternative press occasionally paid a heavy price as well through imprisonment and other forms of repression.

Censorship Eases and the Press Responds

Beginning with General Ernesto Geisel, who assumed the presidency in 1974, more moderate military leaders began to plan a transition back to civilian rule in Brazil or, at least, to liberalize the authoritarian rule they had inherited from the hardliners. As the Herzog murder in 1976 clearly demonstrated, even tentative steps toward liberalization could be met by brutality from hardline elements within the military.

The press began to recover. Although the repressive laws still remained on the books, censorship began to ease, as when prior censorship was lifted for *O Estado*

Soon the momentum for a return to civil liberties and the rule of law became almost impossible for the military to surmount. General João Figureido, who by this time had succeeded General Geisel in the presidency, had little appetite to continue military rule. He acquiesced in organizing free local elections in 1982 which resulted in wins by newly legalized opposition parties in all the most important Brazilian states. These elections soon touched off nationwide pressures for direct elections for the presidency itself, the definitive challenge to the military government.

O Estado de S. Paulo's front page (February 1, 1987) says "Brazil writes its new Constitution". Source: [link](#).

An overview of the media landscape in Brazil today

The most important accomplishment of the “accidental” government headed by José Sarney was to convene a constitutional assembly to draft a new constitution, one that would elevate the role of civil society, divide powers among the three branches of government, and enshrine civil liberties in the full spirit of the UN Declaration of Human Rights.¹⁵ These include the rights of Brazilians to broad access to information from different and multiple sources within a democratic environment where freedom of speech and the press is assured.¹⁶ According to the same report, in more recent times, “Brazil has prepared the ground for the establishment of a social communication system in alignment with the most advanced international regimes in the field.” In general, in accordance with international assessments, “the Brazilian legal framework since 1988 is rather favorable to the free practice of journalism.”¹⁷

These same reports, however, also call attention to significant obstacles for journalism in Brazil since 1988. Journalists can be intimidated by politicians and business interests who can exploit loopholes in the legal system to harass journalists with frivolous lawsuits, for example, a fairly common practice in Brazil. Moreover, attention is often called to the ongoing concentration of large media ownership in a small handful of family owners and media groups, a longstanding characteristic of the media landscape in Brazil.

The same report also calls attention to other, more threatening aspects of the media landscape in Brazil today. In the last four years (2018-2022), the government of (now former) President Jair Bolsonaro has helped to unleash a torrent of social media communications that have often targeted journalists who are perceived to be critics of the government. Bolsonaro himself regularly has attacked the media

15. UNESCO: <https://en.unesco.org/fieldoffice/brasilia/expertise/freedom-expression-brazil>

16. Ibid.

17. Reporters Without Borders: Brazil Press Freedom Index. Accessed at: <https://rsf.org/en/country/brazil>

and journalists in his public remarks. This atmosphere of hate speech and disinformation has created a lethal situation for journalists in Brazil, especially recently and especially for those most critical in their reporting on deforestation in the Amazon and the protection of indigenous rights.¹⁸

The Bolsonaro government promoted the most aggressive environment against Brazilian journalists since the military dictatorship. These attacks increased in intensity following the defeat of Bolsonaro in the Brazilian presidential elections of October 2022 and the victory of President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva. The Inter-American Press Association cited local sources in Brazil who counted 77 acts of political violence against journalists in Brazil from October 30, 2022 through January 6, 2023.¹⁹

Matters came to a violent head on January 8, 2023 when a mob of thousands of Bolsonaro voters, discontent with the election results and clamoring for a military intervention, stormed the seat of Brazilian government in Brasilia. Brazilian sources cited many aggressions against journalists covering the riot ranging from violent beatings and threats to theft of equipment and destruction of photos.²⁰

The IAPA cited Brazil's slide in the annual Chapultepec Index of institutional threats against freedom of the press in Latin America. The August 2022 index showed Brazil sliding to the fifteenth position among 22 countries in the Americas, mostly a result of press intimidations promoted or encouraged by the Bolsonaro government.²¹

18. Dom Philips, a reporter for The Guardian was killed in 2022 as he reported on the plight of indigenous peoples in the Amazon, calling attention to the devastating effects of illegal logging and ranching which the federal government has done little to curb.

19. Retrieved from <https://en.sipiapa.org/notas/1215661-iapa-condemns-attacks-against-the-press-and-calls-for-democracy-in-brazil>

20. Ibid.

21. See: https://www.indicedechapultepec.com/index_en.html. Accessed on January 22, 2023.

Cabot Award Winners in Modern Times

Winners of the Cabot awards in the modern era reflect important changes, including increased professionalization, in the Brazilian press. The Cabot jury's field of vision has seemed to expand with more non-traditional media outlets being honored, going beyond the "usual suspects" of the mainstream media to include more popular newspapers and digital media.

More awards have been given in the last thirty years for investigative reporters and for journalists and publications covering relatively newer issue areas, such as reporting on business and economics and on the environment, and also on international reporting. Interestingly, a relatively large contingent of women journalists, traditionally underrepresented in the Cabot awards, have been honored in the most recent decades. Many of these women honorees have worked as investigative reporters on issues of human rights violations in Brazil, the rights of minorities, including indigenous peoples, the environment, fake news, and other emerging issues of our day.

We will highlight a number of these more recent Brazilian Cabot honorees in the profiles contained in Chapter 3. By way of illustration of more recent trends in Cabot awards, the following examples may suffice for now.

In 1987, two Cabot awards went to persons associated with the *Gazeta Mercantil*, for excellence in business reporting: Editor Luis Fernando Levy and Washington correspondent Paulo Sotero. This was the first award given to Brazilian journalists working in financial journalism. Sotero as a foreign correspondent for a Brazilian newspaper may have been the first such Brazilian foreign correspondent to be honored. He was joined as an honoree by Carlos E. Lins da Silva, also a correspondent in Washington and working for the *Folha de S. Paulo*.

Brazil's *Veja* magazine arose in the 1970s and 1980s as a weekly source of news, competing head to head with the leading newspapers of the day. For

innovation and general excellence in news reporting, including highly influential investigative reports, *Veja* publisher Roberto Civita was honored with the Cabot gold medal in 1988.

For his coverage of seminal events in the re-democratization of Brazil in the late 1980s, James B. Brooke, Brazil Bureau Chief of *The New York Times* was awarded the gold medal in 1994. Brooke joined a list of *Times* correspondents honored for excellence in coverage of Brazil over the years. Simon Romero added to the ranks of distinguished *Times* journalists reporting from Brazil when he won the Cabot in 2015.

Over the many years of the Cabot awards few, if any, had been given to investigative reporters and none to reporters writing for more popular audiences, rather than the upper-middle and upper class readers of the more traditional publications. Thus, the gold medal awarded in 2003 to João Antonio Barros of *Jornal O Dia*, a publication clearly aimed at a more popular readership, marked a broadening of the Cabot jury's field of vision in the media landscape in Brazil as well as excellence in investigative journalism.

The award of the Cabot Gold Medal in 2005 to Miriam Leitão of *O Globo* and *Rede Globo* was significant in many ways. She was the first Brazilian woman journalist to be awarded with the Cabot since Silvia Bittencourt won in 1941. Numerous other women journalists in Brazil have been recognized since Leitão opened the way in 2005. Miriam Leitão was recognized for excellence in the field of economic journalism, a relatively rare specialization and rarer still for women journalists. Moreover, the award recognized Leitão's accomplishments as a television journalist making economic developments more accessible to the non-specialist listeners.

Fernando Rodrigues of *Poder360* won the Cabot in 2018, the first time a journalist working primarily for a digital media company had been so honored.

Two more recently honored Brazilian women journalists are worthy of special mention. Patricia

Campos Mello, a reporter with *Folha de S. Paulo*, was honored for intrepid reporting on hate speech in Brazil, especially such odious speech emanating from sources close to the federal government in Brasília. The award citation called attention to Campos Mello's personal bravery in reporting on fake news and hate speech which has driven polarization in Brazil recently.

Eliane Brum, a correspondent for *El País* (Brasil), won the Cabot Gold Medal in 2021, the first Brazilian journalist to be honored for her work in environmental journalism with a focus on deforestation and its impact on forest communities in the Brazilian Amazon.

These are just a few of the Cabot winners from Brazil who have been honored since the passage of the new Constitution of 1988 ushered in a new era for Brazilian journalism.

We turn now to a more detailed profile of a large number, though by no means all, of the Brazilian Cabot winners over the years. While the choice of awardees to profile may have been arbitrary to some extent, as well as based upon the availability of information, certainly all Brazilian winners deserved to be included as well and mention made of their unique contributions.



PROFILES OF BRAZILIAN CABOT PRIZE WINNERS THROUGH THE YEARS

PART ONE: THE CABOT PRIZES IN THE EARLY DAYS

1941: Silvia Bittencourt The First Woman Journalist Honored

Kerianne Leibman



Silvia Bittencourt, circa 1941. Source: M.M. Cabot Prize (@CabotPrize). Twitter, February 14, 2019, 5:18 p.m. [Link](#)

Journalist Silvia Bittencourt was the recipient of the 1941 Maria Moors Cabot Prize. She was awarded alongside her husband Paulo Bittencourt. Both wrote for the leading Rio de Janeiro newspaper at the time *Correio da Manhã* of which husband Paulo was the owner. Silvia, who wrote a daily column for *Correio da Manhã* under the pen name “Majoy”, was the first woman and the first Brazilian journalist ever to receive the Cabot Prize.

Silvia Bittencourt was widely known in Brazil for her efforts for civic improvement, especially in Rio de Janeiro, and an early feminist. A *New York Times* article at the time of the Cabot award emphasized that she had put aside the privileged life she could have pursued to write of the need for “a quieter Rio, a cleaner Rio, a capital that will make the most of its natural surroundings.” The article continued: “Her battle is not an easy one. In short, she is a newspaper columnist, probably the only feminine one south of the Rio Grande. Her professional status makes her unusual among South American women. Add to that high social and economic position and she becomes unique.”¹

Bittencourt’s Cabot citation referred to her efforts “in the advancement of public health, civic beauty, and the welfare of the people.”² The fact that she was the first woman journalist to be honored with a Cabot was duly noted at the Convocation event. In his introductory address at the time, Godfrey L. Cabot commented as follows:

“The duty of formally bidding welcome the four great South Americans that we are privileged to have with us today is in more competent hands than mine, but I would like to refer to one pleasing feature of the present occasion, namely, it is the first time that a lady has been chosen to receive one of these prizes, Senhora Silvia Bittencourt... From childhood up, both by the example and precept of my parents, I have been led to favor larger opportunities for women, and, in particular, the franchise and professional opportunities. This manifestation of the broadest possible basis of this foundation, is, therefore, particularly acceptable to me.”³

1. [Link](#)

2. Senhora Silvia Bittencourt Cabot Gold Medal Citation, 1941. Accessed in the Rare Books and Manuscripts Library, Columbia University.

3. “Our Responsibility Today”, Address by Dr. Godfrey Lowell Cabot at the Third Convocation of the Maria Moors Cabot Prizes, Low Memorial Library, Columbia University, November 10, 1941. Accessed in the Rare Books and Manuscript Library, Columbia University Library.



Silvia Bittencourt receiving her Cabot award from Godfrey L. Cabot, November 10, 1941. Her husband, Paulo Bittencourt, is second from the left. Source: Rare Books and Manuscript Library, Columbia University.

Silvia Bittencourt was educated in Brazil, France, and England. She spoke French, English, Portuguese, Spanish, and German and had lived for years in France prior to the difficult days that preceded the outbreak of World War II. Inspired by the example of women civic leaders she had observed in Europe, she resolved to become involved herself in public affairs. The *Times* article in 1941 quoted her as follows: "When I started to live in Rio again....I saw that much of the city's beauty was being ruined by modern buildings. I saw a lot of community needs that required attention and action. And I saw no reason why I shouldn't take that action myself." And she went on to talk about the role of women in the United States: "To me, one of the most exhilarating things in the United States is the fact that women are independent people with a sense of their own value in society - and the fact that men recognize that position."⁴

Bittencourt addressed the changing cityscape during a time when trees were being cut down, colonial architectural gems razed, and severe highrises constructed, drastically changing the Rio skyline. She advocated for urban modernization in Rio that kept in mind the preservation and integrity of classical architecture and the city's magnificent natural surroundings. Not only did she exercise her influence

as a writer, but she personally saw to it to visit and lobby public officials, not as Majoy, but leveraging her social status as Mme. Paulo Bittencourt. The fruits of her pioneering environmental activism included the rezoning and protection of Rio's Gávea Beach (now known as São Conrado beach).

Silvia Bittencourt's journalistic activities took a sharp turn in the war-torn years that followed her 1941 award by Columbia. She worked as an international correspondent for the United Press and covered the Brazilian and other Allied expeditionary forces in Europe in North Africa and Italy in 1944-45. She was likely the only female Brazilian journalist assigned to covering the war from the field. It may come as little surprise that much of her wartime writing exhibited lyricism and detailed descriptions of the natural world, even amidst the horrors of war. Unlike many other reporters on the ground, she was not delivering her reporting via telegram, the quickest means of delivery at that time, which demanded attention to the latest news of the war. Instead, this delay in communicating her dispatches created space that may have been significant and provided her with time for reflection and afforded her some artistic license.⁵

During her time in Europe, Bittencourt also followed and covered the actions of the United States 5th Army (the first of American forces to enter mainland Europe by way of Salerno, Italy.) She interviewed significant figures, including Charles de Gaulle. She experienced horrific situations during pivotal stages of the war: death and devastation, the slaughter of innocent civilians by Nazis in a small Italian village, and the liberation of the Dachau concentration camps. After suffering a shrapnel injury in Lucca, Italy, Bittencourt spent time recuperating at an American Red Cross base in Capri. Throughout this wartime ordeal, she noted in her dispatches such details as the flowers in the Italian countryside, old women tending the fields, and the hues of the changing sky at dusk and dawn.

5. A recent doctoral dissertation examined Bittencourt's literary contributions through her war chronicles. Rafael da Cruz Ireno, Rafael. 2018. "Crônicas sobre a Segunda Guerra Mundial: Sílvia de Bittencourt (Majoy) e o lirismo de Seguindo a Primavera." Dissertation. University of São Paulo. [Link](#). Accessed August 10, 2022.

4. [Link](#)

After the war, Bittencourt authored the book *Seguindo a Primavera* (1951) ("Following the Springtime"), which is a collection of her wartime chronicles⁶. The allusion to Springtime refers to the hoped-for end of the war in Spring 1945. Those familiar with her work debate whether the lyricism in her writing was at times problematic. There is the suggestion that someone who was so intently focused on the fauna and flora, when faced with the atrocities of war, was averting her gaze from the real story. However, Bittencourt arguably was willing to see all that was before her - the horror and the hope. She captured valuable firsthand accounts from the various stages of the war. It takes a skilled eye to be able to see any beauty amid the horrors of war. As a result she offered the world a unique perspective. In her own words: "I look for Peace within the war, following this flowery Spring that will bless, like the promise of the harvest, the fruits that will come from so many flowers."⁷

Surprisingly, there is still little else known about Silvia Bittencourt and the significance of her journalistic work. Nonetheless, her work is historically significant in fostering ties between Brazil and the international community. Standing at the precipice of pivotal moments in World War II, she navigated the fight for democracy against fascism while Getulio Vargas' regime was in power in Brazil. Her rigorous efforts to preserve Rio de Janeiro's historical architecture and natural landscapes are still evident today. She wrote with great care and hope for her surroundings and for the future, at home and abroad.

Silvia and her husband Paulo eventually separated in the post-war period after having a daughter together. Silvia remained active in urban preservation activities in Rio de Janeiro after stepping back from journalism. "Majoy" died in Rio de Janeiro shortly before her 100th birthday in 1995.

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6. The volume, *Seguindo a Primavera*, was produced under the pen name of "Majoy", and published by the Brazilian Army Library Press in 1951.

7. da Cruz Ireno, op. cit. pp. 247-248.

1941: Paulo Bittencourt The Owner and His Newspaper

Kerianne Leibman



Paulo Bittencourt, 1941. Source: https://pt.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pr%C3%AAmios_Maria_Moors_Cabot.

Paulo Bittencourt was also a 1941 Maria Moors Cabot Prize recipient. He was one of the first Brazilian recipients, alongside his first wife and fellow journalist Silvia Bittencourt. At the time he was awarded, Bittencourt was the owner of the newspaper *Correio da Manhã* of Rio de Janeiro, which was founded by his father Dr. Edmundo Bittencourt in 1901. (de Moraes Ferreira n.d.) During the 1941 Cabot convocation ceremony, the publication received a bronze plaque. In letters to Dean Ackerman, a description of the importance of the *Correio da Manhã* supplementing the recommendation read as follows: “[The *Correio da Manhã* is...] the most influential and respectable, among the most independent, successful, and profitable papers in Rio and probably in Brazil, and a choice which measures up to the high standards set in all previous newspaper selections for the Cabot Prizes.” (Cross 1941)

Paulo Bittencourt was educated at Trinity College in Cambridge (specializing in international law) and later returned to Brazil to complete his studies in Civil Law at the Faculty of Rio de Janeiro. (“Senhor Paulo Bittencourt Citation,” 1941.) It was there that he ultimately obtained his degree in 1918. During his studies, he started working for his father’s paper, and later rose to the position of editor not long after graduating in 1922 while continuing to write political

commentary. He was part of the Brazilian delegation to the Versailles treaty negotiations in 1919. (de Moraes Ferreira n.d.)



Paulo Bittencourt with his wife, Silvia Bittencourt, and daughter Sybil, November 1941

Bittencourt consolidated the reputation of the *Correio da Manhã* for a fierce and combative form of journalism. He was an outspoken critic of the conservative government of President Arthur Bernardes (1922-1926) eventually spending a year in prison after which he and Silvia went into exile in Paris for a period. (de Moraes Ferreira n.d.) He returned from Europe in 1929 to take over the newspaper from his father and plunged back into political journalism at a crucial turning point in Brazilian history with the Revolution of 1930 and the rise of President Getúlio Vargas, who went on to become the dominant political figure in Brazil during the first half of the twentieth century.

While the paper openly supported the 1930 revolution that brought Vargas to power in the first place, it also consistently opposed Vargas for fear of his authoritarian and dictatorial tendencies. For this, the *Correio da Manhã*, along with many other opposition newspapers, suffered repression and censorship, especially after the creation of Vargas’ fascist-tinged *Estado Novo* in 1937. Many influential journalists wrote for the *Correio da Manhã* during this period, including Carlos Lacerda and Francisco de Assis Chateaubriand, both of whom also won

The Cabot Prize awarded to Bittencourt in 1941 came on the heels of the struggles of the Brazilian press to escape the harsh censorship of the early Vargas years. In his remarks at the time of the award, Dean Carl Ackerman commented as follows regarding Paulo Bittencourt and his perceived importance at the time: "Throughout the political and social change in his own country and the world during the past two decades, he has been a stabilizing and constructive influence as a citizen and editor and a powerful factor in his newspaper in the development of international friendship among all American Republics." ("Senhor Paulo Bittencourt Citation," 1941.)

Paulo Bittencourt went on to a long and consequential career as publisher and journalist in Brazil for several decades following the Cabot award. He and his newspaper remained a very staunch critic of Getúlio Vargas, always alert to perceived threats against Brazil's democracy. The unrelenting opposition to Vargas may have contributed to the political crisis of 1954 leading up to Vargas' suicide in August of that year. Bittencourt was a supporter and later a critic in the pages of the publication of President Juscelino Kubitschek (1956-1960).

He was immersed in the political turmoil in Brazil in the early 1960s until he fell ill and died at the age of 68 in 1963. (Marieta de Morais Ferreira) The management of the newspaper was turned over to his second wife, Niomar Moniz Sodré Bittencourt. While the newspaper was initially supportive of the military coup in 1964, it soon turned against the anti-democratic impulse of the military rulers. Niomar was eventually imprisoned. (Ross 1972) The newspaper suffered heavy censorship and an economic boycott. Pressured both politically and economically, *Correio da Manhã*, so closely associated with Paulo Bittencourt, ceased publication in 1974. (Dines 2003)

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1945: Francisco de Assis Chateaubriand A Brazilian "Citizen Kane"

Kerianne Leibman



Francisco de Assis Chateaubriand (left) receives his Cabot certificate from Dean Carl Ackerman, 1945. Source: Accessed in the Archives of the Rare Books and Manuscript Library of Columbia University.

Francisco de Assis Chateaubriand was a 1945 recipient of the Maria Moors Cabot prize. He was the only Brazilian to be honored that year. Popularly known also as "Chatô", he is considered by many to be the dominant figure in the development of the press in the early decades of the twentieth century, a sort of Brazilian Citizen Kane. Born into genteel poverty in the Northeast of Brazil and a lawyer, politician, and journalist by profession, Chatô went on to create the media empire *Diários Associados*. This chain, vestiges of which are still operating today, consisted of many regional and national newspapers, radio programs, publishing houses, and Brazil's first television station (TV Tupi) authorized to broadcast in Brazil. (de Moraes Ferreira n.d.)

Born in Umbuzeiro, Paraíba on October 5 1892, Chatô started out studying law in Recife. (de Moraes Ferreira n.d.) He worked as an editor for *Jornal Pequeno* during this time. After graduating, he became professor of Roman law and the philosophy of law. Later, he continued work as a journalist and started working for the *Jornal do Brasil* based in Rio de Janeiro. He also worked for a period of time at *Correio da Manhã* as an international correspondent. During this time he traveled throughout Europe and also

published work in foreign papers during his travels. In addition, he worked for a time as a correspondent for the Argentine newspaper *La Nación*.

Working as a lawyer to gather the necessary capital, in 1924 he purchased *O Jornal*, which became the first newspaper in his chain. He went on to build a prosperous and far-reaching media outlet which grew to include close to one hundred newspapers, magazines, radio and television stations. (Moraes 1994). Shrewdly using his knowledge of politics and politicians, he expanded his empire through at times ethically questionable means such as essentially selling or withholding favorable coverage. His was a heavily government-funded media empire in contrast to the modern Brazilian corporate media. His path to success is fraught with nuances, controversy and discussion of the role of government funding in media efforts and the possibility of corruption or unethical means of acquisition among other practices. In all of this, Chatô's practices probably did not differ all that much from those of other media owners in Brazil. However, he did operate at a much larger scale than the other chains.

The 1945 Cabot committee, it appears, selected Chatô for his bold stance in the post-Vargas return to democracy in Brazil, and for his vast expansion of communication in Brazil through his revolutionary media empire.

In his own remarks at the time, Dean Carl Ackerman described Assis Chateaubriand as: a "lawyer, journalist, and a leader of public opinion; a writer who combines ideas with the instrumentalities of communication for the enlightenment of people and nations; a builder of international friendships who personifies the momentous forces of progress in Brazil which are admired and respected throughout North America." (Ackerman 1945) Additionally, Ackerman noted later during the convocation ceremony that all recipients of 1945 were considered to be "leaders of international understanding and friendship... their achievements have gained renown abroad..."

Chatô gave a notable speech of his own at the 1945

Cabot ceremony. He spoke of how his publications had fought against Brazil's previous policies of isolationism and promoted Brazil's break from the Axis powers and its eventual alliance with the United States. He emphasized how his publication condemned the Nazi actions from the time of the initial invasion of Poland. The war was, in Chatô's recounting, the beginning of the end of international isolationism in Brazil.

In his speech, Assis Chateaubriand delivered remarks sure to please his North American hosts, lauding U.S. democracy as a beacon and a model for Brazil during its darkest days. The month in which Chatô gave this speech and accepted his award, December 1945, also marked the return to free elections in Brazil following the ouster of Vargas. In his own words:

"Your constitution, like the words of the Gettysburg address, were the messages you sent Brazilians so that during the difficult days when constitutional guarantees were non-existent they would not lose their hope for democracy. During that twilight when our free institutions were dormant, we continued to live by adopting your constitution. When a Latin American dictator tears up a constitution, the people immediately look upon that great document drawn up in Philadelphia as their beacon. To us it is indispensable that the United States should always preserve its constitution intact. It is a standard and a process just as essential to us as it is to you. The success which crowned the eight-year struggle for political freedom in Brazil is due in large measure to North American institutions. When our institutions go under, your institutions become our refuge and our fortress from which to recover ours after they had succumbed to the blows of dictatorship." (Assis Chateaubriand, 1945, p. 5)

Over many years following his Cabot award, Chatô remained a potent force in Brazilian politics, usually, though not always, as a sharp and feared critic of the government in power. In the early 1950s, he mended fences - briefly - with Getúlio Vargas and helped the

former dictator to win election in 1950 and to take office despite widespread opposition to Vargas. Chatô won office himself as a senator during this period; his public life as a congressman focused heavily on encouraging Brazil to remain open to foreign capital as a means of hastening its economic development. His alliance with Vargas did not last, however. The *Diários Associados* became one of the President's most persistent critics up until Vargas' death by suicide in 1954.

Assis Chateaubriand was a public figure in various dimensions. He was the founder of the Museu de Arte de São Paulo (MASP). It was Brazil's first museum of modern art and this legacy was carried on by his son, Gilberto Chateaubriand, who became a patron of the arts and an art collector himself, acquiring up to 8,000 works for the Chateaubriand collection. (Villa 2022) Throughout his career, Chatô published numerous works, books, articles, and speeches (de Moraes Ferreira n.d.), a literary contribution that resulted in his election to the prestigious Brazilian Academy of Letters. Interestingly, for many years Chatô would travel to New York to attend and lend his prestige to the annual Cabot award ceremonies. His health began to suffer in 1965 and he passed away on April 4, 1968 in São Paulo. (Moraes, Fernando, n.d.)

In retrospect, the significance of this Cabot award lies primarily in the legacy of *Diários Associados*. Chatô expanded communication networks in Brazil tremendously and created potential for information exchange through his vast media empire. At the time of his passing, his media empire included an enormous number of newspapers (26 in all) covering every part of Brazil, a large chain of radio stations, Brazil's first and most extensive television network, as well as magazines and other media outlets. He was a producer of revolutionary change in tying together a vast nation, a kingmaker in Brazilian politics, and a Brazilian "Citizen Kane".

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Photograph: Francisco Assis Chateaubriand (Left). December 1945. Box 69, Folder 28. Rare Book and Manuscript Library Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism Records, 1912-2022, (Bulk 1950-1989). Series III: Awards and Prizes, 1934-1988. Call No. UA#0065. Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Columbia University Libraries.

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1953: Carlos Lacerda - Destroyer of Presidents

Kerianne Leibman and Thomas Trebat



Carlos Lacerda, circa 1953. Source: Accessed in the Archives of the Rare Books and Manuscript Library of Columbia University.

One of the most important and controversial figures in the modern history of the press in Brazil, Carlos Lacerda was born in Rio de Janeiro in 1914.⁸ He began his studies of the law, soon immersing himself in the student politics of the day becoming close at one point to the Communist Party of Brazil in opposition to the rise of fascist groups, although he eventually broke with the party. Lacerda eventually gave up on the study of the law to continue his political activities with allies on the left and began his career in journalism. Journalism and politics were to dominate the rest of Lacerda's impactful career.

Through the first fifteen years of the Vargas era (1930-1945), Lacerda worked as a freelancer for the Rio daily *Correio da Manhã* with columns on politics. His articles appeared under the heading "*Tribuna da imprensa*", the same name he would give to the

8. Much of the material contained in this profile of Lacerda is based loosely upon a summary of his life and career published by the Fundação Getúlio Vargas and accessed at this link: <https://cpdoc.fgv.br/sites/default/files/brasil/dhbb/Carlos%20Lacerda.pdf>

newspaper he himself would found in Rio in 1949. After Vargas left office, Lacerda joined one of the leading center-right parties of the era, the UDN.

When Vargas returned to office in 1950, as we have seen in the previous chapter, he found in Lacerda his most acerbic critic. The pages of the *Tribuna da Imprensa* were filled in the early 1950s with violent attacks against the Vargas government and pitched battles with the pro-Vargas *Última Hora* owned by Samuel Wainer. Lacerda ramped up his criticism of Vargas, referring to the increasingly beleaguered President as the “patriarch of theft” and “the general manager of corruption in Brazil.”

In early August 1954, Lacerda was the target of an assassination attempt in Rio by persons belonging to the personal security detail of the President, though apparently without the knowledge of the President. Lacerda was only slightly wounded in the attack. Riding a wave of sympathy, he soon took to increasing the pressure on Vargas, urging the military leaders to step in to remove Vargas. Isolated politically and facing pressures from the military to step aside, Vargas took his own life on August 24.

While Lacerda’s indirect involvement with the tragic removal of Vargas from office may have been a singularly dramatic moment for him and for Brazilian journalism, Lacerda continued to be heavily involved in conservative politics for the rest of his career without, however, ever enjoying the support necessary to win the presidency itself.

Nonetheless, he continued to be a scourge of a series of elected presidents in Brazil in the period prior to the military coup in 1964. He was a fierce advocate for the UDN in opposing President Juscelino Kubitschek who was elected to succeed Vargas in 1956 and at one point went briefly into exile in the United States. Returning to Brazil, Lacerda did try his hand at electoral politics, winning the governorship of the newly created state of Guanabara in the 1950s. From this perch, and using his access to the newspapers, Lacerda soon resorted to his old ways.

In the first months of the mandate of newly elected President Jânio Quadros in 1961, Lacerda unleashed a violent campaign against Quadros in the pages of *Tribuna da Imprensa* and *O Globo* as well as other media outlets. Lacerda and the UDN attacked Quadros for his allegedly soft-on-communism foreign policy, especially with respect to Cuba. The message had an impact on middle class opinion and, ominously, on the armed forces as well. Quadros pre-empted his critics by surprisingly submitting his resignation while still in his first year in office. He cited the “terrible forces” that had been aligned against him as President.

Quadros’ successor in office, Vice-President João Goulart also provoked great animosity from Lacerda, again on the basis of alleged communist tendencies. In the midst of this turmoil, Lacerda sold his *Tribuna da Imprensa* and dedicated himself solely to preparing his candidacy for the presidential elections that were scheduled to occur in 1964. Lacerda was part of a chorus of voices on the right calling for a military intervention against João Goulart, probably in the belief that this would be a path to the presidency for Lacerda himself. In the pages of *Tribuna da Imprensa*, Lacerda raged against the beleaguered Goulart and called upon the national Congress to “rise up and defend what remains of liberty and peace in this country.”

The military did take action to remove Goulart from office on March 31, 1964, an action that seemed to have broad popular support at the time, including from almost all of the major newspapers. For several years after the military dictatorship was established, Lacerda tried to organize a civilian opposition until, in 1968, the military suspended Lacerda’s political rights and sent him off into exile. Lacerda’s time, and his style of fiery politics and weaponized journalism, had passed. While he eventually returned to Rio and wrote columns for the leading newspapers, Lacerda died in 1977 at the age of 63 while the military regime was still in full force.

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PART TWO: THE CABOT PRIZES DURING THE MILITARY DICTATORSHIP

1965: Roberto Marinho

The Architect of the Globo Empire

Franco Graaff Jordão de Magalhães



Roberto Marinho of *O Globo*, circa 1962. Source: [link](#)

The scion of modern Brazil's greatest communications empire, Roberto Marinho was born on December 3, 1904, in Rio de Janeiro to Irineu Marinho Coelho de Barros and Francisca Pisani Barros.

Marinho's career in journalism can be traced back to his father, a renowned journalist in his own right whose career, in many ways, paved the path for Roberto. Irineu began his career as a proofreader for *Gazeta de Notícias*, a Rio-based daily newspaper. After eventually becoming the director of *Gazeta*, Irineu founded both *A Noite* in 1911 and, later, *O Globo* in 1925. *O Globo*, the publication Roberto would eventually lead, was established following Irineu's return to Brazil after a months-long stay in Europe, and created with the aim to "renovate the standards of press in Rio de Janeiro." Irineu would only live to see the new publication operate for a short while, as he passed away less than a month following *O Globo*'s founding, at which time it was circulating 33,000 copies daily.

Rather than take on the now vacant editorship, 20-year-old Roberto chose to delegate the role to Euricles de Matos, a former peer of his father. When Matos passed away six years later, Marinho finally began what would become a 34-year tenure as the

editor and guiding force of *O Globo*. Under the younger Marinho's leadership, *O Globo*'s circulation grew to 200,000 copies daily by the time he received the Maria Moors Cabot Award in 1965, which recognized Roberto Marinho as a "stalwart champion of genuine inter-American friendship, and a worthy journalistic foe of those who would undermine and destroy democracy in the hemisphere."

Interestingly, the journalist and businessman had previously received a special Maria Moors Cabot citation in 1957, when his colleague Herbert Moses, the Assistant Director and Treasurer of *O Globo* and long-time president of the Brazilian Press Association, was given the Cabot Gold Medal. By 1965, however, Marinho was being honored once more, now as a medalist, for his "consistent, courageous and intelligent service to the cause of inter-American understanding." The Prize Committee further praised Marinho for his leadership of a paper "liberal, democratic, and independent in its political outlook," and that had continuously "waged a war" for the sake of democratic values against political extremism.

Marinho's contribution to the hemispheric understanding being championed by the Cabot Prizes was perhaps most clear in his initiative taken to produce a notable 32-page special supplement centered on elucidating the basic problems facing Latin America, simultaneously rallying support behind Eisenhower's and Kubitschek's inter-American policy goals. Beyond its reporting, Marinho's *O Globo* was also praised by the committee for its role in shaping the social life of the country — namely, *O Globo* supported public health campaigns against rabies and polio, initiated national and international programs in the arts, organized research symposiums in the humanities and sciences, donated a theater for public use, and funded various sports tournaments, among other enterprises. Reflecting on the award in advance of the ceremony, Marinho described *O Globo*'s work as being principally dedicated to defying those who wish to present a "deformed view of Brazilian-American relationships."

The year leading up to Marinho's receipt of the

award was rife with political turmoil for the country, as an overthrow of President João Goulart's government in March 1964 had given way to a new military regime. During this time, Marinho was engaged in expanding the *Grupo Globo*, beginning with *TV Globo* in April 1965 – an expansion directly facilitated by concessions granted to the company by the military regime. *TV Globo's* establishment was complicated by controversies surrounding foreign capital investments into the company by the American Time-Life Group. Marinho was ultimately made to break ties with Time-Life after a government investigation confirmed foreign interference in the company. Nonetheless, *Grupo Globo* continued to expand, going on to found Globo Radio System and several other enterprises.

After receiving the Cabot award in 1965, Roberto Marinho's career continued to expand beyond the scope of journalism and towards philanthropy and politics. In 1977, the Roberto Marinho Foundation was established to bring together private and public initiatives related to communication, education, and preservation. Later, in the latter half of the 1980s, as the new Brazilian Constitution was being drafted in reaction to the military dictatorship, Marinho published pieces criticizing decisions made by the National Constituent Assembly. When *Grupo Globo* was faced with mounting financial difficulties in the 1990s, the company utilized its political influence in order to successfully push for an amendment to an article in the Brazilian Constitution to allow for foreign capital investment in the national media sector.

Roberto Marinho passed away on August 6, 2003. Ultimately, Marinho's legacy as a journalist is a complicated one. From the imposition of the military dictatorship onwards, Marinho became increasingly entangled with Brazil's political affairs, and often explicitly leveraged *O Globo's* influence and reach to further his own political viewpoints. *O Globo* only disavowed its support for the military coup decades after almost all other major Brazilian publications had done so. On the other hand, this same wide-reaching influence afforded Marinho, and *O Globo* more broadly, the ability to pursue genuine and tangible efforts to establish and improve upon Brazilian-American

relations and the broader inter-American relationship. *O Globo's* lasting impact as an institution capable of shaping Brazilian culture and public opinion is still felt today, though this has arguably been at the expense of honest, sincere journalism for which Marinho was recognized in 1965.

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1969: Alceu Amoroso Lima (aka “Tristão de Athayde”)

A Fighter for Democracy

Franco Graaff Jordão de Magalhães

“A subida da montanha se faz em ziguezague, por isso não me arrependo de modo nenhum de ter mudado ao longo de minha vida. Mudei e mudarei até o fim (. . .)” (Amoroso Lima, 1984: 92).

“A climb up the mountain is done by zigzagging, which is why I have absolutely no regrets about having changed throughout the course of my life. I’ve changed, and will continue to change, until the end...”



Alceu Amoroso Lima as a young man in the uniform of the Brazilian Academy of Letters. Image from the iconographic archive of the Public Archive of the State of São Paulo, code BR SP APESP UH ICO AMP 0369 103. Source: [link](#)

Alceu Amoroso Lima was born on December 11, 1893, in Rio de Janeiro, to Manuel José Amoroso Lima and Dona Camila da Silva Amoroso Lima. Lima launched his long journalistic career on June 17, 1919, when he began writing under the pen-name of “Tristão de Athayde” at *O Jornal*. As a practicing lawyer, Lima took on a pen name in order to avoid the negative preconceptions he would have otherwise faced as someone engaging in what was regarded as an intellectual practice while he was still working in a field outside of academia. Writing under this anonymous identity, Lima also sought to deliberately detach the ideas expressed in his literary criticisms from the established schools of thought at the time so as to preserve the intellectual integrity of his work. Interestingly, Lima’s later career would somewhat be defined by the ideologies he would come to support

and the ways in which he advocated for them.

In 1924, Lima’s column at *O Jornal* abruptly departed from its typical literary criticisms when Lima decided to veer the publication into a public, written exchange with Catholic leader Jackson de Figueiredo — a conservative, religious thinker whose diametrically opposing views gave way to prolonged political, philosophical, and religious debates against Lima’s own, more liberal stances. This public exchange between the two would go on until 1928, when Lima ultimately decided to convert to Catholicism himself and to adopt a more conservative political outlook akin to Figueiredo’s own. Only months after Lima’s converting, Figueiredo would pass away and, subsequently, Lima would be looked to as a Catholic thought leader himself, loudly championing conservative political ideas both through his column and various academic appointments.

By the early 1940s, however, novel religious ideas would reach Lima from the Catholic Church in France, and Lima would once again be pushed to reconsider his political and philosophical stances — and mostly he re-adopted the liberal position he had maintained prior to his conversion to Catholicism. This return to a liberal political orientation positioned him directly against his conservative religious peers and the military dictatorship that would be established in Brazil in April 1964, against which he would repeatedly leverage his influence and reach in order to condemn the repression of civic freedoms until the time of his passing.

Lima received the Maria Moors Cabot Award in 1969 at 75 years of age while serving as the literary editor of *Jornal do Brasil* of Rio de Janeiro. In the process of nomination leading up to Lima receiving the award, the journalist was lauded as the “dean of Brazilian letters and literary journalism,” and “one of Latin America’s most prolific essayists and literary critics.” In fact, Lima’s award in 1969 came after having been nominated by Columbia Professor Anthony Tudisco for nearly a decade, beginning in 1960. The professor wrote the following regarding his continued nomination of Lima: “This fellow is in my opinion one of the finest in Brazil and in Latin America. I have been

nominating him for several years and shall continue until the Committee sees the light.”

Professor Ernesto Da Cal, who nominated Lima in support of Tudisco, described the journalist as a “Catholic liberal layman who knows the U.S. very well...” and as a person who has contributed “perhaps more than any other Latin American” to pan-American friendship.

Perhaps Lima’s most notable contribution to this pan-American friendship was the publication of “A Realidade Americana,” in 1954, which was regarded by those nominating Lima for the Cabot Award as one of the “finest analyses of life in the United States ever written by a Latin American.” The book details Lima’s travels through the United States in the beginning of the 1950s, when he served as the director of the Pan-American Union’s Department of Culture.

As with many of Lima’s ideological trajectories, his view on the United States was one that dramatically altered courses through the years. Before he ever even visited the country, Lima expressed a distaste and disinterest for a national culture he thought was centered on widespread mechanization and placed an emphasis on the many rather than the individual. In part, as Lima writes, his decision to take on a role within the Pan-American Union and subsequently head to the United States was motivated by a desire to confirm these negative impressions he held on the country. Having landed in New York City, Lima’s initial American encounter seems to confirm the dominion of the urban and industrial over individual freedom he thought plagued the country. Still, his travels take him to vastly different regions and across urban, suburban, and rural settings that gradually expand and ameliorate his views and transform the book into a praise of a humanized and diverse United States that harbored unexpectedly Christian virtues.

In retrospect, Alceu Amoroso Lima in his post-Cabot award life as a columnist, fully embodied the ideals of a free press and the defense of democratic institutions and human rights. In his columns in such major publications as *Jornal do Brasil* and *Folha*

de S. Paulo, among others, Amoroso Lima took full advantage of his voice and his Catholic credentials to take successive military governments to task, writing with a boldness that few other writers of his time could risk. When the military government enacted particularly draconian limits on civil liberties in Brazil in 1968, Amoroso Lima continued to act as a rallying point for civil resistance. Fellow journalists referred to him as “untouchable” by the military censors. He continued his writing until almost the very end of the military regime, which he did not live to see. “Tristão de Athayde” died in Petropolis in 1983, two years before direct elections in Brazil paved the way for a return at last to democratic government.

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1971: Alberto Dines The Editor-in-Chief in Troubled Times

Franco Graaff Jordão de Magalhães



Alberto Dines. Source: <https://blogdomorris.blogfolha.uol.com.br/2014/04/15/alberto-dines-a-imprensa-se-atrelou-demais-ao-mercado/>

Alberto Dines was born February 19, 1932, in Rio de Janeiro, to Israel and Racquel Dines. At 20 years of age, Dines assumed his first journalistic occupation as a cinema critic and editor of movie documentaries, but he soon turned to political reporting within a year, in 1953. The journalist would go on to serve in a variety of roles at multiple publications before starting what would be his longest tenure at *Jornal do Brasil* in 1962, which he joined as editor-in-chief.

At *Jornal do Brasil*, Dines was faced with leading the paper through a tumultuous period in which the newly established military regime would increasingly attempt to enforce censorship on Brazil's leading publication. After Institutional Act No. 5 was implemented in December 1968, Dines led *Jornal do Brasil* in such a way that undermined government attempts to suppress press freedom entirely. Notably,

Dines led a special edition of the paper, in which he transformed the newspaper into a symbolic portrayal of the paper's unwillingness to comply with the government's censorship measures — cleverly using classified ads to point out instances of censorship, depicting a giant being brought down by a child in the sports section, and, famously, warning of black clouds hanging over the country in the weather section. As a result of Dines' exceptionally vocal opposition to the regime, he was often made its target, and was arrested multiple times — in 1968 and 1969 — for his supposed attempts to undermine national security through his work at *Jornal do Brasil*.

In 1971, Dines would be presented with the Maria Moors Cabot Award for his “courageous defense of the freedom and independence of the press” as *Jornal do Brasil*'s Editor-in-Chief. Erwin Dain Canham, Editor-in-Chief of *The Christian Science Monitor*, praised *Jornal do Brasil* as a “clear case-in-point” of a “responsible” newspaper that had managed to continue to carry out its journalistic mission in spite of mounting press censorship under the new military government. Two years after Dines was awarded the prize in 1971, he was fired from *Jornal do Brasil*, ending his 12-year-long stay with the paper. As he would explain in a later interview, his dismissal from the company came after he faced censorship in his reporting of the military overthrow of democratically-elected Chilean president Salvador Allende on September 11, 1973.

In 1974, Dines was the Edward Larocque Tinker Visiting Professor of Journalism at Columbia University. Dines continued to write for several notable publications, including *Folha de S. Paulo*, *O Pasquim*, and eventually *Jornal do Brasil* once more, as well as *Expresso* and *A Capital* in Portugal between 1988 and 1995 at which time Dines resided in Lisbon. Beyond his own journalistic career, Dines would also found the Laboratory for Advanced Studies in Journalism at the State University of Campinas in 1994 and a renowned media analysis website, *Observatório da Imprensa*, in 1996, which offers criticism on contemporary journalism. He labored to promote responsible journalism in Brazil until illness deprived him of his strength. Alberto Dines passed away in São Paulo in 2018.

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1974: Fernando Pedreira The Journalist Confronts Censorship

Franco Graaff Jordão de Magalhães



Fernando Pedreira. Photograph by Jorge William / Globo Agency - Negative : 88-3845 Source: [link](#)

Fernando Pedreira was born March 3rd, 1926, in Rio de Janeiro. Pedreira's career began at the *Diário de São Paulo*, followed by *Última Hora* and *O Estado de São Paulo* (also known as *Estadão*) where he was working at the time of the Cabot award. At *O Estado*, Pedreira was the first to lead the Brasília-based branch of the journal, beginning in 1960, where he was still working when the military overthrew the government in 1964. In the following year, Pedreira would travel to the United States, where he would stay until returning to Brazil in order to assume the leadership of *Estadão's* newsroom. Like other liberals, Fernando Pedreira had once belonged to the Communist Party, which he broke with during the period of de-Stalinization in the Soviet Union, in 1956. The invasion of Hungary shocked him.

During periods of the civil-military dictatorship, Fernando Pedreira became press attaché for Brazil's UN representation in New York and for the Brazilian embassy in Washington. In 1965, he was appointed as a Visiting Professor at Columbia University in the United States.

Returning to Brazil, Pedreira assumed the leadership of *Estadão's* newsroom from 1971 to 1977 just as the fiercest period of military censorship was underway. Under his tenure, *O Estado de São Paulo* won the Esso Award in Journalism for a series it published in 1976 on public money being diverted for private use

by the Brazilian elite during the time of dictatorship. Pedreira led *Estado* through a time when journalism faced heavy censorship at the hands of the regime. Still, the publication was able to maintain a degree of intellectual freedom, publishing pieces that cut through censorship measures and delivered insightful, incisive critiques of the regime and the society its policies were giving way to. *Estadão* became known for publishing extensive literary essays to fill the spaces in the paper created by the censorship authorities. Pedreira's contemporaries called attention to his tireless efforts to provide assistance to many Brazilian journalists imprisoned during the dictatorship and to their families.

In 1977, Pedreira stepped down as *Estadão's* director and returned to Rio de Janeiro, though he still maintained a column at the journal, which he continued at *Jornal do Brasil*. He also wrote for *Veja* magazine and the *O Globo* newspaper.

In 1995, Pedreira was invited by his friend, then-President Fernando Henrique Cardoso, to assume the position of Brazilian ambassador to UNESCO in Paris. Back in Brazil in retirement, he continued to contribute articles and opinion pieces to many leading publications.

He passed away on April 21st, 2020 at 94 years of age. At the time of his passing, Former President Cardoso recognized Fernando Pedreira for his courage and militancy in upholding the ideals of a free and independent press in the darkest of times for the Brazilian press.

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1978: Carlos Castello Branco Intrepid Political Commentator Who Tested the Limits

Franco Graaff Jordão de Magalhães



Carlos Castello Branco wearing the uniform of the Brazilian Academy of Letters (ABL). Source: [link](#)

Carlos Castello Branco was born in Teresina in Brazil's Northeast on June 25, 1920, son of Cristino Castello Branco and Dulcila Santana Castello Branco. His father, a lawyer and judge, pushed Castello to pursue a legal career, and Castello began his studies at the Minas Gerais College of Law in March 1939. Facing financial difficulties, Castello began to work as a reporter for the newspaper *O Estado de Minas* while still studying law. His interest in the journalism field quickly grew, and he eventually became an undersecretary at the paper. Though he graduated law school in 1943, and even founded his own practice, Castello gave up legal work soon after and dedicated himself exclusively to the journalistic profession. He continued work as a secretary at *O Estado de Minas*, and became secretary of the *Agência Meridional de Notícias*, in Belo Horizonte in 1944. He continued these managerial positions within publications before settling into political reporting at *O Jornal* in 1949.

Castello's proximity to various figures in the political sphere allowed him an intimate understanding of the country's political reality which came to be reflected in the columns he was now publishing. In the following decade, Castello wrote for and edited several publications, including *Tribuna da Imprensa*, *Folha de S. Paulo*, *O Estado de S. Paulo*, *A Noite*, and others. When Jânio Quadros was elected president in 1960, Castello was invited by the private secretary of the new president to serve as press secretary. This experience afforded Castello the insight that would eventually serve as the foundation of a famous and influential column he would later write at *Jornal do Brasil*, beginning in 1962, entitled *Coluna do Castello*.

Through this new political column, Castello engaged with the political events and circumstances of the time. Castello was critical of João Goulart's government (1961-1964), supporting the coup that overthrew him in 1964. Once the military regime was actually in power, however, Castello began to write critically of their actions. Castello's disapproval of the new military government became increasingly apparent in his column. On December 13, 1968, he was arrested on the same day that the draconian Institutional Act Number 5 was enacted. Castello was released 48 hours later, and, after having its publication banned for a number of weeks, Castello's column returned in January 1969. Castello continued to face mounting censorship attempting to stifle the critical tone of his writing, though he maintained his column. In March 1974, following the inauguration of Ernesto Geisel and the subsequent loosening of press restrictions, Castello was able to write much more freely than before, and his column began to be transcribed in other states' newspapers. In August 1977, Castello was elected president of the Union of Professional Journalists of the Federal District. He stood out in the fight for press freedom in the face of military rule and repression. Four years after receiving the Cabot award, Castello was nominated by Manuel Francisco do Nascimento Brito, fellow journalist and former *Jornal do Brasil* editor, for a seat on the Brazilian Academy of Letters, which he took part in until 1992. Castello passed away the following year, at age 72, having published his column for 31 years, spanning the

governments of 13 presidents, and three constitutions.

The simple longevity of Castello's career in journalism is testament to his commitment towards the profession's values. *Coluna do Castello*, considered by many to be one of the most important contributions to Brazilian journalism, demonstrated the value and potential of critical journalism in holding politicians and their governments accountable for their actions.

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A Brief Digression: Argentina Journalists Honored During Military Rule

Editor's note: Castello's award in 1978 coincided with an award given in that same year to Robert Cox, Editor of the *Buenos Aires Herald*. We thought this significant enough to call attention to two Argentine journalists, Cox and Jacobo Timerman, whose work in defense of democratic freedoms and inter-American relations resulted in recognition by the Cabot Committee. We profile these two individuals below.

Throughout the course of the 20th century, authoritarian dictatorial regimes were pervasive throughout Latin America and undoubtedly shaped the journalistic production of the region as a whole. At the same time as Brazil attempted to piece together democracy from the legacies of the presidencies of Getúlio Vargas and the military dictatorship that would later arise, neighboring countries were similarly entangled in — arguably even more severe — struggles against repressive governments. In particular, Argentina experienced several successive coups d'état, spanning from 1930 to 1976, that left its journalists and the national press more broadly in an extremely vulnerable and weakened position by the late 1970s and early '80s. In the midst of unprecedented national turmoil, the Argentine journalists recognized by the Cabot jury in this period — namely Robert Cox

and Jacobo Timmerman, both of whom were foreign-born — embody the outstandingly resilient, spirited commitment to international journalistic freedom that the Awards sought to distinguish, and as such are featured in this report as a reflection of the careful attention paid by the Cabot jury to the plight of journalists laboring under military governments in both Brazil and Argentina in the later half of the 20th century.

1978: Robert Cox **Uncommon Bravery in the Face of Repression**

Franco Graaff Jordão de Magalhães



Robert Cox sits at his desk in his office at The *Buenos Aires Herald*, in the 1970s. Courtesy Cox Family to the BA Times newspaper. Source: [link](#)

A British journalist who gained great admiration for his courageous reporting on the horrors of the Argentine dictatorship, Robert Cox was born on December 4, 1933. He arrived in Buenos Aires in 1959, where he initially worked as a desk clerk before eventually becoming Editor of the *Buenos Aires Herald*, an English-language publication. After the 1976 coup, the military government imposed tight restrictions on the press, barring any reporting on the multiple and extremely violent actions carried out by the government. Cox, though belonging to a privileged social circle and having initially sympathized with the military junta, nevertheless continued to report on the government's atrocities. Though the fact that *The Herald* was published solely in English limited its accessibility to the broader Argentinian population, it also insulated the paper from many of the stricter controls placed on other papers in the country, as it was seen as less of an outright threat to the military regime's power. *The Herald* was the only newspaper to report on the fate of the thousands of "disappeared citizens", including how the bodies were being disposed of, and to cover the activities of the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo.

A year following the coup, in 1977, Robert Cox was detained and harshly treated. While he was released relatively soon thereafter after pressure exerted on the government by the Carter Administration, his life in Argentina became steadily more perilous. His 1978 Cabot Prize came during this most difficult period in his life and career as a journalist. By 1979, the government's threats of murder and attempts at kidnapping against the journalist and his family grew to the point where Cox left the country, initially heading to the United States to serve as a Nieman Fellow at Harvard. Later, Cox moved to Charleston, South Carolina to edit a sister publication to *The Herald*. In 2010, Cox was made an "Illustrious Citizen of the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires" in recognition of his heroic contributions to the country through his journalistic work at The *Buenos Aires Herald*.

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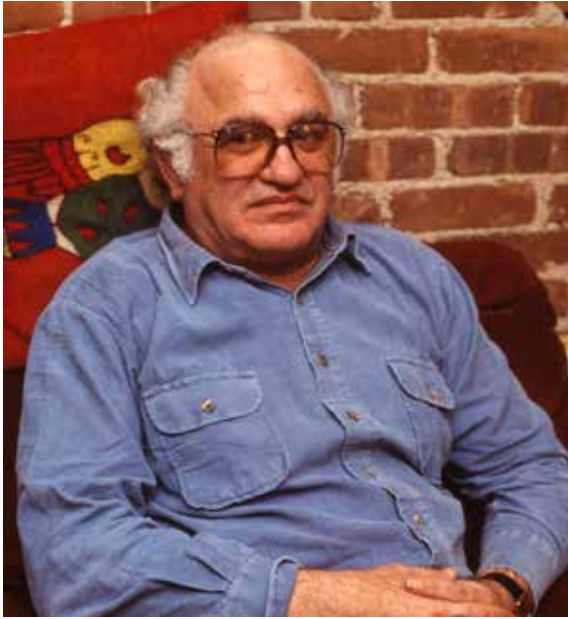
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1981: Jacobo Timerman

The Prisoner Without a Name

Franco Graaff Jordão de Magalhães



Jacobo Timerman. Source: [link](#).

Jacobo Timerman was born in Bar, Ukraine, to parents Eve Berman and Nathan Timerman. The family immigrated to Argentina in 1928 to escape the Soviet persecution of Jews. Timerman wrote for several publications before founding his own, beginning with *Primera Plana* in 1962, *Confirmado* in 1965, and, most notably, *La Opinión* in 1971. Until 1977, Timerman edited and published *La Opinión* as a left-leaning daily criticizing the Argentinian government's violations of human rights. In April of that year, Timerman was arrested for his ties to David Graiver, a businessman thought by the military junta to have laundered money used to finance left-wing guerillas in the country. While Timerman was being held, *La Opinión* was placed under the direction of a government-appointed military supervisor who forced the paper to shut down. Timerman was released in 1979, departing Argentina for Israel after having been exiled from the country.

Upon Timerman receiving the Cabot award in 1981, several prominent Argentinian publishers outwardly expressed their dismay at Timerman, a left-leaning journalist at odds with the Argentinian government, having received such recognition. A *Washington Post* article published at the time makes mention of a telegram sent to Columbia University by newspaper

publisher Diana Julio de Massot, where she describes Timerman as a "political opportunist, an encourager of Marxist terrorism." Osborn Elliott, Dean of the Columbia Graduate School of Journalism at the time, said Timerman was selected unanimously by the seven Cabot judges. Timerman wrote about his 30-month arrest and his torture in a book titled *Prisoner without a Name, Cell without a Number*, published in 1981. Timerman died of a heart attack at his home in Buenos Aires, at the age of 76.

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PART THREE: THE MODERN ERA TO THE PRESENT DAY

1988: Roberto Civita Pioneer of Investigative Reporting and Media Baron

Sabrina Huang



Roberto Civita. Source: <https://www.istoedinheiro.com.br/roberto-civita-um-editor-de-revistas-1936-2013/>

Roberto Civita was born in Milan, Italy, in 1936 and emigrated to New York in 1938 at the age of two. He and his family stayed in the United States for about a decade before moving to Brazil in 1949, where his father, Victor Civita, founded Editora Abril in 1950.⁹ Victor Civita originally founded his publishing company as *Editora Primavera* (Spring Publications), publishing an unsuccessful Italian comic called *Raio Vermelho* (Red Ray). He later renamed his company *Abril*, and published its first title, Donald Duck, which ran for many years. Roberto took over Abril in 1990 when his father died¹⁰. Roberto Civita graduated from the University of Pennsylvania with a degree in economics from the Wharton School.¹¹ After undergraduate studies, he briefly worked as a trainee at Time Inc. under Henry Luce, before working for his family's publishing

9. Anderson Antunes, "Billionaire Roberto Civita, Brazilian Media Baron, Dies At 76," *Forbes* (Forbes Magazine, May 27, 2013), <https://www.forbes.com/sites/andersonantunes/2013/05/27/billionaire-roberto-civita-brazilian-media-baron-dies-at-76/?sh=1a4098242eb5>.

10. Ibid.

11. Office of Public Information from Fred Knubel, page 3, October 27, 1988, Historical Subject Files UA #002 Series V: Awards Box 104, University Archives, Rare Books & Manuscripts Library, Columbia University Libraries. Anderson Antunes, "Billionaire Roberto Civita, Brazilian Media Baron, Dies At 76," *Forbes* (Forbes Magazine, May 27, 2013),

business.¹² He also studied nuclear and particle physics at Rice University, and completed a postgraduate degree in sociology at Columbia University.¹³

When Roberto Civita received the Maria Moors Cabot Prize in 1988, he was the publisher of *Veja*. Civita founded *Veja* in 1968. By 1988, *Veja* was the world's fifth largest weekly newsmagazine and the largest circulating print media product in Brazil. From 1968 to 1988, *Veja* was a major player in the fight for freedom of the press in the Western Hemisphere by resisting censorship from the Brazilian military regime and denouncing totalitarian practices in Brazil and elsewhere. *Veja* provided the Brazilian public with coverage of political and economic issues through investigative reporting. Furthermore, *Veja* provided in-depth interviews with world leaders in every issue of the newsmagazine, which provided a space to discuss domestic and international issues. Recognized as the leading newsmagazine of the time, *Veja* played a role in the growth of democratic institutions and had an important influence in Brazilian society.¹⁴ Civita was likely chosen for the Cabot prize due to his leadership and the influence of *Veja* at the time. In November 1987, *Veja* published its 1,000th issue, which was a landmark in Brazilian and hemispheric journalism.¹⁵

Civita took over operations of *Abril* from his father as chief executive in 1982.¹⁶ Under his leadership, *Abril* grew to become Brazil's largest publisher and one of the leading media conglomerates in Latin America, with operations in areas of comic books, book publishing, magazines, cable television, and maps and travel guides.¹⁷ To get a sense of its impact in Brazil, it is important to note that *Abril* was the leader in 21 of the 25 magazine market segments that it was

12. Anderson Antunes, "Billionaire Roberto Civita, Brazilian Media Baron, Dies At 76," *Forbes* (Forbes Magazine, May 27, 2013),

13. Ibid.

14. Office of Public Information from Fred Knubel, page 4, October 27, 1988, Historical Subject Files UA #002 Series V: Awards Box 104, University Archives, Rare Books & Manuscripts Library, Columbia University Libraries.

15. Ibid.

16. "Publishing Innovator for Brazil: Roberto Civita," *Wharton Magazine*, August 4, 2021, <https://magazine.wharton.upenn.edu/issues/anniversary-issue/a-savvy-publishing-innovator-for-brazil-roberto-civita-w57/>.

17. Ibid.

present in and published seven out of ten of Brazil's top magazines. *Abril's* list of titles includes magazines published in association with Hearst, Disney, Time Inc., Gruner+Jahr, Hachette, National Geographic, and Rodale.¹⁸ *Abril* also had more than 80 websites and portals, and its Education Division dominated the Brazilian textbook market.¹⁹

Although Civita struggled to maintain freedom of the press for *Veja* under the repressive military government that ruled Brazil from 1964 to 1985, just like many other publishers at the time, he was still able to make a significant impact in the field of journalism in Brazil. As the publisher of *Veja*, he led the newsmagazine in becoming a trustworthy source of political and economic news, gaining respectability from both the right and left of Brazil's politics.²⁰ His father founded *Abril* as a conservative media outlet, but Civita saw the opportunity to set *Abril* as a credible source of news through investigative journalism.²¹ Under his leadership, *Veja* published in-depth interviews with world leaders in every issue of the newsmagazine, and had an important influence on Brazilian politics and society. Even after he received the Cabot Prize in 1988, Civita continued to play an important role in Brazilian journalism, especially after he took over operations for *Editores Abril*. He is a noteworthy figure in Brazilian journalism for his impact in the social, economic, and cultural advancement of Brazil, as well as the evolution of a free press. At Wharton's 2006 Global Alumni Forum in Rio de Janeiro, Civita displayed his passion for advancing the media by saying, "ensuring the free flow of accurate information and responsible opinion and analysis to the largest number of people possible is the best way we can nurture the economic, social, and political development of our great country."²²

18. "Roberto Civita, Chairman and Editor-in-Chief, Abril Group." Grupo Abril. Grupo Abril, January 2011. https://web.archive.org/web/20120509211955/http://www.grupoabril.com.br/arquivo/perfilIRC_in.pdf.

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22. Ibid.

Civita held many other positions in journalism, including serving as president of the Brazilian Magazine Publishers Association and a board member of Brazil's Audit Bureau of Circulation and São Paulo's Advertising and Marketing School²³. He was also a participant in the Inter-American Dialogue and the Atlantic Conference and a member of the Board of Overseers of the International Center for Economic Growth.²⁴ At the time of his death at age 76 in 2013, Civita was a billionaire, and head of one of Latin America's largest media conglomerates. He was considered "one of the last true media barons in Brazil," a title earned due to his influence in Brazil and its politics over six decades.²⁵

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1991: Otavio Frias Filho Bringing Journalism into the Modern-Era

Sabrina Huang



Otavio Frias Filho. Source: Agência Senado, Attribution, [link](#)

Otavio Frias Filho was born in São Paulo on June 7, 1957. He was only 34 when he was one of four people to be awarded the Maria Moors Cabot Prize Gold Medal in 1991. He was the editor-in-chief of *Folha de S. Paulo*, one of the daily newspapers in Brazil and owned by the Frias family. Frias Filho received the Cabot award on behalf of the newspaper.

He completed his secondary studies in São Paulo at Colégio Santo Américo, linked to the Order of Benedictines. He then went on to study law and graduated in 1980 from the Law School of the University of São Paulo.

Otavio Frias Filho came from a family of journalists. His father, Octavio Frias de Oliveira, was the owner and publisher of the *Folha de S. Paulo* newspaper when he began working there professionally in 1975. He began his career by writing editorials and advising the editor of the newspaper, Claudio Abramo. Between 1976 and 1982, he was the editorial writer at *Folha*. At the time, *Folha* was known as a leading liberal daily newspaper with a circulation of 380,000; it was to become a thorn in the side of military censors. During a time when the Brazilian press was under self-censorship, *Folha* actively

tried to hire journalists of different backgrounds and perspectives, and started a section of media criticism to restore public interest and confidence in newspapers. The *Folha* was one of the first major newspapers in Brazil to publicize the growing pro-democracy rallies occurring around the country in the early 1980s.

In 1984, Otavio Frias Filho became the editorial director of *Folha*, where he was “responsible for introducing an editorial line qualified as critical, nonpartisan and pluralistic.” However, as the head of the newsroom, he suffered strong resistance both internally from the newsroom, and externally in general for being a member of the family that owned the newspaper. In 1985, he was even prosecuted for illegal practice of his profession for not having a journalism diploma. This resistance was partly because, in September 1984, he implemented the *Manual da Redação*, prepared by Carlos Eduardo Lins da Silva, Caio Túlio Costa, and Otavio himself. The manual imposed strict rules on wording and procedures, so the text of the newspaper would be more impersonal, descriptive, and rigorous. (Lins da Silva was awarded a Cabot citation in 1991, the same year in which Frias Filho won the Gold Medal.)

A few months after the implementation of the *Manual*, there was a petition in the newsroom asking for its repeal and the appointment of a joint committee to discuss its use. In reaction to this, Otavio decided to fire the journalists who opposed him. In just a few months in 1985, around 50 layoffs were made. By doing so, he began the most radical changes in the newsroom, by replacing managers and teams, many older journalists. As a consequence, the newsroom had a younger team, with increased average salaries, and the editorial line became more aggressive.

While introducing the *Manual* was a fraught endeavor, the result was transformative for Brazilian journalism. Frias Filho sought to create a journalism that was, at once, descriptive and precise, yet also admitting and encouraging different points of view. *Folha* became known for its diversity of columnists. At the same time, internal “fact-checking” controls were put in place, the position of an ombudsman

was created, and readers and those impacted by the *Folha's* reporting encouraged to provide feedback and criticism of its coverage.²⁶

The political coverage of *Folha* was, and remains to this day, a target of criticism for its often unflattering portrayal of governments of both the right and the left in Brazil. At the same time, the newspaper has consolidated a reputation for in-depth investigative reporting dating back to the end of the military governments. Each of the Brazilian presidents holding office in this time period found reasons to criticize *Folha's* coverage as favoring their political opposition.

Folha has consolidated a position as the most important rival to *O Globo*, nearly matching Globo in terms of combined print and digital circulation and far exceeding the more venerable *Estado de São Paulo* in its home state. This may be the most meaningful contribution of Otavio Frias Filho, and his successors, to journalism in Brazil.

In the years following his receipt of the Cabot award in 1991, Otavio Frias Filho wrote a series of six plays and theatrical texts. Three plays were published in the book *Tutankaton* (1991), along with essays on culture, and the other three theatrical texts were staged in theaters in the capital of São Paulo. From 1994, he began to write a weekly column published on the opinion page of *Folha de S. Paulo* and which he continued to produce for a decade.

Otavio Frias Filho died of cancer in 2018 at the age of 61.

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2003: João Antonio Barros Recognizing the Investigative Reporters

Sabrina Huang



João Antônio Barros. Source: [Link](#).

João Antônio Barros was awarded the Maria Moors Cabot Prize in 2003 when he was working as a special reporter at *Jornal O Dia* in Rio de Janeiro. He was 39 years old at the time, but already with 17 years of experience working as a journalist. When he was chosen for the Cabot Prize, Barros was known for his work in investigating the connections between policemen and politicians with paramilitary groups of extermination, violations of human rights, and embezzlement of public funds. In a self-signed nomination form submitted to the Cabot Board, Barros writes that "many of [the corrupt policemen and politicians he wrote about] are now in prison." He also self-described as someone who "dedicates his life to stories which are about the violation of human rights in Rio, in Brazil, [and] in Latin America."²⁷

Born in 1965, Barros graduated from the Universidade Gama Filho in Rio de Janeiro with a degree in journalism. Barros began his journalistic career at the *Jornal de Hoje* in 1985, where he covered stories related to urban violence, and violation of human rights. As a journalist covering these stories, he met people who were hurt and the relatives of people who had been killed. This inspired Barros to dedicate his career to investigating "policemen who

27. Nomination form submitted by Barros, School of Journalism, Columbia University.

are corrupt and who kill innocent people for money.”²⁸

When Barros was presented with the Cabot Prize in 2003, he had been working for *O Dia* for ten years, a widely circulated daily, but certainly not one of the most prestigious publications in Rio by any means. In the 1990s, Barros’ work focused on the violation of human rights and corruption within the police and political systems. He investigated embezzlement by politicians, as well as cases related to mobs that dealt with international drug dealing. In 1993, he wrote about police who were involved in homicide, yet were still walking freely and armed. Two years later, in 1995, Barros wrote about young boys who simply “disappeared” after being arrested, and in 1997, he revealed that many police lied when they killed innocent people by trying to make the public believe that the victims had fired back. Barros even spent 20 days undercover in the Presídio de Segurança Máxima Bangu 3, a notorious maximum security penitentiary in Rio, without the other prisoners nor the guards and directors of the prison knowing his identity. Through this undercover experience, he was able to reveal how drug dealers ordered murders, imposed their personal laws, and maintained their illicit businesses all while still in prison. In 2001, he also wrote about police who tortured people during the 1970s under Brazilian military dictatorship.

He was chosen for the Cabot prize because he was an example of the new generation of investigative journalists who challenged the political establishment in Brazil and scrutinized law enforcement in Rio de Janeiro²⁹. At the time of the award, Barros had already been known for risking his life to investigate and document police corruption, brutality, and human rights violations. “He unmasked police officers moonlighting as death squad members and uncovered links between politicians and organized crime. He also documented pervasive corruption in the prison system where money could buy cell phones, drugs,

sex, improved accommodations, and transfers.” Barros was an influential figure in journalism, and risked his own life exposing the corruption in Brazil in politics as well as law enforcement. As an investigative journalist cracking down on injustices in Brazil, he helped advance the evolution of a free press in Brazil by reporting on the corruption of politicians and police officers.

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2005: Miriam Leitão Multifaceted Journalist

Sabrina Huang



Miriam Leitão. Source: Sou BH, Attribution Daniel Bianchini. [Link](#)

Miriam Leitão was born in Caratinga, State of Minas Gerais, as the sixth of twelve children to a Presbyterian minister. Leitão graduated from the University of Brasília (UNB) with a BA in Journalism. As a student fighting for democracy in Brazil, she spent several months in jail and was prosecuted by the military for her political activities. When she was awarded the Maria Moors Cabot Prize in 2005, she had been a professional journalist for 30 years and had worked for various important Brazilian media companies in radio, TV, daily newspapers, and weekly magazines. She has been a reporter on international affairs for the financial daily newspaper *Gazeta Mercantil*, economics editor of *Jornal do Brasil*, and has been writing a daily column on economic and social issues for the daily newspaper *O Globo* since 1991. Additionally, she comments on economics for the daily TV news program *Bom Dia Brasil* (Good Morning Brazil) and for *CBN Radio*. She also hosts her own widely followed program on Wednesdays at *GloboNews* in which she interviews guests.

Leitão is well-respected by her journalist peers. One described Leitão as “one of the most important Brazilian journalists nowadays” and praised her for being able to “find time to write a long column on economics and business six times a week for *O Globo*, appear with intelligent and insightful commentary on a Globo TV early-morning newscast five times a week, host a cable TV channel show once a week, and also broadcast on radio with very updated business

news commentary five days a week.” Leitão’s column, *Panorama Econômico*, is reprinted in dozens of newspapers throughout the country, not just in *O Globo*.

Although the column is supposed to focus on business and economy, in the words of one reviewer, “Miriam has earned the right to write about whatever she wants. And she has been using this right to write about some of the most important social issues in Brazil – from its strong opposition to a ridiculous proposed law (eventually defeated in Congress) that tried to create a press council, to the controversial introduction of the concept of affirmative action in Brazil.”³⁰ The same reviewer emphasized that Leitão has been a champion of the adoption of policies to correct the social exclusion that people of African ancestry have suffered since slavery was abolished in Brazil in 1888.

Based on the recommendation letters submitted in support of her nomination, it is clear that Leitão’s journalist peers were impressed by her versatility in media formats. One mentioned that Leitão has mastered how to deliver commentary on Brazil’s economic and social issues to the public.

Another emphasized that Leitão has “paid a price for her hard-hitting reporting.” During the darkest years of Brazilian dictatorship in the 1970s, Leitão was jailed under the National Security law and later fired from the *A Tribuna*, in Espírito Santo State, for her “unflattering” coverage of the state governor. She was also denied access to a press pass at the presidential palace until 1985, when democracy was restored in Brazil. Additionally, she was sued in both civil and criminal courts by a former governor of São Paulo for her exposé of the bankruptcy of the publicly owned State Bank of São Paulo (Banespa).

Leitão was awarded the Cabot Prize for her work focusing on economics and business “in a country plagued by frequent economic crises – but also one that has demonstrated great potential as an emerging

30. Recommendation letter from a reviewer, School of Journalism archive, Columbia University

global power.”³¹ The *Columbia Record* in its coverage of the award went on to note this about Miriam Leitão: “Known for her ability to translate the complexities of her beat into information easily grasped by the general public, Leitão has moved far beyond the boundaries of business reporting to become a leader in investigating social injustice in Brazil, contributing to the national debate by searching for solutions.” At the Cabot awards ceremony, Leitão displayed her penchant for integrating social issues into her work, emphasizing to the students present that they should participate in preserving the environment - “your generation’s greatest struggle.”

In addition to the Maria Moors Cabot Prize, Leitão has also been awarded a large number of prizes from Brazilian institutions, consolidating her position as one of the most influential and admired journalists in Brazil and certainly a beacon for women journalists. She continues her journalistic activities to the present day.

References

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The Record, October 31, 2005. Accessed through the archives of the Columbia School of Journalism.

2017: Dorrit Harazim

Careful Chronicler of Brazil and Its Problems

Sabrina Huang and Thomas Trebat



Dorrit Harazim. Attribution: Renato Parada. Source: [Link](#).

Dorrit Harazim is one of Brazil’s best known investigative reporters and columnists. Her path to the highest levels of journalism in Brazil was not a conventional one. Harazim was born in Zagreb in what is now Croatia (former Yugoslavia) in the midst of World War II. As a young girl, she arrived with her parents in Brazil in 1948 as stateless persons whose passage was facilitated by a UN program to deal with the refugees from the war. Educated both in Brazil and in Europe, Harazim did not become a Brazilian citizen until she reached the age of 21.

Through her career which began in Paris, Harazim honed the skills of a remarkable investigative journalist and helped to build the reputation of a series of leading Brazilian publications. Her most significant early writing was for *Veja* magazine, a weekly publication modeled on the U.S. examples of *Time* and *Newsweek*. This included a long period of time in which *Veja* was confronted with particularly strong censorship during the military regime in the 1970s. As both a reporter and

31. *The Record*, October 31, 2005

a manager at *Veja*, she helped to build its circulation to more than one million, an enormous reach in Brazil, and contributed to *Veja's* reputation as "by far the best and largest newsmagazine in Latin America."³²

Years later, beginning in 2006, Harazim became one of the leading editors and writers for a new weekly known as *Piauí* that was based loosely on the model of *The New Yorker* and *The New York Review of Books*. *Piauí* quickly distinguished itself in the Brazilian media landscape for investigative journalism and long-form reporting. Many of the best known articles were contributed by Harazim herself who was also credited with training and mentoring a cadre of young journalists at the magazine.

As an international correspondent, Harazim rose to fame for the clarity of her reporting on some of the most important global events in the world including the Vietnam war, the military coup in Chile in 1973, Richard Nixon's impeachment in 1974, and the global oil crisis of the late 1970s. Later, she reported on the September 11 events in the United States. Her experience in reporting was truly extraordinary. Harazim covered presidential campaigns and elections in the United States, produced documentaries on Brazilian issues, and developed a specialization in coverage of the Olympic games.

In his Cabot nomination letter, one reviewer called attention to human interest stories that have marked Harazim's reporting: "I wonder how much her immigrant and refugee roots have influenced her capacity to find and cover so many human interest stories on the domestic and international levels. In Brazil, her focus and excellent work on alcoholism, prison conditions, domestic violence, disabilities, for example, have many times put those topics on the national agenda in an effective way." Harazim herself cited her immigrant background as imparting a natural capacity to insert herself in any environment, whether friendly or hostile, to find the story and then to listen to the individuals who were at its heart as when she reported on abuses of female prisoners in Brazil. "These two capacities combined have helped me to cross barriers of race,

32. Cabot nomination letter by a reviewer, March 14, 2017, as found in the Archives of Columbia School of Journalism.

language, prejudice, and experience to chronicle Brazil and its problems without the usual patronizing tones."

Another of the Cabot reviewers used words that go back to the original intent of the Cabot awards, praising Harazim for her efforts to improve inter-American understanding: "Her international experience and global view... have given her a singular place in Brazilian journalism. She is by far who best translates the intricacies and subtleties of international affairs to the Brazilian audience."³³

While Dorrit Harazim may not have been the first Brazilian investigative journalist to be honored with a Cabot, she may lay claim to being among the first and probably the most distinguished as well. Her career traces much of the evolution of Brazilian journalism from the repression of the military days, the strenuous efforts to help start up two major publications, and to dig beneath the surface of stories to find the human interest angle at the heart. Dorrit Harazim remains active in reporting and writing. Her column appears regularly in the pages of *O Globo*.



Columbia University as he honors her at the 2013 Convocation Ceremony. Source: [link](#)

References

Cabot nomination letter, March 14, 2017, as found in the Archives of Columbia School of Journalism.

Letter of recommendation dated March 14, 2017. Accessed through the archives of the Columbia School of Journalism.

33. Letter of recommendation dated March 14, 2017. Accessed through the archives of the Columbia School of Journalism.

2020: Patricia Campos Mello Taking on the Merchants of Fake News

Sabrina Huang and Thomas Trebat



Patricia Campos Mello. Source: [Link](#)

Patricia Campos Mello was born in São Paulo in 1974. She graduated with a degree in journalism from the University of São Paulo and then went on to do a Master's degree from New York University. She earned an early distinction in journalism for her work as a foreign correspondent, including a four-year period in Washington, D.C. working for *O Estado de São Paulo*. For more than ten years, Campos Mello has been writing for *A Folha de S. Paulo*. During this period, she was noted for her work as a reporter in areas of international conflict, filing reports from Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran, Libya, Syria, Kenya, and elsewhere.

Campos Mello's Cabot award in 2020 called attention to her overall excellence in investigative reporting with special mention of her intrepid reporting during and after the 2018 presidential elections in Brazil. The campaign leading up to the election was marred by an unprecedented rise in the use of social media and an explosion in fake news and disinformation. A far-right congressman, Jair Bolsonaro, emerged victorious from the elections.

Patricia Campos Mello's reporting revealed that unidentified individuals associated with the congressmen had resorted to the illegal use of the

global messaging app WhatsApp to promote the candidacy of Jair Bolsonaro. This type of messaging campaign is illegal in Brazil. Campos Mello soon paid a price measured in vicious attacks on her reporting and on her reputation from the many individuals who benefited from the illegal scheme.

One reviewer explained that Campos Mello was the victim of sexual innuendo amplified by Bolsonaro himself and by members of his inner circle. "These baseless allegations inspired hundreds of messages and memes on social media that (attempted) to smear Patricia and her outstanding investigative reporting."³⁴ The reviewer mentioned in particular that Campos Mello had been added to a list compiled by the Committee to Protect Journalists as one of the ten journalists most at risk while also awarding her its International Press Freedom Award. Referring to Campos Mello as a "talented and fearless journalist", the reviewer emphasized that a Cabot award "would also add a layer of protection for reporters engaged in shedding light in the darker corners at this moment of disruption when the very essence of democracy is at risk."³⁵

Other experts echoed these comments in urging the Cabot committee to action. "The award for Patricia Campos Mello would be a strong signal for populist governments and authoritarian governments that take it upon themselves to dismantle democratic institutions, beginning with violence against women and against the freedoms of press and expression."³⁶

Other persons writing to the Cabot committee rounded out Campos Mello's broader qualifications for the award. One of these called attention to her work as a foreign correspondent, including covering Brazil-United States bilateral relations for more than two decades. The reviewer went on: "Her investigative stories and humanitarian and foreign policy coverage all over the world are fundamental reading for... a wider

34. Letter of recommendation dated March 10, 2020. Letter accessed through the archives of the Columbia School of Journalism.

35. Ibid.

36. Letter of recommendation dated March 13, 2020. Letter accessed through the archives of the Columbia School of Journalism.

understanding of Brazil and the world.”³⁷

Following her Cabot award in 2020, Patricia Campos Mello spent time in residence at the Columbia Journalism School while continuing to cover international events for the *Folha*, including the U.S. presidential elections in 2020. She wrote a book, entitled (in Portuguese) *The Hate Machine: A Reporter's Notes On Fake News and Digital Violence*, documenting her experiences as the target of government harassment and the broader lesson.³⁸ In a practically unprecedented legal action, she successfully sued President Bolsonaro for defamation, winning a financial settlement.

The importance of the Cabot award for Campos Mello lies in part in its recognition of the evolution of investigative journalism in Brazil and the importance of such journalism standing up to abusive governments during the hate-filled and polarizing era of the first decades of the twenty-first century. It also recognizes once again the importance of women journalists to the advance of the profession in Brazil. Finally, the award itself underscores its importance to adding a “layer of protection” to journalists at risk in the Americas.

References

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Letter of recommendation dated March 13, 2020. Letter accessed through the archives of the Columbia School of Journalism.

Letter of recommendation. Letter accessed through the archives of the Columbia School of Journalism. Translation by the editors.

37. Letter of recommendation. Letter accessed through the archives of the Columbia School of Journalism. Translation by the editors.

38. *A Máquina do Ódio: Notas de uma repórter sobre fake news e violência*. São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 2020.

2021: Eliane Brum Reporting on an Amazon Rainforest Under Stress

Sabrina Huang and Thomas Trebat



Eliane Brum. Source: [Link](#)

The Cabot Gold Medal for Eliane Brum in 2021 continued a recent tradition in recognizing intrepid and fearless investigative journalism by Brazilian women reporters. Born in Rio Grande do Sul in Southern Brazil in 1966, Eliane Brum graduated from the journalism program at the Catholic University in Porto Alegre. Her earliest journalistic experience was at Zero Hora in Porto Alegre where she honed her skills during an eleven-year period of time. She first achieved broad public notice in Brazil after moving to São Paulo to report for *Revista Época* for another ten years after which she began a career as a freelance journalist with a special interest in the peoples of the Amazon and the protection of the rainforest. Leading up to the time of her Cabot Award, Brum was a contributor to the Brazilian version of *El País*.

Brum is an accomplished writer and documentary filmmaker. She has published seven books, mostly non-fiction, but including one romance novel, and four documentaries. One of her books, *The Collector of Leftover Souls - Field Notes on Brazil's Everyday Insurrections*, achieved consideration for a National Book Award for Translated Literature.³⁹ Much of her published literature draws upon her experiences as an investigative reporter specializing on human rights stories and environmental concerns in Brazil.

One of Brum's nominating letters for the Cabot

39. *The Collector of Leftover Souls - Field Notes on Brazil's Everyday Insurrections*. (Graywolf Press, 2018)

award reflected on her contributions while working for *Revista Época*: “Her reporting was in-depth, brave, and flawless with her investigations about killings in the Amazon caused by land conflicts, the links between Opus Dei and top politicians in São Paulo, the links between rich businessmen and illegal logging, (and) the fundamental right of a person to die. Eliane has always been an embracer of huge causes.”⁴⁰

One of the huge causes Brum has embraced is that of climate change. She moved to Altamira in the heart of the Amazon to be close to the issues and to the peoples of the rainforest most affected by unwise and even malicious public policies. The same reference letter mentioned above went on to add: “Until today (ed. note: 2021), Eliane is still one of the very few voices to report on the impending tipping point for the forest and for the world in the Brazilian media.”⁴¹

While reflecting back on the totality of Brum’s contributions to investigative journalism, the Cabot Committee itself made special mention of Eliane’s resolve to move to the Amazon even at great personal risk. A socio-environmental activist in the Amazon provided this endorsement for the Committee’s consideration: “(Brum) has dedicated herself tirelessly to listen to the voice of riverine communities, indigenous peoples, and human rights leaders dealing with death threats, using her professional sensibility to denounce abuses...”⁴²

Eliane Brum’s Cabot award came almost exactly 80 years after the Gold Medal was presented to Siliva Bittencourt in 1941, the first Brazilian and the first woman to be honored. Both were honored, in part, for raising environmental awareness in Brazil and in the world.



President Lee C. Bollinger (far left), Patricia Campos Mello (middle, in blue), and Eliane Brum (middle, in black) at the Maria Moors Cabot Prize awards ceremony at Columbia University in October 2022. The ceremony gathered winners from 2022, 2021, and 2020. Source: Columbia Journalism School [@columbiajournalism]. (2022, October 11). [Photograph of the 2020, 2021 and 2022 Maria Moors Cabot Prize winners at Columbia in October 2022]. Retrieved from <https://www.instagram.com/p/CjmE4LRLFIQ/>.

References

Letter of recommendation dated March 25, 2021. Accessed through the archives of the Columbia School of Journalism.

Letter of recommendation March 24, 2021. Accessed through the archives of the Columbia School of Journalism.

40. Letter of recommendation dated March 25, 2021. Accessed through the archives of the Columbia School of Journalism.

41. Ibid.

42. Letter of recommendation dated March 24, 2021. Accessed through the archives of the Columbia School of Journalism.

POSTSCRIPT

Reflections on the Impact of the Cabot Awards

This study of the Cabot awards in the context of the evolution of journalism in Brazil has presented three separate stories roughly corresponding to the three chapters of this volume.

In the first story, we used mostly archival sources to look more deeply into the origins and motivation for the creation of the Cabot awards. The awards have been based on strong institutional foundations which have stood the test of time, so it was important to understand how they began and how they came to interact with journalism in Brazil.

The second story was an attempt to place the awards in the context of the historical evolution of honest and truthful journalism in Brazil from the days of Getúlio's *Estado Novo* to the rebirth of Brazilian democracy in the 1980s to the role of the press during the Bolsonaro government. We sought to sketch the bigger picture of the interplay between the press and the sometimes exhilarating, often tortuous passage of Brazilian democracy into modern times.

The third story, envisioned as the heart of our study, was to look, however briefly, at selected Brazilian winners, the lives they led (or are still leading) and their individual contributions to the advancement of journalism in Brazil. We felt it was important to try to get beyond the press releases about these individuals at the time they received their rewards and see them as individuals with important careers and accomplishments before and after the time of the awards.

We hope that our attempts to tell these stories have made a contribution and sparked interest in going beyond what we have been able to accomplish. This postscript offers, therefore, final reflections on the three storylines and suggestions as to how other research in the future might proceed.

On the Legacy of the Cabot Awards at Columbia University

It is to take nothing away from the honorable tradition of the Cabot Awards to say that they have been eclipsed somewhat with the passage of time and no longer receive the attention throughout the Americas that they once commanded. The awards remain in their present format very similar to the original design by Ackerman and John Cabot in the late 1930s. They happen at one time during the year, generate brief news coverage at the time, and then seem to slip out of view until the award ceremonies in the following year.

The awards are certainly no longer the only recognition for journalists in the Americas. The Inter-American Press Association (IAPA), for example, provides awards annually in fourteen separate categories for excellence in journalism in the Americas. These categories include specialized areas within journalism that could have hardly been said to exist in the 1930s, including human rights, data journalism, internet journalism, environmental and health reporting, and others.¹

At the same time, credit for creation of the IAPA itself must certainly go, in part, to the creation of the Cabot Awards. Recall that earlier efforts to create a broad organization for journalists in the Americas had all seemed to fall short of success prior to 1939 and that the Cabot awards were an attempt to fill in this void. IAPA was eventually established in Mexico City in 1943. Many among IAPA's earliest directors were, in fact, Cabot winners. The Inter-American Press Association has recently conducted its 77th annual gathering.

1 <https://en.sipiapa.org/contenidos/call-for-entries.html>

The influence of the Cabot awards can also be traced to the creation and flourishing of important centers of research on journalism in the Americas that arose in subsequent decades. An institution known as CIESPAL, based in Ecuador, became the first full-time international center for the study of the inter-American press.² It recently marked its 63rd anniversary. One of its first directors, Jorge Fernandez, received the Cabot prize in 1963.³

Other Centers dedicated to research on journalism in the Americas arose elsewhere and have also stood the test of time. One of these is the Knight Center for Journalism in the Americas, founded at the University of Texas in 1996 and directed since that time by Rosental Alves, a Brazilian journalist with long experience at *Jornal do Brasil*.⁴ Alves was awarded a Cabot prize in 2016 and is the current head of the selection committee for the Cabots.

Closer to home at the Columbia School of Journalism, the lasting impact of the Cabot award and the Cabot family's philanthropy have drawn the School as close or closer to journalists in Latin America than at any other school of journalism in the United States. In 1960, an agreement between Columbia Dean Edward W. Barrett and Jack Cabot provided funding to produce selected articles from the *Columbia Journalism Review* in Latin America. The Brazilian journalism school in São Paulo known as ESPM publishes leading articles from the CJR on a quarterly basis.⁵

Other links between Latin America and the Columbia School of Journalism can be traced to the Cabot family, including in 1964 the creation of an endowed chair known as the Godfrey Lowell Cabot Professorship and held over the years by Columbia faculty members with expertise in Latin American journalism. One of the more recent occupants of the Cabot chair at the School of Journalism was John

Dinges, a distinguished editor at NPR in Washington. Dinges was a Cabot honoree in 1991. Among his most important publications as the Cabot Professor were two volumes dealing with the coordinated actions of the murderous military dictatorships of the Southern Cone countries, including Argentina, Brazil, and Chile.⁶

The Journalism School's present day links to Latin America go well beyond these examples. The activities include scholarships and fellowships for journalists from the region, including from Brazil and executive education programs for Latin American editors and journalists. The School routinely receives promising young journalists for its prestigious Master's degree programs.

The Cabot Awards and the Evolution of the Press in Latin America

One of the bigger questions in looking at the lasting legacy of the Cabot awards is whether or not the awards really did help citizens of the Americas to reach a sympathetic understanding of one another. Whether or not Americans of the 2000s have a better and more informed understanding of the cultural, political, and social landscape of Latin America could be debated, of course. It is not hard to imagine that the designers of the Cabot Prizes might be disappointed with what has been achieved in the last 80 plus years in terms of informing Americans about the societies of Latin America.

At the same time, it seems more clear in retrospect that the lifespan of the Cabot awards has overlapped with a remarkable growth in the professionalism of the press in Latin America and that following the timeline of the Cabot awards over the years gives us a way to understand the different stages in this evolution of the press.

We saw in Chapter Two how the profiles of the awardees reflected well the challenges facing journalism in Brazil through various historical periods. The early winners tended to be the owners and publishers in the 1940s until the early 1960s of

2 Henry Sweets Ackerman Master's thesis, op.cit., page 124. Accessed through the Columbia University Library Archives.

3 <https://ciespal.org/historia/>

4 <https://journalism.utexas.edu/faculty/rosental-alves>

5 <https://www.espm.br/bibliotecas-espm/revista-de-jornalismo-espm/>

6 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Dinges

the best known publications, rather than working journalists. Many of these business leaders were active participants in the politics of the day as well, often using the power of their publications in ways injurious to the cause of democracy. We have seen that Carlos Lacerda, for example, became known as the destroyer of presidents. It was also the case that practically every major Brazilian newspaper of the time initially backed the military dictatorship in 1964, a decision most came to regret, but only after the damage was done.

By the mid-1960s, Brazilian journalism itself had become more professional and forced to take a stand against the press censorship and human rights abuses of the era of military rule. Many of the Cabot honorees of the era of military rule were those who pressed the limits of tolerance of the military. Not a few did so at the risk of imprisonment and torture and strong commercial pressures on their publications. Many journalists took refuge in the “alternative press” which the military found more difficult to control, although also doing so at great personal risk. When the military government finally had nearly run its course, the mainstream press was able to resume its role of informing the citizenry by exposing military abuses and covering the mass protests that erupted to a point that the military leaders could no longer ignore.

The Cabot awards in Brazil from the early 1990s on reflected both the growing professionalism of the press and the multiplication of print outlets, including nationwide newsmagazines which came to exercise great influence through intrepid investigative journalism. The Brazilian press also spread its reach abroad through networks of journalists able to explain the world to Brazil and Brazil to the world.

The most recent Cabot winners seem to reflect the increasing specialization and sophistication of Brazilian journalists, including those covering newer topics such as the economy, the environment, and the peoples of the rainforest. Similar to their counterparts in earlier periods in Brazil, the most recent winners have been journalists unafraid to speak truth to power

while maintaining the support of their editors and publishers. In fact, our report was still being written at the time of the worst assaults on the integrity and physical safety of Brazilian journalists under the Bolsonaro government. However, it is not too early to conclude that members of the Brazilian press played a heroic role in covering the violent protests in January 2023 and informing the Brazilian citizenry of the threats to their democracy.

We can conclude from this that much could be learned in the future from extending the format of this study to the evolution of the press and inter-American relations in many other countries of Latin America. While Brazilian honorees appear prominently among the winners over the last 80-plus years of the Cabots, a far larger number of journalists from more than 20 other countries in Latin America have been honored over the years. It would be of great interest to understand, for example, how the press has grown and thrived (or not) over the decades in Argentina, Mexico, Colombia, Chile, and still other Latin American countries. We would hypothesize that a similarly instructive narrative would appear by linking the individual Cabot winners from any one of these countries to the broader evolution of the role of the press as defender of democracy.

A Focus on the Cabot Award Winners

The awards did call global attention to the best in Brazilian journalism at a time when the outside world paid too little attention. The awards provided encouragement to journalists to adhere to the finest journalistic standards and even, in numerous cases, provided these journalists with a measure of personal protection in the face of censorship and repression at home. We believe that the focus in Chapter 3 on individual Cabot winners succeeded in bringing back the stories of individual journalists who merited the confidence of the Cabot juries over a very long period of time.

We would make a straightforward recommendation that this type of country-focused study of the impact of the Cabot Prizes be extended to individual winners

from other Latin American countries. We know that many of these winners practiced the highest standards of journalism even while facing the gravest of personal risks. We already hinted at the interesting stories in Argentina through our profiles of Robert Cox and Jacobo Timerman who won Cabots in the 1970s and 1980s. Similar stories, and stories equally as important although less dramatic are to be found almost everywhere. One thinks of Yoani Sanchez who won the Cabot award for her blog reporting from Cuba in 2009 and a number of brave Mexican journalists who clearly risked their lives to report on the drug trafficking that undermined their country so badly.

Our final recommendation would be for the Columbia Journalism School and others to find ways in which to increase the visibility of the awards by leveraging the large cohorts of honorees in Brazil and elsewhere in Latin America through seminars, events, gatherings, and the like that would take place in Latin America at regular intervals and not just once a year on the campus of Columbia University. Besides tapping into the goodwill of many influential journalists in the region, events bringing these journalists together would provide an additional, and vitally needed, source of international prestige and attention to journalists everywhere in the region. They are, after all, an important line of defense in the global protection of democracy.

APPENDIX I

**List of Brazilian Cabot Prize Winners
1941 - 2021**

1941

Paulo Bittencourt, Proprietor and Director, Correio da Manhã, Gold Medal, Brazil
Silvia Bittencourt, Correio da Manhã, Gold Medal, Brazil

1945

Francisco de Assis Chateaubriand, Editor, Diários Associados, Gold Medal, Brazil

1948

Orlando Ribeiro Dantas, President, Diário de Notícias, Gold Medal, Brazil

1951

Elmano Cardim, Managing Director, Jornal do Comércio, Gold Medal, Brazil

1952

Belarmino Austregesilo de Athayde, Editor, Diário da Noite, Gold Medal, Brazil

1953

Carlos Lacerda, Director, Tribuna da Imprensa, Gold Medal, Brazil

1954

Danton Jobim, Editor-in-Chief, Diário Carioca, Gold Medal, Brazil

1955

Breno Caldas, Director, Correio do Povo, Gold Medal, Brazil

1957

Roberto Marinho, Director and Co-Owner, O Globo, Special Citation, Brazil
Herbert Moses, Director and Treasurer, President of the Brazilian Press Association, O Globo, Gold Medal, Brazil

1959

Hernane Tavares de Sá, Director, Visão, Gold Medal, Brazil

1965

Roberto Marinho, Director, O Globo, Gold Medal, Brazil

1967

M. F. Nascimento Brito/(Manoel F. Nascimento Brito), Executive Director, Jornal do Brasil, Gold Medal, Brazil

1969

Alceu Amoroso Lima, Author, Essayist and Literary Critic, Gold Medal, Brazil

1970

Alberto Dines, Editor-in-Chief, Jornal do Brasil, Gold Medal, Brazil

1974

Fernando Pedreira, Director and Editor-in-Chief, O Estado de Sao Paulo, Gold Medal, Brazil

1978

Carlos Castello Branco, Political Columnist, Jornal do Brasil, Gold Medal, Brazil

1987

Luis Fernando Levy, Gazeta Mercantil, Gold Medal, Brazil
Roberto Muller, Managing Editor, Gazeta Mercantil, Special Citation, Brazil
Paulo Sotero, Washington Correspondent, Gazeta Mercantil, Special Citation, Brazil

1988

Roberto Civita, Publisher, Veja, Gold Medal, Brazil

1991

Ricardo Arnt, Special Reporter, Folha de S. Paulo, Special Citation, Brazil
Gilberto Dimenstein, Bureau Chief, Brasilia, Folha de S. Paulo, Special Citation, Brazil
Otavio Frias Filho, Editor-in-Chief, Folha de S. Paulo, Gold Medal, Brazil
Carlos E. Lins da Silva, Correspondent, Washington Bureau, Folha de S. Paulo, Special Citation, Brazil

2001

Clovis Rossi, Chief Editor, Columnist, Folha de S. Paulo, Gold Medal, Brazil

2003

João Antônio Barros, Special Reporter, Jornal O Dia, Gold Medal, Brazil

2005

Miriam Leitão, Reporter and Columnist, O Globo, Rede Globo, and Radio CBN, Gold Medal, Brazil

2006

José Hamilton Ribeiro, Special Reporter, TV Globo, Brazil

2009

Merval Pereira, Columnist, O Globo, Gold Medal, Brazil

2010

Norman Gall, Correspondent, Braudel Papers, Gold Medal, Brazil

2013

Mauri König, Correspondent, Gazeta do Povo, Gold Medal, Brazil

2015

Lucas Mendes, GloboNews ,Gold Medal,Brazil

2017

Dorrit Harazim, Journalist, Gold Medal, Brazil

2018

Fernando Rodrigues, Poder360, Gold Medal, Brazil

2020

Patrícia Campos Mello, Folha de S. Paulo, Brazil

2021

Eliane Brum, freelancer, Brazil

Adriana Zehbrauskas, photojournalist, United States/Brazil

APPENDIX II

Selected Historical Documents

Letter I

September 14, 1936

Dean Carl W. Ackerman
School of Journalism

My dear Dean

I have read with interest your letter of the 13th. My disposition would be to go very slow on the question of additional prizes in Journalism. Every new prize will diminish the significance and psychological value of the Pulitzer Prizes themselves and will distract attention from them.

Various persons in different parts of the country are constantly approaching me on this or some related topic, but I do my best to keep them in a state of quiescence.

Faithfully yours,

Nicholas Murray Butler

P

A 1936 letter from Nicholas Murray Butler to Dean Carl W. Ackerman expressing his concern that the new awards might diminish the luster associated with the Pulitzers. Source: Accessed in the Archives of the Rare Books and Manuscript Library of Columbia University.

COPY

THE FOREIGN SERVICE
OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

AMERICAN LEGATION
THE HAGUE, NETHERLANDS
APRIL 30, 1938

Dear Mr. Ackerman:

Your letter of April 20 arrived simultaneously with a letter of April 21st from my father. In the latter letter, My father stated that he would contribute \$16,000 of the \$20,000 for two years experimental work in connection with the prize proposal. Of this, he will contribute \$8,000 in September and the rest later, subject to my approval of the rules. I am sure that you will rejoice with me at this good news.

With regard to your letter, I am prepared to advance two thousand dollars for the preliminary work as soon as we iron out the small remaining differences between our drafts. I am afraid that I do not quite understand the meaning of your first statement: "I am quite prepared to go ahead on the basis which you suggest". I presume that this means the acceptance of the slight amendments which I proposed in my first letter in reply to your re-drafted plan: I unfortunately did not keep a copy of my letter although I did keep notes. I shall try in the next week to embody these points in a further draft of the rules and to forward this draft to you for your approval.

I entirely approve your discussing the prize plan with friends in the American Society of Newspaper Editors.

It seems to me that the forthcoming Pan-American Conference at Lima would constitute an excellent opportunity either to announce our plan or perhaps to announce the first year's prizes. What do you think of this?

I am hoping that we may be home next February and March on leave and it, of course, will be good to have an opportunity fully to discuss our plan at that time. My father expects to be here in June and that will give me an opportunity to talk the matter over with him, although he seems to have given me a carte blanche in his letter of April 21st.

Very sincerely yours

John M. Cabot (signed)

Carl W. Ackerman, Esquire,
Dean Graduate School of Journalism
Columbia University
New York City

August 12, 1941

Dear Doctor Ackerman:

Answering your favor of the 11th, please use your own judgment as to when you make the public announcement. I think it is desirable to make a public statement on the approximate value of the capital stock.

The book value, as of May 31, 1941, was \$6885.56 per share. There is no market value. The stock was originally all of it issued to me, and since then more than one-half of it has been given away by me.

GLC:A

Yours sincerely,

Godfrey L. Cabot

Doctor Carl W. Ackerman,
Dean, Graduate School of Journalism,
Columbia University,
New York City.

\$ 275,422, total value.

TELEPHONE: 27-0020

of Cabot file

COPACABANA PALACE HOTEL

RIO DE JANEIRO December 19, 1950

Dear Grayson:

We have been here one week with the usual cordial reception by the newspapers, Radio and television. While the schedule has been on a faster pace than New York I have been able to make inquiries in regard to the 1951 Maria Moors Cabot awards. Last night I met Ambassador Johnson again at dinner and checked the list with him.

Everyone agrees on Elmano Cardim, Director of Jornal Do Commercio. This is the substantial, reliable newspaper of record and influence in Rio de Janeiro.

Everyone agrees also on Senhor Fernandez, Director of Diario de Pernambuco in Recife. I have not met him but hope to stop in the North on my way home.

These two men are directors of the two oldest newspapers in Brazil and probably in South America.

There are differences of opinion in regard to the third man, whether he should be the editor of A Gazeta of Sao Paulo or the editor of Diario Carioca in Rio.

Assis Chateaubriand owner of 32 newspapers and the two new television stations in Rio and San Paulo as well as several radio stations and magazines told me at dinner last night that he would attend the Convocation also. He was awarded a medal six years ago as I recall the date.

Obviously I have made no commitments even to the Ambassador but I have endeavored as I usually do to obtain the best opinion possible before making recommendations. I do not think that any recommendations should be made until next summer and until we know the war situation and the attitude of Brazil. Literally no one knows what President-elect Vargas will do. While every newspaper is filled with war news from Washington, Korea, Tokyo and Europe the people we have met have little interest in another war and little realization of what it may mean to Brazil. This is a very prosperous country. While 2 inch. filet mignons cost \$1.50 in this hotel; scotch is \$11. per bottle (black market rates available to all Americans through brokers) or \$22. at the official rate of exchange, Chateaubriand told me that it was easy to raise money for museums and hospitals. Two weeks ago he bought a Cezanne in New York for \$90,000. for the Museum of Modern Art in San Paulo and when the purchase was announced in the press he received \$90,000. in gifts within hours. In two years he said he had raised \$2,000,000. for the museum. Naturally I extended a cordial invitation to him to help us but he is a Paulista.

Sincerely yours,
Carl

A late 1950 letter from Carl Ackerman to President Grayson Kirk of Columbia describing his efforts to find candidates in Brazil other than those working with the best known newspapers. Source: Accessed in the Archives of the Rare Books and Manuscript Library of Columbia University.

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