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## WHITE HOUSE NEWS PHOTOGRAPHERS ASSOCIATION LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD ED EAVES

You can start anywhere, but you have to start somewhere. For me, it was Harmony Grove, Ark., in 1971. My incredible journey in television and film editing began in high school making Super 8 films with my friends. I also had a passion to teach myself how to play drums, and by the time I finished high school I was in a band. I dreamed of Hollywood and rock stardom, whichever came first.

Dreams are powerful motivators, but opportunity opens the door. In 1972, Hollywood came to town. Burt Reynolds arrived to shoot "White Lightning," the first of his good ol' boy films. I wrangled a job assisting the property master and caught a real bug for filmmaking.

I enrolled in a filmmaking course in Little Rock taught by a retired CBS film cameraman, Jimmy Mundell. He said, "Kid, if you want to learn how to shoot film, you've got to run a lot of film thru the camera." With his recommendation, that's exactly what I did, starting at Little Rock's CBS affiliate, for \$4 an hour.

I soon moved across town to ABC's KATV. News Director Jim Pitcock was a great mentor and for the next seven years I learned from the best and fell in love with photojournalism. By 1980, Pitcock had given me the lofty title of chief editor.

In 1983, with bigger dreams, I applied for an ABC network job as a vacation relief editor in Washington. It was a temporary, don't sell your house and move your family kind of deal. I promptly sold my house and moved my wife, Ina, and young daughter, Lindsey, to Alexandria, Va. The risk was worth the reward.

During the heyday of big network budgets in the 1980s and '90s, covering stories required traveling to edit on-site to feed only the short finished piece on the expensive satellite. Travel editing took me around the world.

In Washington, I was also the principal editor for "This Week With David Brinkley," editing a seven-minute setup piece for each Sunday morning. I worked with great writers -- James Wooten, John Martin and Jack Smith.



PHOTO BY JON ELSWICK

In 1989, the year of the Tiananmen Square protests, I traveled to Hong Kong with Ted Koppel and his incredible team. We produced and edited on location an Emmy-winning documentary. In November I watched the Berlin Wall fall and East Germans experience their first taste of freedom. I thought I would never experience anything like that again.

Only eight months later, Saddam Hussein rolled his tanks into Kuwait City. In January 1991, I joined 126 other journalists and boarded the "big foot" flight into Dhahran, Saudi Arabia. After a month of covering the air war and dodging Scud missiles, we woke up to news that 7th Corps tanks were rolling into Iraq. Joining a Saudi military convoy, we rushed across the desert toward Kuwait City. The sky was black from burning oil wells. We spent two weeks working in a trashed hotel, often editing by candlelight, to get Sam Donaldson and ABC on the air from the powerless city.

I returned to editing long-form for "PrimeTime Live."

For the next seven years I was a principal editor for Donaldson and Chris Wallace along with editor Steve Cain, one of the best in the business.

By 1998, I joined NBC News editing and producing long-form for "Dateline." After six years I returned to my roots in daily news and began cutting for "Nightly News With Brian Williams" and "Today." And now in what seems like coming full circle, I'm once again editing and producing long-form, this time for "Rock Center With Brian Williams."

Telling stories by arranging pictures and sounds, creating little moments of emotion, truth and beauty, is to me the greatest job in the world. I have continued playing drums professionally all these years in working bands without illusions of rock stardom but with great joy.

I would like to thank all my friends and colleagues in the WHNPA for this honor and for their friendship and support. And to Ina, Lindsey and Logan, thanks for being so supportive and understanding about all the times I was away for too long or was once again stuck in the editing suite.

