



November 25, 2025

New England Newspaper Hall of Fame
c/o NENPA
P.O. Box 2505
Woburn, MA 01801

To whom it may concern:

We write to nominate Jackie Majerus, a journalist in Maine, for induction into the New England Newspaper Hall of Fame.

During a decades-long period when New England's newspapers were paring back or shutting down – and journalists everywhere worried about the profession's future – Jackie Majerus did something remarkable.

She never lost faith in the power of good journalism.

Starting in 1994, Jackie created and fostered a nonprofit that taught young people for free what it takes to be a reporter, helped them find and write stories, and published their pieces for a growing world audience.

Her handiwork, Youth Journalism International, which began in Connecticut and is now based in Maine, has mentored students throughout the region but also in scores of countries around the globe. Over the years, it has published more than 750 young reporters and photographers – and educated many others.

Jackie's work hasn't gone unnoticed. Two years ago, she received the gold laureate Global Youth & News Media Prize for news/media literacy, from the Paris-based Global Youth and News Media. Last year, the Journalism Education Association named Jackie one of four recipients of its "Friend of Scholastic Journalism" honor. But what she loves aren't prizes or distinctions. It's the warmth and buzz of the unique, international newsroom she created to serve as "a training

ground for aspiring young journalists” that amounts to “a close-knit global community of young writers who are intent on making a difference in the world,” as Hartford magazine once noted.

Her students know they are a part of something special.

“In a world that says it values unity and informed citizens, Jackie actually does the work to foster those values,” said student Annamika Konkola. “Through Youth Journalism International and experiences like the 2025 Global Conference in Cape Town, her mentorship has brought us together to learn from new places and each other's stories. Jackie is remarkable because I know I am just one of hundreds of people who will say she's been one of the single biggest positive influences in our lives. There are hundreds of writers around the world whose lives and writing have been changed because Jackie refused to give up on journalism's future.”

At first, YJI began as a program for Connecticut teens who met weekly in a Bristol Press conference room. They wrote local news, including many stories about Lake Compounce, the nation's oldest amusement park, and the nearby sports network ESPN. They tackled tough issues, too, including many stories on teen pregnancy, teen suicide and school shootings.

What they did proved so compelling that it found an online audience, which spurred an increasing tide of requests from young people around the world to join, too. After about 15 years, the majority of students lived elsewhere. To keep up, and help provide funding to keep operating, YJI became a formal, federally-recognized 501(c)(3).

Really, though, YJI has just kept expanding since day one, rooted in New England and committed to the notion that young people need to be taken seriously.

In short, the little charity Jackie started has become such a crucial part of journalism education that it's been touted by everything from the Los Angeles Times to The Guardian Foundation in the United Kingdom. It can accept only a tiny fraction of the people eager to become its students.

To understand YJI, you need to know Jackie.

A journalist since middle school, she earned her living as a professional reporter for a quarter century after graduating with a journalism degree from the University of Iowa. Most of those years, she wrote for The Bristol Press in Connecticut.

In that time, covering stories about everything from a fraudulent bail bondsman to the explosive growth of ESPN, she won many first-place writing awards from the Connecticut Society of Professional Journalists, the New York State Bar Association, the New York Newspaper Publisher's Association, the New York State Associated Press.

It's a job she might still be doing except that she quit The Bristol Press after discovering the paper's owner cut a secret deal with the local hospital to hide a potentially damaging story. That courageous, principled stand took place in 2011.

It was also the moment when she decided to devote all of her time, as a volunteer, to YJI and its students. She figured that's how she could do the most for journalism and, really, for the world.

As a schoolgirl in Iowa, Jackie started writing for the school paper in junior high and continued into high school – until her senior year, when she couldn't remain as editor with an advisor who viewed the publication's role more as PR than news. That just didn't sit right with Jackie.

"I hated the blandness of the official school paper and was determined to provide something better," she once told us. "Leading a small staff, I published my own paper bi-weekly from October through graduation in June. Funded only with small donations from supporters, my tiny paper tackled tough issues, including racism in town, abusive teachers in the school and, of course, the latest rock and roll show. To say it was well-read among faculty and students would be an understatement."

Anyone who's been in high school – let alone in newspapers – knows how rare it is for seniors to focus on a long-term project that isn't strictly necessary. Jackie, of course, was one of the rare examples of getting it done.

In Iowa City, where she worked her way through school, Jackie studied journalism and got a few things published in its student paper. When she earned her diploma, she found a job for a daily newspaper in southern Illinois that featured a chain-smoking editor in the newsroom. She managed to write some excellent stories and quickly looked for another position.

Next up was a daily in upstate New York, *The Citizen*, in the newsy city of Auburn, where she covered cops and courts with a series of stories that won her acclaim from readers and her profession. Before long, she was on her way to *The Bristol Press* in Connecticut, a respected daily with a hard-driving editor who liked her nose for hard news.

In Bristol, Jackie wrote many compelling stories, including one heart wrenching piece where she interviewed a father whose daughter had been murdered and stuffed in the trunk of his car. The killer? His son. What she wrote captured the trauma and sadness of it all. That she found the man and got him to talk is an indication of how great a journalist she is – one who never just regurgitated what officials wanted to see in print.

Jackie worked at the Bristol daily until 2011, including a period in 2008 when its corporate owner declared its intention to shutter the paper. She was a leader in a huge public campaign to save the Press, one that attracted international attention and, against all odds, actually found someone willing to buy it and keep it alive. At a time when hundreds, maybe thousands of papers closed, she helped preserve one that remains available today. Not many people can say they saved a newspaper. But Jackie can.

She moved to Maine in 2017 after her husband – a collaborator in YJI since day one – got a job as the State House reporter for the Lewiston Sun Journal. She's run YJI from an office in an old Maine house ever since, a place that often has a traveling student in a guest room. In a nod to what goes on there, she named the 19th Century house the Fourth Estate.

Jackie said a long time ago that her work with young journalists "is some of the most rewarding I've ever done. I love encouraging young reporters to pursue my chosen field and starting them off right. I love introducing all of them to our uniquely American freedom of the press."

"I like the feeling of making a difference, of making the world a little bit better for having been here. With YJI, I'm doing that and showing my young writers that they can, too," she said.

We could say a lot more about Jackie in this letter, but it seems better for each of us to tell you why we think she deserves this honor. So let's give that a try:

From Nicole Luna of Brazil:

I once heard that if we become a light in this world of darkness, we will inspire others to brighten their own paths.

I never imagined I'd find this light from 3,700 miles away. But since I met Jackie Majerus, she has been a sun in my life!

Amidst the many struggles in my country and the lack of opportunities, I found a place in Jackie's program. Thanks to Youth Journalism International, I was able to advance my career in journalism and gain significant experience in hard news and reporting.

But most importantly, I became passionate about connecting with diversity, thanks to the dedicated and inclusive approach that Jackie has adopted with us. Always super kind, motivating, and understanding, she has taught values that one might not find even in the most competitive schools, such as the power of human connection and tolerance for difference.

I am not the person I was before Jackie, and I am deeply thankful for finding her light on my path. She definitely deserves all the recognition for her effort and hard work as a journalist. Indeed, she has reached the goal of every communicator: to amplify unheard voices in the world.

From Norah Springborn of Illinois:

Jackie is the backbone of Youth Journalism International; she has dedicated her career, expertise, and energy in order to enable each new generation of students to speak up as well as listen close to those around the world. Jackie works countless hours editing student writing, managing Zoom meetings, and planning for global conferences. Jackie takes the time to converse with each and every student to learn about who they are and their personal story. No one goes unnoticed in YJI thanks to Jackie. All of these events, meetings, and advice from Jackie would not be possible without her continued drive to improve the world by aiding each student to find their personal identity and voice. The work done by Jackie is not just special – it is a gift to each YJI student aiding this next generation of journalists.

Jackie has a gift for journalism but also for enlightening students from around the world to appreciate each other's culture and personal differences. Many students come into YJI lacking English writing and speaking skills. Jackie helps them master English better in order to get published online. YJI alumni come back and present (facilitated all by Jackie) about their careers. Weekly Zoom calls allow students to connect across continental borders led by Jackie. Whether it be updating social media, changing our means of connection based on student opinion, or mailing out personalized journalism notebooks, Jackie is an excellent example of what it means to put others before yourself. Most importantly, Jackie's constant upbeat attitude and kind heart equips her to be the outstanding editor and role model to all Youth Journalism International students.

From Holly Hostettler-Davies of Wales:

When Jackie first became part of my life, I was a shy 17-year-old trying to figure out her place in the world as it shut down around me due to the Covid-19 pandemic. It was April 2020. I didn't quite know what I was looking for when joining Youth Journalism International besides something productive and worthwhile to fill my time. I never could have imagined that five years later, it would prove to have been the most influential decision of my life.

A good journalism educator believes in your voice before you do. They don't just prepare you to report the news, they prepare you to face the world. Jackie did that for me, as she has done for hundreds of students before me and as she will do for hundreds of students after me. She taught me that journalism is not just about reporting - it's about witnessing and choosing to speak. Through her mentorship, I discovered a keen interest in gender equality and sexual and reproductive health and rights. She supported me in sourcing stories, conducting interviews and writing boldly on menstrual health, women's fight for equality and transgender rights. Her trust in me allowed me to write award-winning coverage on sexual assault in YJI's 'No One Is Safe' global project.

When I later found myself working for the UK Government at the United Nations on those aforementioned issues, the values that Jackie instilled in me became the tools I used to navigate global spaces. Curiosity, compassion, courage.

Her mentorship bridged the distance between the newsroom and the world. Because of her, I don't just see journalism as a profession, but as a responsibility. A responsibility to truth and to people.

That understanding has widened my world and shaped how I live my everyday life. I approach every conversation with the same curiosity she taught me to bring to an interview where I listen to understand, not to reply. I look for nuance instead of judgement as she taught me that everywhere carries a story worth telling. I approach each day recognizing whose story isn't being told and looking at what I can do about it.

I often wonder how much better the world would be if only everyone else was as lucky as me to be taught, mentored and inspired by Jackie Majerus.

From Ahmed Elkhamisy of Egypt:

My name is Ahmed Elkhamisy, and I am a 19-year-old reporter with Youth Journalism International.

Since the beginning of my journey with the organization, Jackie has been my inspiration, educator, and mentor. Her passion and dedication to journalism are unmatched. She gave me the chance to start my journalism journey with so much passion and patience, teaching me how to write a report, interview people, and be an honorable writer.

Her presence in my life wasn't just as my editor; she was much more than that. She was an icon of generosity, working tirelessly to build YJI and provide youth with a chance to speak and a safe space to share their stories and ideas. Her love for us was unconditional; she always supported our work and ideas, and shared our achievements with everyone, even if we were alumni.

YJI has succeeded in becoming an independent international organization that teaches youth journalism equitably from anywhere in the world. With Jackie's presence, YJI became a big family with many members from different cultures, backgrounds, and countries.

Jackie was a great leader with immense passion. Since 1994, she continuously improved the organization, making it an opportunity for anyone from any place in the world to join. She even ensured her presence wasn't just visual, taking every chance to travel and see her students and

alumni from all over the world. Under her leadership, YJI started its Annual Global Conference, which has been held four times now, traveling to four different countries and regions from Istanbul in 2022 to Cape Town in 2025. She even succeeded in bringing some of our members who came from regions that are particularly difficult to travel from. Her love, care, and passion made us all so proud to have her as a leader and also as a second mother. Her efforts have changed many students' lives.

From Joe Killian of North Carolina:

With Jackie as my mentor in Bristol, I became a writer rather than a kid with a penchant for writing. I learned to focus my energy and make my writing count – affecting my community and the world with just my mind and my keyboard. That’s an indescribably precious gift to give to a fifteen-year-old boy and something for which I’ll always be grateful.

By the time I came into the group in the winter of 1997, they had already finished their ambitious teen suicide project and won state and national awards. They had a staff of talented teen journalists who had already proven themselves. It was more than a little intimidating. Though both Jackie and her husband Steve were always patient (sometimes remarkably so) they never treated us with kid gloves. If something was wrong, it was made right. When we made mistakes we were expected to learn from them. We were held to deadlines, required to develop story ideas and always encouraged to be more creative and ambitious. In short, we were treated like reporters and, in turn, became reporters. One by one, as my friends and I graduated high school and went on to college I saw YJI’s lasting effect on our lives.

What was – and continues to be – most impressive to me was the way in which Jackie, while raising two small children and working as a full-time reporter, gave more time and energy than seems humanly possible to something for which she has never been paid. I can remember countless nights in the Bristol Press newsroom, watching Jackie put together pages well past midnight so YJI’s work would be printed. At the end of a long day, when she should have been home in bed, she would still take the time to show me each step of the process and let me try my hand at it. Her determination and humor kept the rest of us going and got out some terrific pages week in and week out. When, years later, I became responsible for laying out my college newspaper, it helped that Jackie had already taught me the software – but it helped more to remember her dedication.

Jackie has taken students into her family’s home, helped them secure internships and jobs at newspapers, and put her time, money and more importantly her heart into making YJI what it is today. When she looks around her and sees what began with a handful of Connecticut teenagers now flourishing as an international group of young people dedicated to her dream, I can see in her eyes and hear in her voice the enormous gratification. But, because it’s Jackie, I can also sense something else – anticipation of what’s to come and the desire to do more and do it better.

From Dorothy Quanteh of Maryland:

I met Jackie earlier this year as a senior in high school eager to learn and practice journalism. My high school didn't have a solid paper, so I decided to join one. When I got accepted into YJI, I expected to simply write for the publication and have Jackie as my editor. But, she became much more than that. Jackie is my mentor, supporter, and friend.

For the first 1-2 months, she hosted Zoom meetings with me and incoming YJI students, learning and allowing us to express who we are. The first thing that made me like Jackie is her smile. She has this wide-toothed grin she does every time a YJI student comes to a Zoom meeting. It's

warm, welcoming, and never fades on even the roughest days. She also hates when we mute ourselves. Young people deserve to be heard, she said. That stuck with me because I grew up being labeled as "too loud" or "too much" by my family, teachers, and peers. But, having ideas as a teen never offended Jackie. She respects them and encourages us to think critically by and for ourselves. Even if we don't become journalists, she said, these skills are as transferable as they are helpful.

I looked forward to those meetings then and still do: On the late-night Wednesday meetings (she hosts four throughout the week at odd hours to accommodate YJI across the globe), Jackie, me and other students talk about current events, how our lives are going, all while editing articles, op-eds and brainstorming new ones. Like a good journalist does, Jackie does her best to understand perspectives she may not hold and issues she may not deal with. She's always excited to be introduced to something new. As an editor, she treats us as the experts of the stories we've spent days and sometimes months researching, interviewing sources for, and writing. I appreciate that because thoughtfulness is not always given to younger journalists, and even veterans. Jackie edits with us, explaining why certain words or sentences need to be adjusted and listens to us when we advocate for those seemingly unimportant but important parts of the story. She is determined to acknowledge things we believe are important.

After knowing her for less than 6 months, I met Jackie in-person at Youth Journalism International's 4th Annual Global Conference hosted in Cape Town, South Africa. She was caring, curious, and committed to fostering a community of students and alumni from diverse backgrounds. She always made me feel comfortable and would ask me if I was okay. We cooked an African-inspired peanut stew together. I enjoyed doing that. She made a connection between my Liberian heritage and a dish her family eats and wanted to incorporate that into the trip. Through YJI and Jackie's collaboration, I've strengthened my journalism, public speaking and critical thinking skills. I've also got a better understanding of what a journalist is. Beyond reporting, a journalist is compassionate, understanding and resilient. Like Jackie.

I strongly urge you to consider Jackie for your award because her journalism career transcends the news or college classroom. She's impacted many before me and I know I will not be the last young person lacking access to a mentor, safe space, and no-cost journalism education that she impacts.

I am proud to know her and from this letter, I hope you are too.

From Anjola Fashawe of London:

Jackie has been an inspiration to me ever since I joined Youth Journalism International in 2021. Her kind-heartedness, sense of humor, and intelligence are qualities I deeply admire. From the moment I first met her at the journalism conference in Prague, I could sense how much she truly wanted to share journalism knowledge with and uplift young people. When joining YJI, I was just a young girl with a free weekend, unaware that I was about to become part of a family.

Jackie has an incredible ability to uplift and empower those around her, even in the most challenging situations. She has given me the confidence to speak up when I disagree whether on local issues in my own hometown or global problems and also to use my voice for good. I often find myself wishing I could balance my time and share the same boundless optimism and compassion that she so naturally radiates.

Jackie is truly a formidable force, she is a person whose legacy will endure for generations, because it has been built on kindness, courage, and the unwavering belief in the power of young voices.

From Lina Köksal and Naz Mergen of Türkiye:

As two students from Türkiye, we wanted to say that it has been an amazing experience to be able to be a part of YJI and be able to go to conferences, meet new people and share our ideas and experiences – all thanks to Jackie. Whenever we needed help or guidance, journalism-related or not, Jackie has been there. We are so lucky to have had the chance to meet her and be a part of the wonderful organization she founded.

From Gemma Christie of Chester, England:

Whether it's her extreme devotion to the roots of journalism, or her phenomenally huge impact on media education, I am in no doubt that Jackie Majerus is fully deserving of this award. I only joined Youth Journalism International in 2023, as journalism was a prospective hobby that I was interested in. But within the first few Zoom calls, Jackie's passion, warmth and genuine care about the kids she was educating drew me into the group and I quickly became fascinated by the workings of articles. I would read articles every day, but had little knowledge about how they were created, and Jackie made this learning process unforgettable. Not only has Jackie consistently emphasized the importance of ethics in journalism (which is increasingly crucial in our political climate), but she considers all aspects of it. Whether you write, photograph, draw, interview, or create content, Jackie pays each project the same amount of meticulous attention and does her best to help. YJI's own awards ceremony is a prime example of her determination to uplift youth voices: by having professional judges spotlighting and critiquing the best work, all areas of YJI are committed to its cause; emphasizing the importance of youth voice. I think one of the standout features of Jackie's commitment to journalism has to be the annual global conferences that Youth Journalism hosts; a truly unique opportunity where students from all over the world are able to convene in a different country from their own, bond with each other, explore and then write about their experiences. Whilst insanely rewarding, the conferences are enormous to plan and incredibly difficult to accommodate (for issues like visas, expense and time). But I believe that it is only because of the commitment of Jackie that they are able to go ahead, and I find it difficult to express into words how worth it they are, and how many lives they change, all because of Jackie. Whilst I am only a small part of the huge community of YJI (made of current students, board members, and generations of alumni), it is clear from my last two and a half years alone that countless lives have indeed been changed by this organization. An organization that Jackie Majerus not only founded but also leads.

From Anya Farooqui of Pakistan:

When I was 15, I travelled without my family for the first time and went to a YJI conference in Mexico City, all the way from Pakistan. Though I was scared at first, that experience is now one of my best. This is due to Jackie Majerus. She welcomed me so easily, and never once made me feel different, though I was the youngest student there. Jackie is not just kind, she is also incredibly smart and hard-working. She works tirelessly to edit pieces and always explains these in a way that is not demeaning but is instead uplifting. Jackie has helped give a voice to students around the world, including me. Thanks to her work in YJI, I was able to express myself in a way that I couldn't have without her. She has also made it possible for me to meet so many people from all corners of the globe, people who I couldn't have even met without Jackie's work.

Jackie wholeheartedly deserves this award. I know this, and so do many others.

From Annamika Konkola of Oregon:

Jackie shows up for each of us, every day. She somehow manages to connect students across time zones, even if that means waking up early or staying up late to read our drafts, spark conversations, and remind us that our voices – and journalism – matter. She was my first real introduction to journalism; she taught me to ask sharper questions, consider diverse sources, and approach global issues with curiosity. Each of those perspectives still shapes my writing today.

I have witnessed Jackie create friendships between students from vastly different backgrounds by encouraging thoughtful, engaged exchanges about everything from family traditions to school stress to toxic masculinity. She supported me through some of the most consequential decisions of my life, including deciding what to do after high school, and she is a constant role model of compassion and tenacity.

In a world that says it values unity and informed citizens, Jackie actually does the work to foster those values. Through Youth Journalism International and experiences like the 2025 Global Conference in Cape Town, her mentorship has brought us together to learn from new places and each other's stories. Jackie is remarkable because I know I am just one of hundreds of people who will say she's been one of the single biggest positive influences in our lives. There are hundreds of writers around the world whose lives and writing have been changed because Jackie refused to give up on journalism's future.

From Jana Salama of Egypt:

I joined YJI in 2024, all because of one google search of part-time activities students can pursue on the side to gain more experience. I never really thought of journalism as someone currently studying in the business information systems field, but YJI has been one of the best things to happen to me.

Jackie works *incredibly* hard as YJI's sole editor. She is the bridge to those pursuing journalism yet not having the education or expertise. When students get accepted to YJI, Jackie hosts an orientation where she briefs on ethics, terms, writing techniques, and other information involving journalism and how we can jumpstart our writing journeys. When students are finally done with the orientation period, that means that Jackie now has the load of both current and new students' work to edit.

Every piece of work of yours being edited receives a level of attentiveness and care, and Jackie makes it an important goal to keep your essence and message unchanged. And as someone who has been in this field for many countless years, Jackie always communicates with you why she edited or restructured some sentences and addresses any mistakes that so many of us young journalists may face along the way. She never keeps someone in the dark, and if you made a mistake — that's okay. She always assured you that this is why she's here in the first place. Personally, YJI has given me opportunities I could never have imagined. Me writing as a journalist to begin with was not something I could always imagine, and the more I interact with this organization and the community it has cultivated, the more I want to genuinely write more for them.

Unfortunately, Jackie could only handle so much. As the only editor, she is faced with a ton of students whose work requires editing and handling other organizational stuff behind the scenes we may not know about. I admire that she has dedicated almost a majority of her life to

journalism and making it accessible to the youth. Most importantly— YJI is a nonprofit, so the only money that it receives is from donors. Despite all of this however, she has so much enthusiasm for us and continues to work hard daily because she has so much faith in what she's cultivated.

I am Egyptian and queer, and I found it interesting and lovely to experience the world through so many people by meeting my other YJI colleagues. Jackie especially has been ever so warm and caring to me even outside of YJI affairs, she was a safe space for me if I ever needed someone to talk to. She always seemed to push me when I didn't have enough faith in myself, and her efforts with me make me so humble and grateful that she didn't *stop* when I felt myself already making up my mind. Most notably, YJI flew me out to Copenhagen during a time where I was visiting Germany, and I attended two days of Copenhagen Fashion Week in August of 2025 to report on the event all because of them. It was one of the most cathartic experiences of my life. I also had a surge of conflicting and confusing emotions during that visit, and she was there to hear me out and soothe me through it. Confiding in her allowed me to navigate all that was within me so I could have the capacity to have fun and enjoy myself—and I enjoyed myself indeed. I cannot recall a time with as much joy as the hours I spent in Copenhagen. I will always cherish it forever.

I love Jackie so much. I love her very earnestly, and there's no one in my mind who deserves such an award more than Jackie.

From Noah Haynes of Denmark:

Jackie has changed a lot for me. She has given me a space to be able to write and be actually coached. Beyond that, she has fostered my love for writing and interviewing, helping me know exactly who to interview and how. She is a firm believer in giving feedback and guidance instead of telling you exactly what to do. With that kind of training, it just comes to me naturally. This has given me the opportunity to interview some very fascinating people.

From Josephine Lee of South Korea:

I joined Youth Journalism International (YJI) in the 7th grade, approximately a year ago in 2024. I didn't exactly know what I was signing up for, but as someone open-minded and enthusiastic about taking risks and trying new things, I pressed submit on my application without any hesitation.

A couple of months later, I received an email stating that I had been accepted into the YJI journalism organization and had the opportunity to become a journalist. I was instantly surprised and thrilled, and was immediately welcomed by Jackie. During my first few weeks in the program as a complete beginner junior reporter, Jackie was so friendly to everyone and explained every detail about the program with clarity and care. Jackie was, and continues to be, genuinely energetic about how students from across the globe come together, unified by an amazing, shared passion for writing articles about current news, personal experiences, and countless story ideas worth telling.

Like any journey, I experienced my ups and downs and faced difficulties as a developing journalist and human in general. But without a doubt, I can confidently say that Jackie was always there to help and support me, both as a student and as a journalist in YJI. Her guidance never wavered, even during my most challenging moments!

Now, fast-forward to 2025. I have been promoted to senior reporter at YJI and have become a more experienced journalist. I owe this growth to Jackie. Through YJI, I have undeniably strengthened my writing skills, found new friends from different parts of the world, collaborated with other students, and learned invaluable lessons that extend far beyond just simple journalism.

YJI has become a meaningful part of my daily life, and I always look forward to our weekly meetups and check-ins. They have become moments I cherish and await!

I wholeheartedly thank Jackie for being not only a wonderful teacher, but the best teacher I have ever had. I hope to continue my journey with YJI for many years to come until I'm really old.

From Rachel Glogowski of Boston:

In the twenty years I have known Jackie, my mentor and founder of Youth Journalism International, she has made clear her uncompromising commitment to the future of journalism by cultivating the talents of aspiring young reporters. In addition to an estimable career uncovering the truth and reporting it, Jackie has gone above and beyond the call of duty by investing in the profession's future, building a legacy and cultivating commitment to a fair and free press around the globe.

In her three decades as a daring and innovative educator with YJI, a nonprofit that she co-founded with her husband in 1994, Jackie has served as an inspiration to hundreds of young journalists around the world, including myself. Her direct mentorship – borne of countless hours connecting with young folks in person and on remote calls – involves competency-based training, exploring potential subjects for publication, discussing ethics, imparting basic journalism principles, editing articles, and coaching on basic life skills such as communication and teamwork. Her work has directly contributed to the growth and development of my peer student journalists in places as diverse as India, Pakistan, and South Africa.

When we met back in the mid-2000s, Jackie saw in me – a painfully shy middle school student – the potential to confidently approach interview subjects, ask insightful questions, and pursue the truth. Her weekly coaching sessions improved my writing skills, which set the foundation for effective communication to audiences across geographies and cultures in my professional career. In fact, my participation in YJI unlocked a desire to learn about cultures different from my own and expanded my world beyond my little New England bubble. The collective support of Jackie and the YJI community set a foundation that opened doors for me, including the opportunity to serve as a Fulbright Fellow in Kolkata, India, study public health and development at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, and achieve a leadership role in a social enterprise devoted to equipping nonprofits and other social sector organizations with better impact data.

Jackie is a highly ethical journalist, and therefore a great educator and mentor. Her tireless commitment to upholding the lessons that she taught me and my fellow YJI reporters – that transparency and honesty matter above all else, that journalism is a tool for giving a voice to the voiceless and holding powerful people accountable, and that we are stronger when we learn about those beyond our immediate bubble – has equipped generations of future journalists with the skills they need to advance the profession.

Conclusion

We hope you'll see what we see: that Jackie deserves this recognition. Her whole life has been dedicated to making sure journalism survives and thrives – and every success we have owes something to her guidance, skill and idealism. Few can point to such a legacy. Even in the New England Newspaper Hall of Fame, she'll stand out as a creative leader whose vision became a reality that transformed lives in her region, her country and beyond.

That spunky girl who churned out an underground newspaper as a teen has managed through the decades to retain her energy and idealism, and use them to create a nonprofit, rooted in New England, that will change the whole world.

Sincerely,

Gemma Christie	Lina Köksal
Ahmed Elkhamisy	Annamika Konkola
Anya Farooqui	Josephine Lee
Anjola Fashawe	Nicole Luna
Rachel Glogowski	Naz Mergen
Noah Haynes	Dorothy Quanteh
Holly Hostettler-Davies	Jana Salama
Joe Killian	Norah Springborn