



January 11, 2017

Dear Editor:

One of my students will be contacting you, offering to write a story for your newspaper and digital platforms. Please let me explain what we have in mind.

This story is part of our Hometown Reporting project, funded partly by the Alabama Press Association Journalism Foundation. Each student in my Advanced Reporting class is being required to select an Alabama newspaper or affiliated news organization, contact the editor, and offer to research and write a story.

You, as the editor, control the story. The student's assignment is to meet your needs and to follow your directions. The story could be about the Alabama Legislature or another, unrelated subject. The choice is yours.

For example, if you choose a legislative story, you might want to assign the student to interview one or more of your local state House and Senate members about local or statewide issues in the regular session of the Legislature, which starts Feb. 7.

I have told the students that the story must be 500 to 700 words, but you should feel free to change that.

Our class will visit the Legislature in Montgomery. I will help the students find sources and develop their stories, and will require each one to send me a draft 24 hours before the editor's deadline. Drawing on my experience as a reporter, editor of The Monroe Journal and managing editor of The Decatur Daily, I will try to make sure that your story is in good shape by the time you receive it. Of course, you can edit it as you see fit and can decide whether to publish it.

We would prefer to complete this project by April 5. But you set the deadline to suit your needs. The semester will end May 1, so students need to complete all classwork by then.

I hope you will find it worthwhile to participate in this project. It will help us prepare student journalists to work for news organizations like yours.

Please call me at any time, day or night, that I can help. I will also appreciate suggestions about how we can make this project more fruitful for both the news organizations and the students. We appreciate your support and that of the APA Journalism Foundation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Steve Stewart".

Steve Stewart
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