

Exploring Ethical Journalism Practices: An Interview with Stephen Porter

Mfundo Msimango, HBCU-Secretary | 23 April 2024



Stephen Porter was a guest speaker to the HBCU-Africa Correspondents Corps. He formerly served as the Director for the Centre for Learning on Evaluation and Results and Lecturer at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg.

How should journalists handle/use “off the record” information?

Having joined the course I better understand that my expectation would be that it is for information purposes only and that none of it would find its way into a news source.

What is the first piece of advice that you would give an HBCU student reporter who aspires to become a leading journalist? Why?

Integrity to your values mixed with a willingness to question them as you develop. I have close friends and relatives who are African journalists, I respect the way they live their values and have evolved to meet and provide an honest view on the challenges in the World.

In your experience, what key skills or qualities differentiate exceptional journalists from the rest?

Those that tell stories about difficult subjects be it economics, trade or truth and reconciliation

in a way everyone can understand.

How do you leave a meaningful impression as a student journalist?

Listening and then probing.

Can you share a memorable experience from your journey as a journalist that taught you a valuable lesson or shaped your approach to the profession?

I'm not a journalist. I think from my own experience as an evaluator my most valuable lesson is to keep working really hard to hear, understand and feel what the situation is trying to say from different perspectives.