

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

Gerald F. Seib
Executive Washington Editor and Chief Commentator
Tel: (202) 862.9225
Email: Jerry.Seib@wsj.com

Mr. Peter May
Chairman
National Capital Memorial Advisory Commission
1100 Ohio Drive, SW., Room 220
Washington, D.C. 20242

Dear Mr. May,

One of the lowest moments of my professional life came late one night when I got a call telling me that Danny Pearl, my friend, colleague and successor as Middle East correspondent, had disappeared in Pakistan. An even lower moment came weeks later when I got another, even darker call telling me the Wall Street Journal had seen a video showing Danny beheaded by terrorists.

Over time, though, shock and sadness gave way to pride--pride that my friend had given his life in not just a good cause, but a vital one. Journalism provides what citizens in an open and democratic society need for that society to thrive, which is an understanding of their fellow citizens, the country around them and the world beyond.

And in pursuing that final piece of journalists' mission--helping their fellow citizens understand the world beyond their shores--journalists must and do take risks. They walk the same dangerous streets as do American diplomats and aid workers. They charge into the same dangerous situations as do American soldiers, often alongside those soldiers. And yes, they sometimes pay with their lives.

Their contributions to American life and society may not be as numerous or as obvious as those of fallen military warriors, but they are just as vital. And it is right to acknowledge the sacrifices they made, because they were made for the benefit of others. As one travels around Washington, there are monuments to honor a wide range of people, in many walks of life, who paid a personal price to advance what former Defense Secretary Jim Mattis calls this great experiment in democracy. It is right that such sacrifices are honored, so they can be remembered and, when necessary, even repeated. The same is true for journalists such as my friend Danny Pearl.

As a former foreign correspondent myself, and as president of the Gridiron Club, the oldest journalistic organization in Washington, I want to add my voice to the effort to produce a permanent monument so they, too, will never be forgotten.

Sincerely,

Jerry

Gerald F. Seib