

Sample fellowship recommendation

To Whom It May Concern:

It gives me great satisfaction to recommend John H. Smythe for the Salem-McKenzie Fellowship in Specialized Journalism. I was John's professor in three undergraduate Communications courses and worked closely with him at both our college radio station and campus video center.

Like a number of my former students, John has kept in touch. Through his letters I stayed abreast of his television news career in Sacramento and witnessed his development as a professional journalist.

It came as a wonderful surprise last year when John announced his intention to return to school for his master's degree. Knowing John I am sure he has exhibited the same enthusiasm for his graduate studies as he did with us.

John is highly charismatic and has a terrific on air presence. More importantly, he thinks critically, reasons well and has all the instincts of a good reporter.

His grace under pressure became abundantly apparent to me during John's junior year. John hosted our weekly TV interview show, "Live on the Mall", which is fed via closed circuit across the university. As John was discussing campus politics with the president of the student government, a fire broke out in one of the dormitories. John immediately headed toward the blaze and began covering the story. Back at the video center the technician called all the local television stations, three of which wanted John's feed and went live with it for more than half an hour. The fire was quite unsettling and involved considerable damage as well as loss of life. John's calm professionalism shown through so much that his feed was also picked up briefly by two national cable news channels.

John also has a good feel for balanced and objective reporting. Case in point, while John was with us a supremacist group sprang up on campus. Although not sanctioned by the university, the group was allowed to conduct a rally. This drew protests from the vast majority of the student body. Nevertheless, John felt it important for freedom of speech to interview the group's leaders on his show.

The interview, conducted on the mall, drew a large demonstration with animus directed not only at the group's leaders but also at John. A number of John's friends held this against him, but he unequivocally believed what he did was right. I would go so far as to say it was not only right but a reflection of mature journalistic judgment.

It was a real honor to witness John's development here at the university and it has been a joy to watch his growth since then. I cannot imagine a better recipient of this fellowship. I enthusiastically recommend him to you.

Sincerely,

David P. Kroger
Professor of Communications
Davis University