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Hemphill: Why yes, the media is too liberal

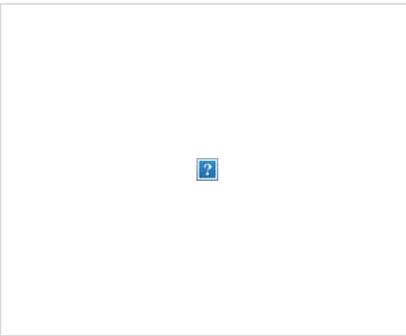
By **Allen Polk Hemphill**

For years on local and national blogs there have been slanted articles, from both political sides, about media. Is media reporting too liberal, as conservatives claim, because its reporters are overwhelmingly known to vote Democrat? Or is the media reporting conservative, as liberals claim, because rich people and corporations own the media outlets? The blogs are virulent with the question because whatever source is cited, it is questioned.

I am not going to address in detail how that question was addressed academically as long ago as 2005 in an academic study (“A Measure of Media Bias”) in the Harvard’s very prestigious, peer-reviewed publication, the Quarterly Journal of Economics, except to say that the authors found the media to be liberal. (The study was recently released as a more readable book, “Left Turn.”)

I think you will find fascinating the academic reaction of prestigious universities to that article.

The primary author of the study, published in November 2005, was Tim Groseclose. I won’t tell you who he is quite yet because that is part of the story.



Allen Hemphill

Beginning the study in 2002, Tim and his academic co-author, Jeff Milyo, were almost ready to publish when they were invited by the academic community of which they were members, to present their paper at Harvard, Yale, Princeton, Duke, and twice at Stanford. Interestingly, while there was some quibbling about methodology, there were no personal attacks from the overwhelmingly liberal

audiences of professors. They then presented at the University of Missouri, where the academic council decided to quell the growing controversy about the study conclusions by doing it the academic way — they scheduled a debate between the authors and the faculty. The faculty declined to show up for the debate.

So, with that preparation, the authors submitted to what is arguably the most prestigious peer-reviewed economics publication in America — the Harvard Quarterly Journal of Economics, which published the study.

Then all hell broke loose — not in academic circles, but from Media Matters and other left-wing organizations. But that was to be expected.

Here is the punch line: The primary author was not academically blackballed — he was promoted from associate professor of political science to full professor — and invited to be a full professor of Economics as well at UCLA.

He became a visiting professor at CalTech.

He was invited to be a full professor at Yale.

He was invited to be a full professor at The University of Chicago — with an

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endowed chair.

UCLA then countered with a salary raise, and an endowed chair.

Tim Groseclose is currently the Marvin Hoffenberg Professor of American Politics at UCLA, and professor of political science and economics!

It is almost anticlimactic to mention the results of the study: Yes, the media is overwhelmingly liberal, and the study was actually performed to find a scientific methodology to determine the "Slant Quotient" of media outlets and the "Political Quotient" of individuals — and to determine who or what is to the left or the right of some other entity.

You really should read Groseclose's "Left Turn," from St. Martins Press.

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