

Mr. & Mrs. Scott M. Palian

DuBois, PA 15801
(814)

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To Whom It May Concern:

We have recently learned that David L. Roush is in a transition process from WJAC-TV's local DuBois area. With that in mind, we would like to provide a few observations from the standpoint of someone who is not only a recipient of his news stories, but also as one who was personally involved in a major fatal story October 21, 2004.

We live in a subdivision in which occurred a fatal gas explosion that killed two residents. David Roush was on the scene before the local fire departments. He stood across the street from the accident with neighbors trying to ascertain information from anyone who was able to provide a timeline from the explosion to his arrival. He used all of the technology available to get the breaking story. He researched facts (i.e., a rumor that the owner of the house used oxygen, David learned was unfounded) so that his story was accurate. When it was learned that National Fuel Gas had a leak in their line that may have caused the explosion, David once again investigated to make sure the facts were accurate. His reporting was fair and balanced to both the residents and their concerns, as well as to National Fuel Gas who had to wait for a government report to assess blame for the explosion.

When National Fuel Gas began holding "town meetings" once a week to discuss progress with the investigation of the cause of the blast and what steps the company would take to quell fears and rectify the situation, David was once again present. He reported a balanced story containing the residents concerns and questions as well as NFG's responses. When the residents were faced with continuing problems with gas detections, evacuations and NFG's remedial actions, Dave sat with some of the residents in a confidential, off-the-record setting so that concerns could be addressed to him and he could investigate areas in which NFG was not forthcoming. NFG provided gas detectors and their installation to the residents and then began the long process of assessing damage to individual homes as well as re-piping of the subdivision. During this process, Dave became a friend as well as a reporter. He understood the nature of the story, and did not forget the personal story of the residents going through the horrendous anxiety and continuing problems of the explosion's aftermath. He reported fairly, and even though he empathized with the emotions of the residents, he did not allow his story to be tainted by those emotions.

Months later, when the detectors provided by NFG started inexplicably sounding alarms and sending residents into the streets for fear of another explosion, Dave was there reporting and looking for answers. Other local news reporters had decided the story was no longer front page and didn't respond.

When the company finally started to address the damage assessment stage of the process, Dave was one of the only reporters to continue with the story. He conducted himself in a professional manner but also endeared himself to residents offering compassion (and sometimes a hug when emotions surfaced) to frazzled residents. He followed through on all story components and leads.

Personal involvement with Dave as a reporter on this story made me aware of important characteristics needed and exhibited by quality news reporters. Some attributes which Dave exhibited while reporting our story were professionalism, empathy, unbiased fairness and balance in a controversial setting, intellectual and accurate reporting of facts, respect for confidentiality and courtesy. He is hard working and takes a task to finish.

We feel that Dave would be a tremendous asset to any company lucky enough to hire him. Unfortunately, that means a loss to the local market. If there are any questions or concerns or if there is any further information you feel we may provide, please do not hesitate to contact us at the telephone number listed above.

Respectfully,

Mr. & Mrs. Scott M. and Monica J. Palian

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