The stories below are archived stories by students in Professor Walter “Robby” Robinson’s Investigative Reporting class. Older stories might not be available to view.

2013 INVESTIGATIVE STORIES

What motivated an arson suspect to set fire to a Brookline unfinished home? Cell phone texts and calls led to the arrest of a 29-year-old ex-marine who was badly burned in the blaze. Journalism students Anne Steele, Libby Leyden-Sussler and Amanda Ostuni investigate possible motives that led to the destruction of the unfinished home in which its developers fought loosing court battles to
save it and continue construction. “The article, Brookline arson yields mystery. Not who did it, but why?” made front-page news in the December 8 edition of the Boston Sunday Globe. Steele, Leyden-Sussler and Ostuni are students in Professor Walter Robinson’s Investigative Reporting class. Read the story on Boston.com→

Sex abuse kept quiet at Beverly private school Journalism student Katherine Landergan and Investigative Reporting Professor Walther V. Robinson reported that a Beverly private school, a state Appeals Court judge and the victim kept allegations of sexual abuse by former Landmark School science teacher Curtis H. Bryant secret for 23 years. The story, “’90 sex abuse suit at Beverly school kept secret,” was published on the Metro front page, February 27. According to the article, the abuse allegations were revealed after five former students came forward to report that they had been molested while students at the school. Two former students lodged complaints against Bryant and three others against former dean at Landmark, Howard Kasper. Earlier this month the Boston Globe filed a motion seeking to release the impounded records. Courts ruled that Landmark’s “…handling of the Bryant case was a matter of public concern.” Read the article →

Old Massachusetts laws still on the books Did you know that you could be fined $100 for using “The Star Spangled Banner” as part of a medley? You could be fined for cursing at a Red Sox game. Students in Prof. Walter Robinson’s Investigative Reporting class found many obscure Massachusetts laws that are outdated, but you’d better watch your mouth because they’re still on the books. Students Andrew Carden and Kristen Lee reveal many more in “Antiquated state laws stir modern-day worry,” in the Metro section of the Boston Globe, January 3. Read the story →

2012 INVESTIGATIVE STORIES

Board removes Cape school’s president Dr. Robert J. Gee’s lavish spending and fiscal stewardship at the Falmouth-based National Graduate School of Quality Management spawned three separate inquiries. He recently was removed by the school’s trustees after reporting this spring by journalism students in Prof. Walter Robinson’s Investigative Reporting seminar. Prof. Robinson reported on the removal in a follow-up story in the Globe June 21. Journalism students had uncovered possible financial irregularities with the school, located Falmouth, Mass. The original article, “Tax-exempt school gives president a lavish life,” April 29, was written by students Brian Jordan and Kristina Finn; and Prof. Robinson. This article was also reported by students Betty Wang, Sara Feijo, Samantha Lane, Matt Kauffman, and Melissa Tabeek. Read the story → Read the full page view.→

Cape Cod grad school finances questioned A Cape Cod graduate school that specializes in quality management provides its President and founder, Dr. Robert Gee and his wife Aileen Waters Gee, with a lavish lifestyle. Journalism students in Prof. Walter Robinson’s Investigative Reporting uncovered possible financial irregularities with the National Graduate School of Quality Management in Falmouth, Mass. The article, “Tax-exempt school gives president a lavish life,” April 29, was written by students Brian Jordan and Kristina Finn; and Prof. Robinson. This article was also reported by students Betty Wang, Sara Feijo, Samantha Lane, Matt Kauffman, and Melissa Tabeek. Read the story → Read the page view.→

Candidate’s party allegiance Explored In spite of having a long history as a Democrat, Elizabeth Childs, a contender for Barney Frank’s US House seat, is running on the Republican ticket. In a Feb. 20, Boston Globe article by journalism students Melissa Tabeek and Kristina Finn, Childs says that her decision to run as a Republican is a “compromise.” In the article, “Elizabeth Childs’s allegiance to GOP scrutinized,” Childs says that the party is not what matters, it’s the principles. This article was written as part of Walter V. Robinson’s Investigative Reporting class. Read the article → View a pdf of actual pages.→

2011 INVESTIGATIVE STORIES

Students find parking rules ignored by restaurant valets Traffic often crawls through some of Boston’s busiest downtown streets as restaurant valet parkers leave diners’ empty cars double parked. In their reporting for an article published on the front page of the Boston Globe on December 21, students in Prof. Walter Robinson’s Investigative Reporting class observed a large number of valet parked cars in front of some of Boston’s most prestigious restaurants. The article, “Valet parking violations punished lightly, if at all,” noted that the Office of Consumer Affairs and Licensing rarely punishes violators. One restaurant owner found violating parking regulations was forced to suspend entertainment for two days. Read the article → Valet Parking, Front Page View→
STUDENT REPORTS ON COMMUNITY COLLEGES AND GUNS

It took police three days to arrest a MassBay student for carrying a semiautomatic 9 mm handgun to campus. In, “Open-access policy has risk: guns on campus,” graduate student Callum Borchers writes, “…when Darryl Max Dookhran, a reputed gang member with a history of violent behavior, applied to Massachusetts Bay Community College, he didn’t have to report any of his transgressions. Three weeks after Dookhran enrolled, he was apprehended carrying a loaded semiautomatic machine gun around campus, nine days after a student first reported seeing him with a weapon.” Borchers wrote this story as part of the Investigative Reporting Seminar led by Prof. Walter Robinson. Read the story →

TWO JOBS FOR ONE PUBLIC EMPLOYEE

How can one man work two full-time jobs at the same time and rake in an average salary of $200,000 a year? Rachel Kossman, a student in Prof. Walter Robinson’s Investigative Reporting seminar, looked at public records to reveal that Lt. Richard G. Covino worked with the Massachusetts Port Authority Fire Department from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. At 3 p.m., the same day, he worked as a paramedic for Boston’s Emergency Medical Services Department. An article written by Ms. Kossman and Prof. Robinson entitled “One Man, Two Jobs and a Question,” appeared on the front-page of the Boston Sunday Globe on May 1. The report said the two jobs resulted in Covino working long hours with few hours rest, endangering public safety. Both agencies said they were investigating the situation. Read the story →

STUDENTS INVESTIGATE FIREFIGHTER WORK SHIFTS

Students working with Prof. Walter V. Robinson have found that the city of Boston turns a blind eye on costly shift-swapping among firefighters. This practice has led some to avoid years of work. The article, “Trading the call of duty for a call of convenience,” appeared in the Boston Globe on Sunday, Jan. 30. The student reporters found that more than “70 firefighters owe comrades between three months and a year of workdays.” The article was written by Callum Borchers, Gal Triperman Lotan and Prof. Robinson, with contributions from Stefanie Geisler and Cecilia Akuffo. Globe Staff Writer John M. Guilfoil also contributed. The report was done for the Investigative Reporting Seminar taught by Prof. Robinson. Read the story →

2010 INVESTIGATIVE STORIES

Investigative Reporting Students Get Two Front-page Globe Stories The Democratic nominee for state auditor Suzanne M. Bump, and her husband Paul F. McDevitt, call two locations their home and reap the benefits of a personal property tax break for both locations, apparently violating state law. The Oct. 7 article titled “Auditor candidate claimed two property tax exemptions: Bump entitled to only one, state officials say” was written by School of Journalism student Stefanie Geisler and Prof. Walter V. Robinson with assistance from Gal Tziperman Lotan, Cecilia Akuffo, and Callum Borchers as a project for Robinson’s Seminar in Investigative Reporting. Read the story → Follow-up story shows campaign disclosure improving On October 12, students in Prof. Robinson’s class published a follow-up story that also appeared on the Globe’s front page. The story, “Campaign disclosure improving: But Bump lagging in reports on donors,” was written by Gal Tziperman Lotan, Stefanie Geisler and Walter V. Robinson. Cecila Akuffo and Callum Brochers contributed to this report. Read the story →

STUDENTS REPORT ON RACIAL DISPARITY AT CITY FIREHOUSES

Danielle Ossher, Courtney Brooks and Prof. Walter Robinson investigated and wrote a major story for The Boston Globe, published August 1, detailing racial disparity between black and white firefighters in city firehouses. Thirty-seven years after a federal court order to increase minority hiring, reporting based on city records found, “…many of Boston’s individual units have become increasingly segregated by race, as both white and minority firefighters choose to work alongside their own as part of a seniority system that gives veterans great leeway to decide where they serve. Almost half of Boston’s firehouses are now either more than 85 percent white or more than 50 percent nonwhite...” Bret Silverberg, Chelsea Reil, Lauren McShane, Peter Martin, Rachel Kossman, and Sarrah Benoit also contributed to the story. Read the story →

Treasurer Cahill’s fundraising practices reviewed Students in Prof. Walter Robinson’s Investigative Reporting class reviewed the aggressive fund-raising practices of state Treasurer Timothy P. Cahill and discovered that he had received campaign contributions from companies that have or want business from the treasurer’s office and the five agencies he oversees, including the pension board. The front-page story in the Boston Globe, March 21, was written by graduate student Aaron Lester, undergraduate Michele Richinick and...
2009 INVESTIGATIVE STORIES

Campaign donor disclosures under-reported On December 30, a page one Globe story by Professor Robinson’s five seminar students disclosed that many statewide officeholders had failed to report occupation and employer information for thousands of their major donors, even though state law requires candidates to collect and report that information. In the article, which was written by graduate student Kelly Glista and undergraduate Pamela King, several candidates pledged to rectify the under reporting. Read the story

Rep. Lynch’s role in obtaining grants questioned Marino Eccher, a graduate student, wrote a front-page article in the Boston Globe on Nov. 10 about US Rep. Stephen F. Lynch’s role in engineering federal grants for a community health center where his wife, Margaret, works and to a substance abuse center where she is a board member. The story is headlined, “Lynch’s wife tied to agencies he won grants for.” The report was prepared in the investigative reporting seminar under the direction of Prof. Walter Robinson. Read the story

Police park in handicapped spaces “When police park at HQ, regular rules do not apply,” February 16, by graduate students Colby Cremins and Emily K. Williams. Contributing to this article were Graduate student Jennifer Skala, and undergraduate students Anne Baker, Danielle Capalbo, Emma Johnson, and Casey Ramsdell. Maria Cramer, a Globe staff reporter also contributed to the story. Read the story → A follow-up story, “Illegal police parking unabated. Officers still using spaces reserved for the handicapped,” appeared on April 2. It was written by graduate student Emily Williams and undergraduate Casey Ramsdell. Read the story →

2008 INVESTIGATIVE STORIES

“Fire Dept. disability backlog costs city: Delays in decisions add up to millions,” by Walter V. Robinson and Nikki Gloudeman, Friday, January 11, page 1. Read the story.→


“Trusts for mentally retarded neglected” by journalism student Stephanie M. Peters, August 31, front page. Read the story.→

2007 INVESTIGATIVE STORIES

“High-end fare, with side order of violations,” by Jennifer Nelson and Bobby Hankinson, August 29, page 1. Read the story. Also in the same edition, page 2, see “City hasn’t informed public of nearly 400 temporary license suspensions,” by Prof. Walter Robinson.

“State fails to curb usurious pawnshop rates,” August 30, by Donna Roberson, page 1. Read the story.

“Mayor’s plan on guns appears to miss mark: Little impact seen for taking licenses,” by Michael Naughton and Hailey Heinz, Monday, April 23, page 1. Read the story.