

Ralph J. Begleiter

Ralph.Begleiter@udel.edu

Professional Biography

Updated: January 2018



Thumbnail

During two decades as CNN's "world affairs correspondent," **Ralph Begleiter** was the network's most widely-traveled reporter, covering five U.S. Secretaries of State and three Presidents. During the 1980s and 1990s, when CNN was the world's only global, all-news television channel, he covered U.S. diplomacy, interviewed countless world leaders, hosted the public affairs program "Global View," and co-anchored CNN's "International Hour." Later, he hosted the nationally broadcast PBS program "Great Decisions." He has worked in 100 countries on all 7 continents, including taking university students to Cuba, South America,



Turkey, the United Arab Emirates and Antarctica. At the invitation of the U.S. government, Begleiter has taught journalists in Cambodia, Thailand, Jordan, Syria and Taiwan, and has taught media-related classes for employees of the U.S. National Security Agency. During nearly two decades at the University of Delaware, he was founding Director of the Center for Political Communication, and brought more than 30 years of broadcast journalism experience to his award-winning instruction in communication, journalism, and political science. In 2004-5, Begleiter successfully used the Freedom of Information Act in the United States to prompt public release of hundreds of photos taken by the U.S. government of fallen American soldiers returning home from Afghanistan and Iraq in flag-draped caskets. The ban on visibility of returning casualties was lifted by the Pentagon in 2009. For this effort, in 2012 Common Cause of Delaware honored Begleiter with its John Gardner Lifetime Achievement Award. He frequently speaks to civic and community organizations, international affairs groups, universities and military institutions worldwide, including World Affairs Councils, the National Defense University, the Freedom Forum, Britain's Royal College of Defense Studies, U.S. military academies and embassy policy groups.

He holds an Honors B.A. in political science from Brown University, an M.S. in Journalism from Columbia University, and is a member of the National Honor Society, Phi Beta Kappa.

More...

For a decade, Begleiter hosted the Foreign Policy Association's public television series "Great Decisions," broadcast on many PBS stations from 2001-2004 and again from 2006 - 2012.

At the University of Delaware, Begleiter founded the Center for Political Communication, a leading-edge multi-disciplinary program of teaching, research and events focusing on the use of digital technology in campaigns and public affairs. He taught undergraduate courses in "Broadcast News," "Broadcast News Documentary," "Global Media & International Politics," "Introduction to Journalism" and special courses such as study abroad programs in Turkey in 2008, in Antarctica and South America in photojournalism and geopolitics (2003, 2005) and "Road to the Presidency" during election years. He also created and directed the university's "Global Agenda" and "National Agenda" public speaker programs. His "Global Agenda" classes for several years met weekly by videoconference with students in the Middle East - to discuss cross-cultural and media issues, and the classes conducted exchange visits to the United Arab Emirates and the United States. In 2002 he took UD students to Cuba on the 40th anniversary of the Cuban Missile Crisis.

He co-led the creation of a new journalism minor at UD in the mid-2000s, and spearheaded creation of a new minor in political communication in 2010.

As creator of both Global Agenda and National Agenda at UD, between 2000 and 2014, he personally brought to the University of Delaware some 140 prominent guest speakers including major media personalities and government officials from various departments (including Defense, the National Security Agency, the CIA, the State Department, the White House and Congress)... and from foreign nations (including Jordan, Israel, Egypt, Lebanon, Kuwait, Russia, Germany, France, Britain, and others in Africa, Asia and Europe.). Among those guest speakers were a president of the World Bank, a former chief of the National Security Agency and a genuine (former) Soviet KGB spy. These programs impacted some 50-thousand people, students and non-students who attended over the years.

At the invitation of the U.S. government, Begleiter has taught journalists in Cambodia, Thailand, Jordan, Syria and Taiwan, and has taught media-related classes for employees of the U.S. National Security Agency. He has also addressed journalists in many other countries and in Washington has helped train U.S. career diplomats studying public affairs issues at the State department's Foreign Service Institute. Begleiter has also taught on media and foreign policy at Georgetown University in Washington, DC and at Princeton University. He has served as a faculty member and resource specialist at a Salzburg Seminar session on "Mass Media in the Age of Globalization."

He has lectured for a wide array of organizations, including World Affairs Councils, the National Defense University, the Freedom Forum, Britain's Royal College of Defense Studies, the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, the U.S. Air War College, the U.S. Naval War College, the U.S. Army War College and embassy policy groups.

For almost two decades, Begleiter was CNN's World Affairs Correspondent based in the network's Washington Bureau, writing and producing thousands of news reports and programs aired worldwide. He helped pioneer global, all-news television, joining CNN in 1981. In 1994, he conceived and began hosting the weekly "Global View" program, a discussion of international issues seen worldwide on CNN International. He also co-hosted CNN's "International Hour," seen worldwide.

His CNN travels included visits to many areas of the then-Soviet Union, and to all of the now-independent states of the former USSR. Begleiter has also traveled extensively in Asia (including China, Vietnam, Thailand,

Cambodia, Mongolia, Japan, Taiwan, the Philippines, Indonesia and Korea), the Middle East (including Israel and most Arab nations), and Europe, and made less expansive trips to Latin America and Africa.

Among his CNN assignments, Begleiter developed and hosted "Cold War Postscript," a 24-part weekly program examining connections between the history of the Cold War and global affairs in today's world. In 1999, Begleiter broadcast "live" from the funeral for Jordan's King Hussein in Amman, as he did from Jerusalem in 1995 after the assassination of Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, whom he had interviewed just four days earlier. In 1997, Begleiter reported "live" from the Hong Kong/China border as Chinese troops arrived for the handover from Britain. In 1996, he hosted coverage of the "Summit of Peacemakers" from Egypt's Sinai Desert and contributed to CNN's awarding winning coverage of the Russian Presidential elections.

In August 1990, Begleiter became the first and only Western news correspondent ever to accompany a Soviet Foreign Minister, then Eduard Shevardnadze, interviewing Shevardnadze aboard his aircraft. He covered virtually every high-level Soviet-American meeting between 1983 and 1999.

Before joining CNN, Begleiter reported for WTOP AM-TV in Washington, D.C., then owned by the Washington Post Company. He began his broadcast journalism career in 1967 in Providence, Rhode Island, where he worked as a reporter and writer for WICE-AM and WJAR AM-TV, and served as News Director for Brown University's student radio station, WBRU-FM.

In 1994, Georgetown University's Graduate School of Foreign Service awarded Begleiter its Weintal Prize. He was named as a contributor to CNN's award-winning coverage of major global events, including the Gulf War (1991). In November 2000, editors of the Brown Alumni Magazine named him among the 100 alumni who have had "greatest impact... on the twentieth century." Other honors include awards from the National Press Club, the National Academy for Cable Programming, the Houston International Film Festival, the New York Festivals International Competition for Television, Film and Video Communication, the Associated Press and United Press International.