

# WHAT'S YOUR STORY?

RAPAPORT MAGAZINE ASKS THREE LEADING JEWELRY JOURNALISTS WHAT INSPIRED THEM TO CHOOSE THIS CAREER.

BY LEAH MEIROVICH



**JILL NEWMAN**  
CONTRIBUTING JEWELRY AND  
WATCH EDITOR, *TOWN & COUNTRY*

After graduating from journalism school, I joined *Women's Wear Daily* as a reporter and was assigned the fine-jewelry and accessories categories. Straight away, I was fascinated by jewelry — the family businesses, the historic brands, the natural resources and emerging artists. I was inspired by the characters in the industry, from David and Sybil Yurman's passion for their work to the way Nicola Bulgari protected his family legacy. Once I started to travel and see the diamond mines in Africa, cutting facilities in India and gem mines around the world, I was inspired by the stories, the people, the possibilities. I spent 20 years writing about jewelry for the *Robb Report*, where I had the opportunity to visit countless creative designers and jewelry houses. My latest obsession is pearls after visiting Jeweler's pearl farms off the Palawan islands and seeing firsthand how connected the future of pearls is to our environment. I'm also amazed by the way Claire Choisne, Boucheron's creative director, continues to develop and pioneer new concepts in high jewelry, creating a whole new language around wearable luxury. I'm especially excited about the new initiatives by the mining and jewelry companies around sustainability and ethical practices. We still have a long way to go, but there is so much good work being done and plans to make the industry more transparent.



**MICHELLE GRAFF**  
EDITOR IN CHIEF,  
*NATIONAL JEWELER*

I started my journalism career as a newspaper reporter and, later, editor in Atlanta, Georgia. I moved there from my hometown, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, right after college. I loved Atlanta, but by my late 20s, I came to understand that I had outgrown the city. I decided it was time to move on, so I quit my job and followed my best friend, Andrea, to New York City.

It was the fall of 2007 — right before the economic crash — and I was staying with another friend in Hoboken, New Jersey, while job hunting. One day, I spotted an online ad for “senior editor, diamonds” at a publication called *National Jeweler*, which at that time was owned by [global media firm] Nielsen. The ad described the job as challenging and mentioned opportunities for international travel. I was sold.

I can't say I ever really dreamed of a job as a “jewelry journalist” — or even knew such a career existed, to be frank — but I've found the industry to be interesting and, as promised, challenging, which is why I'm still here 13 years later.

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**ROB BATES**  
NEWS DIRECTOR,  
*JCK*

When I graduated college, I wanted to be a writer, not necessarily a journalist. (That's still a big interest; my first novel, a diamond industry mystery, will come out this year. More on that soon.) I saw an ad from Rapaport for a diamond writer. My grandfather was a diamond dealer on 47th Street, though he died about a decade before this. I told Martin Rapaport that I grew up with people in the business and knew a lot about it. Which was kind of BS, but I guess Martin pitied me and took me on board. Back then, his newsletter was six pages and had no ads, which is a huge difference from where it is now. From there, I went to *National Jeweler* and have spent the last 20 years [working] for *JCK*. I never dreamed I would be doing this so long; I remember [industry analyst and former *JCK* editor Russell] Shor saying the industry is like the Roach Motel: You check in, but you don't check out. I met my wife in this business, so staying in it ended up being a good move.

I don't know if I would have stayed in the business as long as I have if I hadn't worked for Martin. I was just out of college; what happened to [US jeweler] Zales [in the early 1990s] wasn't top of mind for me. But Martin would get so excited about it (“Oh my God. Zales has gone bankrupt”) and had such passion for it, he infused me with that passion, too.