

**TRO** FRIDAY, MAY 16, 1997

## ***Times Columnist Wins a Columbia Award***

The Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism has awarded the 1997 Meyer Berger award for distinguished reporting to Joyce Purnick of The New York Times for her Metro Matters columns on city life, the school announced yesterday.

Ms. Purnick, a veteran New York City newspaper reporter who is now deputy metropolitan editor at The Times, wrote the Metro Matters column from September 1994 to January 1997. In selecting Ms. Purnick, the prize jury cited her columns in 1996 for covering a "range of urban problems and people."

Professor Craig Wolff, the chairman of the jury, said in a statement: "Joyce Purnick's stories show a remarkable eye and ear for how the city moves in the large political arenas, but she does this without sacrificing the sense of intimacy and

empathy with her subjects."

The award is named for Meyer (Mike) Berger, the legendary Times reporter who founded the newspaper's About New York column and whose stories reflected a deep affection for the city and its people.

Ms. Purnick's last column said: "For two years and four months — these dates kind of stick with you — I have been writing the felicitously titled Metro Matters column to show how government touches the lives of New Yorkers, how it is no more theoretical for the public than for the politicians who serve them."

She added: "Writing this column has also been plain old fun at times, providing a platform for tweaking politicians, talking to perfect strangers about their lives, or recalling days and people now gone."

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