EAGLIN RETIREMENT COVERAGE BOTCHED

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Author: Buckner Hinkle Jr. | Page: A6 | Section: Feedback
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At issue | Jan. 7 Herald-Leader staff and wire report "Morehead president resigns; search firm will be hired to find 13th leader"

The Herald-Leader's coverage of Ronald Eaglin's retirement from the presidency of Morehead State University was disappointing, to say the least. The article's headline spoke of resignation, implying that Eaglin was forced from his position.

Such an implication is ludicrous. Eaglin is retiring after 12 years of distinguished service.

Although the Herald-Leader had ample opportunity to interview Eaglin or other MSU representatives before the paper's deadline, it did not do so. Instead, the article, which was not attributed to a specific author, merely parroted the university's press release -- with one disgusting addition.

For no apparent reason, except maybe a desire to find something negative to say, the paper added a paragraph, under the heading of "scandal," alleging that Eaglin's administration was "rocked" by criminal charges filed against university housing officials for failing to report an allegation of gang rape.

The article failed to explain how the administration was "rocked" -- perhaps because that is untrue. Moreover, it failed to mention that the criminal charges were dismissed. In truth, there was no scandal.

Since the Herald-Leader so seldom sends a reporter to campus, I fail to see how the paper could accurately characterize the incident in the first place.

In contrast, The Courier-Journal of Louisville and The Daily Independent of Ashland interviewed Eaglin and me, the MSU regents chairman. To see professional reporting, read those articles.

This is my second exposure to the Herald-Leader's less-than-arduous reporting. As a member of the legal team that represented the plaintiffs in the Kennedy Bridge litigation, which exposed criminal conduct within the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet, I observed that the Herald-Leader showed little interest as the story unfolded, while the state's largest newspaper and the other media interviewed and reported often.

The Herald-Leader rightfully aspires to be a first-rate newspaper. In this instance, its lackadaisical and intentionally negative reporting indicate that it has a long way to go.
Buckner Hinkle Jr. of Lexington is chairman of the Morehead State University Board of Regents.

Caption: - Ronald Eaglin will retire as president of Morehead State in December.