

MICHAEL D. BATES

February 10, 2009

To whom it may concern:

I would like to set the record straight regarding my Cityscope column in the January 15-21, 2009, edition of *Urban Tulsa Weekly*, which was given the headline "Tulsa Whirled," specifically concerning paragraphs dealing with the *Tulsa World's* circulation reporting and auditing practices.

I didn't contact the Tulsa World prior to publication to verify any of my research or statements for this column. As my column contained numerous errors, I would like to make the following corrections, clarifications and/or retractions:

- A. My column suggests that the Tulsa World was not audited by Audit Bureau of Circulation for nearly a decade. This is false. They resigned from ABC on March 18, 2002, renewing their membership three years later, with ABC audits resuming with the period ending March 31, 2006. I regret and retract this suggestion.
- B. My suggestion that they withdrew from ABC for any nefarious reason is unfounded. I have no knowledge or information regarding the reasons for their withdrawal from ABC.
- C. My statement that the Tulsa World retained "consultants" to provide circulation information is inaccurate and misleading. Prior to writing my column, I possessed information that identified Grant Thornton LLP as the selected auditing company. Grant Thornton is a well-known and highly respected auditing firm and I have no reason to question its auditing practices. I regret and retract any such statement.
- D. My suggestion that the actual circulation numbers were somehow "concealed" for a time is incorrect. The Tulsa World circulation was audited by Grant Thornton LLP and presented to advertisers during their absence from ABC. I have no knowledge or information regarding any attempt by the Tulsa World to "conceal" any aspect of their circulation or readership. I have no information to indicate that Grant Thornton LLP's newspaper circulation auditing procedures differed substantially from those of ABC.
- E. My suggestion that *Tulsa World* circulation was 20% higher in 2005 than in 2006 was incorrect. The actual decline, based on a paid circulation comparison, was between 5-6% as evidenced by their audits, and this percentage decline is consistent with the declines at other major daily newspapers.

F. Accordingly, the suggestion that *Tulsa World* circulation was “inflated” is incorrect. There is absolutely no evidence to support this claim. It was based on my misinterpretation of 2005 and 2006 circulation numbers. I have no knowledge or information regarding any attempt by the *Tulsa World* to “inflate” any aspect of their circulation or readership.

I realize now that I should have contacted the *Tulsa World* to determine if my information was complete and accurate. A simple phone call to their offices prior to publication of my column may have prevented this whole situation. I regret any doubt that these statements cast on the credibility of the *Tulsa World's* circulation figures or their circulation audits.

Upon being presented with the *Tulsa World's* information, I now realize the extreme action that they took in suing me and *Urban Tulsa Weekly* for defamation and disparagement and do not disagree with the *Tulsa World's* need to set the record straight. My research was flawed and information in my story was false and inaccurate, and I retract those incorrect statements. I apologize to the *Tulsa World* and the *Urban Tulsa Weekly*.

Lastly, any comments made on my blog and/or batesline.com regarding this instance should be disregarded as they may have given the unintended perception that the items in question were correct, when they are not.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Michael D. Bates". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the typed name.

Michael D. Bates