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NBC star calls for revival of local news

The backbone of democracy lies in the strength of local journalism, a famous broadcaster told students Tuesday at Southern Methodist University. Chuck Todd, former moderator of NBC's *Meet the Press*, spoke at 7 p.m. on Nov. 19 emphasizing the critical role community-focused reporting plays in keeping a society informed.

Todd, who visited campus as a special treat, pointed to the decline in local news outlets as a growing challenge for the media industry.

"We need about 30,000 new local news stations," Todd said, underscoring the need for revitalizing hyper-local journalism to cover everyday stories that shape communities.

"Think about Texas," he said. "High school football is a religion here, but there are some schools whose scores don't get reported because there's no one left to cover them."

Todd argued that without strong local reporting, many voices and issues are lost in the noise of national media, especially during political times.

He also reflected on the evolution of the industry and the growing challenges journalists face in maintaining public trust. "The media is fractured, but truth and accountability aren't optional," Todd said, adding that rebuilding trust starts at the local level.

His remarks resonated with students. Isabella Popo, a senior journalism major, said Todd's message reminded him why he wants to pursue community reporting.

"Hearing him say that local journalism can bridge gaps really hit home for me," Popo said.

Todd addressed the future of journalism during a Q&A session, where students asked how the industry can adapt in a digital age.

Grace Corwen, a sophomore student, said the speech inspired her to explore reporting untold stories in her hometown.

"I learned that local news isn't just about the news—it's about connection," she said.

Todd ended by encouraging aspiring journalists to embrace their roles as watchdogs and storytellers.

"If you're not there to tell the story, who will?" he said.

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