

# Student Interview

## *Joseph Lawrence*

### Biography

Joseph Lawrence graduated from the University of Colorado in 2020 with a BA in English rhetoric and a minor in film. He went into the field of education, teaching history, Latin, and poetry at a classical learning elementary school in Colorado Springs. In the 90s, Joseph's grandfather started a Christian book publishing company called Choice Publications, but when Joseph's grandfather passed away in 2014, so did the company. Joseph's grandfather was a very strong positive influence on



Joseph's life, instilling in him a love of literature and books. Joseph was always regretful that his grandfather's books had passed away with him.

After Joseph wrote his first book of dramatic poetry, *A Town of James*, his interest in reviving Choice began, both as a vehicle to self-publish this book and as a means of continuing his grandfather's legacy. Joseph launched the company with seven titles in January of 2021. He joined the GW MPS in Publishing program to complement these efforts, and Choice Publications has since added five more titles to its catalog. Choice will be exponentially growing in January 2025, and Joseph will be looking for freelance editors and publishers to support this expansion, hopefully gathering future staff from his fellow

GW students. Joseph feels very proud that as his business expands, so will his grandfather's legacy.

In his free time, Joseph enjoys writing poetry, reading classical literature, watching baseball, and going on as many nature walks as he can with his fiancé.

### **What does “ethics in publishing” mean to you?**

Professor Randy Townsend's amazing Ethics in Publishing course really helped me formulate my view on this question. For me, ethics in publishing is a careful balance between virtue and profit priorities. These are not mutually exclusive things, but they are often at odds with each other. Profit keeps the lights on, but virtue is what's worth highlighting. I try to balance my book catalog with works that don't sell as well but offer a message that aligns with the press's mission, and less mission-aligned works that do sell well. I will try to keep that balance in the future, using the more profitable titles to support mission-aligned works.

### **How would you describe your experience with the journal?**

My experience with the journal has been very uplifting. It's wonderful to work with my fellow students for a common goal. While I haven't had the chance to be very involved recently due to my engagements with my business, it was a privilege to work on the latest edition. The team leads in the journal are all very dedicated to creating a beautiful and informative publication.

### **What recent ethical topics in publishing are you interested in and why?**

I'm very interested in AI and publishing. I work in generative AI for Innodata Inc., so I get to see firsthand (and be a part of) large language models (LLMs) that are changing how we understand, write, and interact with the written word. Obviously, the ethical concerns that arise with AI and publishing are endless, particularly in the fields of copyright infringement, plagiarism, and our respect for originality. LLMs cannot function without people's materials. As LLM technology becomes more prevalent in publishing, conversations on AI use and ethics become more pressing.

**Do you feel that the classes you have taken so far have discussed ethics enough?**

Ethics has always been an important part of the classes I've taken. My favorite class so far has been Copyright Law in Publishing with Professor Puja Telikicherla. She doesn't shy away from all the technical and legally-complex material we need to know, but she always encourages us to view these materials from an ethical and empathetic viewpoint. I learned how to cut through legal jargon and look at copyright law's human impact, and I think that attitude has set a course for me for all my upcoming courses.

**What is something you would like to see the journal do in the future?**

I would love to see the journal become even more of a track to a career in scholarly publishing. This industry is all about connections, so offering more organized opportunities just to socialize with fellow volunteers would be very beneficial in that sense. We're all in this degree program to make our passions our careers; we should leverage that shared aspiration and look out for each other.