More to Come on Watergate Story

The Washington Post's exposure of the Watergate bugging of Democratic National Headquarters as the work of Republicans on the re-election committee of President Nixon will be "confirmed and expanded upon," confidently predicts the newspaper's woman president.

Mrs. Katharine Graham, who was a San Francisco waterfront reporter back in the 1930s, told the Commonwealth Club yesterday the Post definitely intends to keep on probing the "Watergate burglary" until it gets to the roots.

She said it was "just not true" the Post was motivated by any anti-Nixon feelings and a desire to elect Senator George McGovern.

'Major News'

"We covered it in depth because it was major news, an important story from a national standpoint," she said.

"We would have given it the same treatment regardless of which party or who was running for election."

Speaking at the Sheraton-Palace luncheon on "Fairness and Freedom of the Press," Mrs. Graham contended that much more than just Watergate bugging was involved.

She said the reporting was done "in the highest tradition of American journalism" as not only a guarantee of freedom of press under the First Amendment but also of the public's right to know.

Anonymous Sources

Mrs. Graham agreed that it was necessary to rely on anonymous sources but that cross-checking of the sources was diligently made. She said the Nixon administration also used anonymous sources and that its reaction at times to Watergate allegations amounted to "ambiguous and unsubstantiated denials."

Mrs. Graham, in the question and answer period, said a newspaper today must do more than answer "who, what, where, when and how" in handling a story.

To illustrate, she pointed to the late Sen. Joe McCarthy's daily stream of accusations about Communists in government. The simple "who, what so forth" approach to reporting would have just noted the accusations and would have failed to tell the reader that earlier statements of that kind by McCarthy had never been substantiated.

Therefore, she said, there is both a place and a need for what some call "interpretive reporting."