

~~XXX VII~~ (36)

" ADIEU, KIND FRIENDS, ADIEU."

~~RECEIVED~~

As Mark ~~xxxx~~ approached his sixty-<sup>fifth</sup> birthday, he began making plans to resign from the ~~Courier Journal and Times~~ papers and move on. He ~~himself~~ had established the rule when he first <sup>went</sup> came to Louisville: ~~and found a lot of old dead wood on the staffs:~~ Every employee at the Courier Journal and Times must retire at sixty-five, unless asked to stay longer for some special reason. He was thirty-nine at the time and never expected to reach such a hoary age as sixty-five.

Yet, his sixty-fifth birthday did come, but instead of it being a sad day of drastic changes, it was bright with two happy happenings. One was ~~he received~~ a letter, which had no bearing on the impending resignation, from Mark Jr. then editor of the Detroit Free Press. It read:

" Dear Pop, [all the children and grandchildren called Mark, Pop]

' #This is only an affectionate salute, sir, on your 65th birthday.

"It's been my privilege to know <sup>you</sup> you for nearly 37 years now, a span of time long enough to know you well, and see you change in vision and achievement ( as well as <sup>breath</sup> ) from a young man in his late twenties to your present ~~emx~~ eminence. In all that time you have been the best and finest kind of father anyone could wish.

" You have and still have your faults, I think, but they are faults of an excess of humanity and a desire for human betterment rather than faults of meanness and fear. If you have had one fault toward your children, it ~~was~~ perhaps been to offer too much to us, to want us to succeed, to want to ease too much our cuts and bruises.

Sometimes, in paradox, you have let us run into trouble <sup>aw</sup> rather than ~~to~~ seem to interfere.

" I know we have given you more than your share of trouble,

428-b Ethridge

but that, too, at least in part, you can blame on yourself. You taught us not to settle for the commonplace, the safe, the routine. You told us to try to use our own minds, to question, to challenge, and to strike out in new directions if the old did not seem good enough.

"If the results have frightened you and occasionally aged you before your time you can at least chalk it up to your credit that you were a good teacher.

".....I know you too well to worry that ~~your~~ the years ahead will be wasted, or that you will be any different, but I feel sure the Courier Journal will not be the same.

"Please use your next sixty-five years as well as you have the last, enjoy your time and the fruits of your labors, and worry for a change about yourself ~~in~~ instead of your offspring.

"On your birthday I wish you, sir, the very best ahead, and ask only that you remember that I, and everyone else who has ever known you, have long felt about you as Benet ~~it~~ wrote about Lee.

Bubber"

The other ~~was~~ <sup>that</sup> happy happening was the directors of the Courier and Times and other Bingham interests

Page Missing ?

It was certainly time for him to take charge. He was eminently capable and had the respect and warm affection of all those who worked for him.

"Nevertheless, it was a wrench to leave Kentucky. It was not easy to pull up roots that had been growing for so many years; nor was it easy to contemplate seeing less of the many friends to whom we had become so deeply attached. I had found Kentucky people to be lively, hospitable, gracious, adventurous, and kind <sup>ly</sup> unbelievably kind. And they were always ready to go, whether to a football or basketball game, a square dance, a picnic, a boat ride, a <sup>symphony</sup>, a concert, a horse race, a beagle hunt, or an ice-skating party."

Mark thought Kentucky the most beautiful of states. He <sup>once</sup> said in a speech ~~and~~ that Kentucky had "all her curves in the right place. North and South, she's as 'narrow as an arrow,' and East and West she's 'broad <sup>where</sup> ~~where~~ a broad should be broad.' Her lakes, her rivers, her mountains, her Purchase, her <sup>✓</sup> Pennyrile, her <sup>✓</sup> Bluegrass, are ineradically imprinted on my heart."

He admired greatly, too, Kentucky's gallantry, symbolized for him by the behavior of her people in the flood of 1937, when they turned out from every area of the state to help one another.

Best of all her intangible qualities was her tolerance. To his mind Kentucky was the spiritual inheritor of the great tradition laid down by Jefferson who, though denouncing the press on occasion, maintained that, if he had to make the <sup>choice</sup> ~~choice~~ between a government and a free press, he'd choose a free press.

The Jeffersonian tradition, as ~~it was~~ exemplified in Kentucky, went further than the right of the press to speak; it extended the right to everybody to have his say.

Mark felt this tolerance was basic to Louisville's race relations; Though <sup>she has</sup> ~~Louisville~~ in the past few years ~~has~~ demonstrated that her tolerance is not as broad and deep as Mark had always thought, in the forties and fifties and sixties she showed the most tolerant qualities. Her race relations were exemplary. Mark often bragged that, when he was wartime chairman of the Fair Employment Practice Commission, he received fewer complaints as to discrimination in employment from Louisville than from any other city, in spite of <sup>her</sup> ~~Louisville's~~ being one of the great industrial <sup>areas</sup> ~~cities~~ of the country.

On July 29, 1950 <sup>4</sup> four years before the Supreme Court decision on the integration of public schools <sup>4</sup> the ~~board of~~ trustees of the University of Louisville, a ~~municipal college~~ <sup>oldest municipal college</sup> and, incidentally, the ~~oldest~~ <sup>oldest</sup> in the United States <sup>4</sup> voted the demise of the Black Louisville Municipal College, which meant the integration of its students into the heretofore white University of Louisville. To the university's everlasting credit, the move was accomplished without ~~one~~ <sup>an</sup> single incident; furthermore, a distinguished Negro professor was immediately added to the faculty, with more to follow. This tolerance in race relations was also responsible for the calm manner in which Louisville accepted the Supreme Court order when it came. Kentucky had no Little Rock, Arkansas, and no Oxford, Mississippi.

Some magazine articles credited the papers with this smooth transition, but Mark denied <sup>that</sup> they were wholly responsible.



and David was living with <sup>his</sup> wife, Eleanor, and <sup>their</sup> one son, David Jr., in Chapel Hill.

Had they more than one?

Then, too, Mark was lured ~~there~~ <sup>Carolina</sup> by an offer of a lectureship at the University of North ~~Carolina~~, under the auspices of <sup>its</sup> the School of Journalism. Dean Neil Luxon when he learned Mark was considering retirement, extended him this offer, which pleased him greatly, ~~for~~ <sup>always</sup> he had ~~always~~ had a "yen" for teaching.

not then  
see p 458

We were planning to head for North Carolina in September 1963 ~~if~~ we had already bought a piece of land on Rocky River, <sup>22 miles</sup> ~~with~~ <sup>at</sup> ~~twelve~~ miles from Sanford, on which to build a house ~~at~~ <sup>but</sup> when

see p. 444  
likely = ...  
This is correct

on July 2, Alicia Patterson Guggenheim died after a supposedly simple operation ~~in New York~~ and Harry ~~called~~ Mark ~~and~~ asked ~~him~~ to come to Garden City in New York and take over Newsday.

see earlier ?  
re. his interest in that page p 414

Harry knew nothing whatever about the editorial and news ~~and~~ of the paper; he knew only the financial end. When Alicia had started Newsday, Harry had agreed to keep hands off the news and editorials, and Alicia had agreed to keep hands off the finances. They had adhered to this agreement so assiduously that when Adlai Stevenson ran for the presidency, they had had a stormy time of it. Alicia was enthusiastic for Adlai; Harry was violently opposed to him. Finally an agreement of sorts was reached. Alicia would support Adlai in the editorial columns and Harry would write a column, giving his opinion, on the opposite editorial page, ~~like any subscriber~~. This separation of ~~their~~ duties and interest worked well while Alicia lived; but now that she was gone, Harry was at a loss. He insisted he badly needed Mark.

would a subscriber read or the editor page? letters column perhaps

Mark flew to New York ~~to see him~~ and Harry <sup>showed him</sup> ~~took~~ a letter letter that  
~~out of his pocket~~ that Alicia had written <sup>she</sup> ~~him~~ and showed it to  
~~Mark.~~ Alicia certainly hadn't expected to die; she was years  
 younger than Harry and brimming with the vitality and the  
 excitement of living; the letter had been written just in  
 case. ~~It~~. In it Alicia said <sup>that</sup> if anything happened to her she  
 wanted her nephew, Joe Albright, to have a chance at running  
 the paper. He was young, ~~Harry told Mark,~~ and though he was  
 already working on Newsday, he needed a lot of training, and  
~~he~~ <sup>Harry</sup> felt Mark was the person to supply it. This challenge  
 appealed to Mark, ~~and so~~ he agreed to accept the editorship  
 for two years.

The New York Herald Tribune carried the announcement of  
 his appointment under the headline: <sup>W</sup> Mark Ethridge, 67, is  
NEWSDAY Editor. His old age was the real story; but the  
Tribune article also said: old OK?

"Mark Ethridge <sup>H</sup> one of the nation's most eminent  
 newspapermen, a son of the Deep South who pioneered for  
 integration in Kentucky <sup>H</sup> will become editor of Newsday....

"In his announcement Mr. Guggenheim said: 'I've convinced  
 Mr. Ethridge not to retire to academic cloisters when he  
 leaves the Louisville papers, although he will fill his  
 commitment to teach one day a week....

"Barry Bingham, editor and publisher on the Louisville  
 papers said yesterday, 'Mr. Ethridge told me two years ago <sup>H</sup>  
 his wish to retire, but I was fortunate in persuading him to  
 stay here in Louisville until this fall. I was especially B?



← eager for my two sons (Worth and Barry Jr.), to have the opportunity of active association with him..."

The news that Mark was leaving Kentucky and going to Newsday as editor brought on a monsoon of mail. It seemed as if every newspaperman in the country composed letters of congratulation or sent telegrams or called long distance. <sup>And</sup> ~~But~~ not only newspapermen; all the preachers of Garden City; all the political officeholders of Nassau County in which Garden City is located; the presidents of ~~Hofstra~~ <sup>Hofstra</sup> and Adelphi Colleges; Robert Wagner, the mayor of New York; Robert Moses, president of the New York World Fair Corporation; Kenneth Keating, senator from New York; James Farley, then chairman of the board of The Coca-Cola Export Corporation; Adlai Stevenson, then ambassador to the United Nations; indeed, an amazing number of people. And it is worth noting that so many of the letters spoke affectionately of Alicia.

Arthur Krock, who for so ~~many~~ many years was head of The New York Times Washington Bureau, wrote in part:

"You have set many records in our trade. But to still be wanted for a top job also, at the age of 67, is, I think, a record in journalism that is unique. In this business, the elderly, if subject to recruiting at all, are rarely in the position of finding room left at the top...."

"My congratulations, tinged with some envy, and every good wish to Miss Willie Snow and you in the lavish purlieus of Nassau County and on the tripod of Newsday that Alicia made distinguished...!"

Alfred Friendly, then the managing editor of the Washington Post, wrote:

"I'm delighted that you youngsters are still full of vigor and willingness to approach new and exciting fields...!"

From that piquant, memorable character, William C. Baggs, at the time editor of the Miami News, came this epistle:

"God Almighty, what splendid news drained down the pipe. [Harry]"

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✓✓ Ashmore, Ralph McGill, and I only worry how you gonna have us for a ham supper on Long Island.

"This is very good news to me and I am so pleased. In a personal sense I was a bit sad when I learned that you were retiring from this old black trade and going on a university campus, but I said nothing to anyone. I loved Alicia and though I am not in touch with that power described as 'The Celestial Edison' and do not know if the people in heaven can hear the noise from down here on our green ~~planet~~<sup>planet</sup>, I do believe that Alicia would have been so pleased to know that you are coming in to be editor of that newspaper."

Andrew Heiskell, chairman of the Board of Time, wrote:

✓ *another party - run in 1967*  
*both* "Congratulations! I have always thought that the young in spirit remain young forever. You are a fine proof thereof..!"

✓ And from Mark's old haunts  $\perp$  the offices of the Associated Press  $\perp$  Wes Gallagher, at the time general manager, said:

*both* "For a young man just trying to make his way in the world, you are certainly moving up the ladder rapidly  $\perp$  director of one paper, editor of another, and journalism professor on the side..!"

*both* Lastly  $\perp$  that is, of the letters from the "trade"  $\perp$  ~~was~~<sup>was</sup> this one from E.B. (Tommy) Thompson, editor of King Features Syndicate:

*both* "I have always wondered what a good newspaperman did when he went into retirement. Now I know. The New York newspapers of yesterday afternoon and this morning answered the question. It is gratifying you are going to take it easy and really enjoy life after September 15. Nobody but Mark Ethridge would have ever thought of deserting one office for two: trading an eight-column newspaper for a tabloid with distinctive and original column width, and commuting by plane from Long Island to North Carolina once a week. That's the way to slow down and take it easy. I knew you were that kind of man when I first met you back in

1927 across a washtub full of corn whiskey punch in the country club outside of Macon, Georgia..!!

And ~~now~~ not ~~really~~ from the "trade" but <sup>really</sup> the last one <sup>Old quote</sup> Adlai Stevenson wrote:

"Hurrah! I have just read the story of the important development in American journalism. What a joy it will be to have you and Willie Snow hereabouts! And what a relief to the dearest friends of Alicia and Newsday!"

~~I even wish I was man enough to dance with Willie Snow once more!~~  
4 More than the letters, Mark ~~received~~ <sup>was</sup> touched most deeply by a message from Eugene Bodner, secretary of the Louisville Mailers Union No. 99, especially since this was the only union that struck the papers during his twenty-seven and a half years as their boss. It said:

"Enclosed herein is a resolution which is self-explanatory...."

"This is a <sup>res</sup>olution from a segment of labor and sometimes feelings are deeper than one can visualize!"

"WHEREAS, Mark F. Ethridge was aware of the problems and struggles of organized labor in their infant years; and,

"WHEREAS, Mark F. Ethridge has consistently befriended the members within the house of <sup>labor</sup> ~~labor~~ for the appreciated years of his service at the Courier-Journal, and,

"WHEREAS, Mark F. Ethridge negotiated and signed the Louisville Mailers Union No. 99 original contract, and thereafter continued to recognize the Mailers' problems with courteous respect; and,

"WHEREAS, Mark Ethridge was not only an employer, but a very dear friend to the Mailers,

"NOW LET IT BE RESOLVED: The Louisville Mailers Union No. 99, by action of the September Union meeting, forward to Mark F. Ethridge a

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copy of this resolution, and furthermore, proceed at the next International Mailers Union Convention to issue an Honorable Journeyman Working Card' in the name of Mark F. Ethridge.

The resolution was signed by the President, John McCarty; Velt Embry, Vice-President, and Mr. Bodner.

Mark in his letter of thanks to Mr. Bodner assured him he would "carry the International Mailers Card with great pleasure."

Besides resolutions, letters, and telegrams, there were parties. The staffs of the Courier Journal and Louisville Times had a big dinner in Mark's honor at which they made speeches and read "testimonials" that Dean Eagle, the sports editor of the Louisville Times had solicited from old friends. Among those friends was no less a personage than President Truman, who by then was back in Independence, Missouri. He wrote:

"Dear Mr. Eagle,

In reply to yours of the 15th of August, I am very happy that you are honoring Mark Ethridge.

"He is a wonderful man, a good citizen, and a patriotic helper of presidents. I hope he has a long career and can help many Presidents. He was a great asset to me."

Then Barry gave a stag luncheon for three hundred at the Pendennis Club where two of Mark's closest friends, John Welburn Brown and John Tarrant, made clever, semi-kidding speeches, and the mayor of Louisville, William Cowger, presented him with Louisville's first Distinguished Citizens' Award. Mark, of course, responded. In all those many years in Louisville, he said, he had "carried on an open affair with the papers an affair of love, interest and pride."

Then there was a four-column story by Norman Isaacs, overlaid by a

on the front page of the Courier's Sunday section, The Passing Show,

large cartoon of a brilliant red devil with an excellent resemblance of Mark's head, done by the Courier's celebrated cartoonist, Hugh Haynie, on the front page of the Courier's Sunday section, The Passing Show. The story was headed, "Good-bye, Cherubic Devil" with the subhead: "Mark Ethridge packs his kindly brimstone to leave after 27 years with <sup>the</sup> papers."

"Not long ago a team of university researchers came to Louisville to study the city's leadership and find out how decisions are made.

Within a week, the leader had come to one firm conclusion.

Every city with any get-up-and-go, ~~Isaac said,~~ <sup>the researchers said,</sup> according to ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> ~~researcher~~ <sup>researcher</sup> has to have an official devil <sup>or</sup> some man with guts and a pitchfork, willing to call the shots as he sees them, and to prod the town into action. In Louisville, we've found out one thing <sup>or</sup> Mark Ethridge has been this city's unofficial official devil.

"Yet what a cherubic kind of 'devil' this one, who is packing up to quit Louisville as his base of operation after 27 years with these papers.

"In appearance he's just about average height, given to a paunch, his hair sparser than it was and now white <sup>or</sup> but his eyes as blue and youthful and twinkling as ever.

"He is one of the most approachable men alive, one of the most deceptively mild in conversation, with speech that still has the soft accent of his Deep South beginnings.

"He is gregarious to a fault. Over a drink he loves to sit and talk newspapering, preferably by the hour <sup>or</sup> or politics <sup>or</sup> or history. Given a party it won't be long before he will have everybody present singing <sup>or</sup> either with piano accompaniment, or acappella. He has never been able to carry a tune himself, but his charm is such that everyone else will leap to sing under what certainly must be the world's greatest amateur choral director.

"Behind all the charm, quick wit, and easy banter is one of the

The article continued?

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XX

keenest minds in public affairs.

"With everyone anticipating his retirement this fall, the Kentucky Press Association last winter asked him to make his farewell speech. Introducing him, I referred to him as what he is to all newspapermen: 'The world's greatest, living, working newspaperman.'

"News people understand that in its precise terms. There are men who grew up to become editors and/or publishers and stuffed shirts at the same time; men whose idea of journalism becomes one of suppressing stories for their friends and whose principles become elastic, depending on the pressures.

"Mark Ethridge has been a newspaper executive for well more than four decades....His concern for journalistic integrity has grown, not lessened. And his principles have never wavered in his life.

"Newsday, the nation's greatest suburban daily, on Long Island, where 'M.F.E.' is going to become editor, is going to think a cyclone has swept through after a few months of this young-old pro, who has given so much of himself to the building of the Courier-Journal and The Louisville Times.

"For he can spot a newspaper's strengths and weaknesses with piercing swiftness and begin the task of prodding staff people into action.

"Yet, for all this side, he also can be incredibly slow in 'moving in' on people. He likes to give them every chance. Often the chances pile up and up, and when the move does come, it is apparent to everyone what corporate patience can be like."

In the middle of September, heavy<sup>s</sup> hearted, Mark and I left Louisville. The day after our departure there appeared in someone's column I believe Floyd Edward's these moving lines:

is it correct in "?"  
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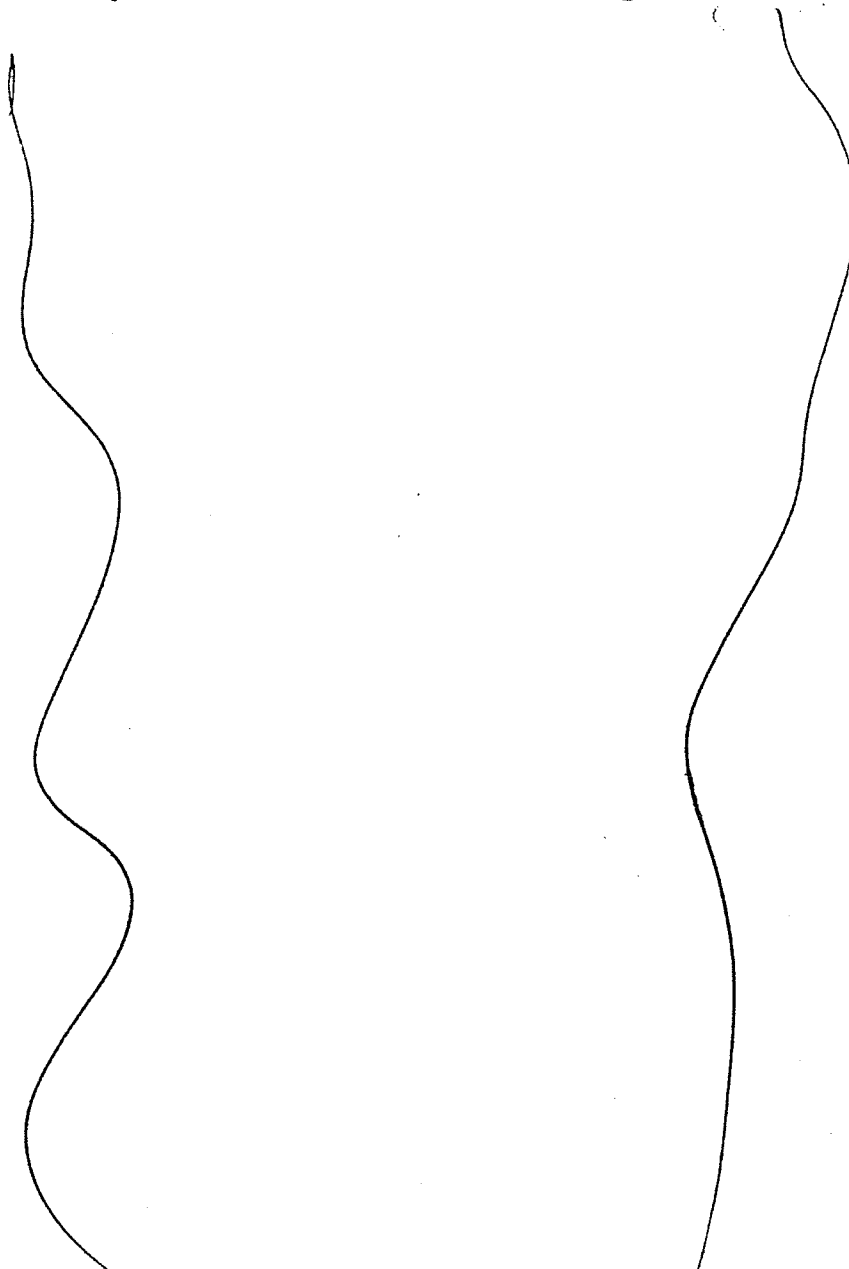
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Though brief, the note ~~xxxx~~ Mark received from Don ~~T~~oules, head of public relations for the papers, moved him as much as Norman's generous out-pouring. It said:

"I feel sort of like a fellow who's been basking in the sun for <sup>e</sup> eight years, and then the sun moves to the other side of the world. I hope I've soaked up enough to last ~~t~~ me a lifetime."

In the middle of September, heavy hearted, Mark and I left Louisville. ~~PS~~ The day after our departure, <sup>September 16, 1963,</sup> there appeared in ~~someones~~ ~~XXXXXX~~ column in the Louisville Times ~~XXXXXX~~ ~~I believe~~ Floyd Edwards' ~~touching~~ item:



"GOOD-BYE FROM ME: This is the first day here since 1936 without Mark F. Ethridge... He left this note on the bulletin board:

"When Ambrose Bierce, the poet, got tired of the world he walked into the desert and was never heard from again. I don't have the same motivation and I'm certainly not tired of you, but I have always envied the manner of his going. I hate to say good-bye, but I can't go without telling you what great joy and happiness I have had in my 27½ years here and how grateful I am to many of you personally and to all of you collectively for the warm and pleasant atmosphere in which I have worked.

"I will always be proud of these papers -- the best combination dailies in the United States -- of WHAS with its record of public service and civic consciousness, and of Standard Gravure, which has been a real pioneer in the field of local magazines and color printing, and of all of you who made the 'corner' [Broadway and Sixth] what it is. Sometimes when your voices are well lubricated, I hope you will take one more and sing for me:

"Adieu, kind friends, adieu,

^ I can no longer stay with you:

^ I will hang my harp on a weeping willow tree

^ And may the world go well with thee."