



Billy Earl Martin

August 19, 1932 - August 2, 2013

A memorial service for veteran newspaperman Bill E. Martin, 80, will be held at 2 p.m. Thursday at Christ Episcopal Church in Tyler. Martin, former publisher of the Longview News-Journal and the Lufkin Daily News, died on Friday in Tyler of congestive heart failure.

Billy Earl Martin was born in Bryan in 1932 the son of Madama and Frank Martin. His childhood was spent in Montague and Decatur. He graduated from Decatur High School in 1950 He earned a bachelor's degree in journalism education from the University of North Texas in 1953 before serving two years in the U.S. Army.

His newspaper career took him to four cities in Texas, two in Georgia and one in Ohio. Martin, described by associates as the quintessential newspaperman, often said he was happiest when he heard the press rumble and could feel the building floor begin to vibrate.

Martin signed on the San Angelo Standard-Times as a reporter in 1955 and steadily worked his way up the journalism ladder with stops as city editor, managing editor, editor and finally as assistant to the publisher.

"In my 62 years as a professional journalist I have never known anyone more dedicated to this profession and committed to making it an honorable cause to make society better," Tucker Sutherland said of Martin. "Bill came to work every day with a passion to do a good job and expected the same from all who worked with him. But I will remember him best as a rock-solid friend and co-worker that I could trust and depend on always."

Sutherland is the retired publisher of the Standard-Times.

While at the Standard-Times, Martin also was an adjunct faculty member at Angelo State University for 10 years. He taught journalism courses.

While editor of the Standard-Times, Martin hired David Easterly as a beginning reporter. More than 30 years later, Easterly, then president of Cox Enterprises hired Martin as publisher of the Lufkin Daily News. .

“Bill had a good heart as well as pithy sense of humor. He was a great guy and I was so happy in later years when I talked him into joining Cox.” Easterly said. “He was a perfect fit for our culture. He was bright, quick, funny and had no tolerance for corporate bull . . .”

Martin was highly respected in the news business and in 1976 his peers elected him president of Texas Associated Press Managing Editor’s Association.

In 1977, he married Reta Sue Boster. The newly weds immediately moved to Georgia where he was publisher of the Walton Tribune in Monroe, GA. In 1980, Harte-Hanks Newspapers named him president of its Georgia Newspaper Group in Carrollton, GA.

Martin returned to Texas in 1985 when he was named publisher of the Greenville, TX, Herald-Banner. From there, he was off to Mansfield, OH, in 1988 as publisher of the Journal-News. He came home to Texas again in 1989 as publisher of the Lufkin Daily News.

“Bill Martin was the ultimate community newspaper publisher,” said Caroline John, former vice president of community newspapers for Cox. “He cared deeply about excellent journalism, his readers and the bottom line. He was exceptionally smart, witty, and had little use for fools. But even those who fell into that category were treated with kindness.”

Martin moved to Longview in 1993 when he was named publisher of the Longview News-Journal. He served on the board of the Longview Partnership, Longview Economic Development Corporation, Greater Longview United Way, Action Longview, the President’s Advisory Council of LeTourneau University and the citizens advisory committee of Texas Eastman.

He was a member of the Longview City Council task force that recommended that the University of Texas establish a campus in Longview.

Martin retired in 1997, moving to Tyler several years later.

He is survived by his wife, Reta; a son, Patrick Martin and Susan Garrett of Dallas; a daughter, Shanna Russell and husband Rodger of Lubbock; a sister, Janice Cates and husband Burton of Fort Worth; a granddaughter, Shea Perry of San Angelo; great grandchildren Hayden and Haylie Perry of San Angelo; two brothers-in-law, Royce Ballinger of Marana, AZ. and Mart Ballinger and wife Judith of Durango, CO.

In lieu of flowers, the family suggests contributions to a favorite charity.

Previous Events

Mem. Service

AUG 8. 2:00 PM (CT)

Christ Episcopal Church
118 South Bois d' Arc
Tyler, TX 75702

Tribute Wall

PM

“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



patrick martin - August 02, 2023 at 11:23 AM

PM

DADDY'S FINEST TOMATOES! 8/2/2023

patrick martin - August 02, 2023 at 12:17 PM

MR

“ *Bill Martin, the husband of my sister Patricia, was my hero. I intended to spend my life working in the oilfields of West Texas before I met Bill. He showed me through example the importance of journalism. He was a tough editor who made reporters keep at their stories until the stories were accurate, fair and complete. He knew how to distinguish between truth and nonsense and he kept after sources until they told the truth. Because of Bill, I ended up teaching and practicing journalism for many decades. I couldn't and wouldn't have done that without his influence.*

I also learned the importance of ethics and moral behavior from Bill. He did not suffer fools gladly; he did not suffer unethical fools at all. Every time we discussed choices, either personal or professional, he opted for the ethical choice. He demanded ethical behavior from his reporters, public officials and others who crossed his path. I think of Bill when I need to make an ethical choice or when I see others behaving unethically. He was my hero.

Mike Ryan - November 30, 2020 at 12:45 PM

PM

“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



patrick martin - July 04, 2020 at 10:11 AM

PM

*My Father with his sister Janice
photo by Shanna Russell*

patrick martin - July 04, 2020 at 10:13 AM

PM

I'm still missing you.

Patrick Martin - August 02, 2025 at 04:57 PM

PM

“ *It is awful lonesome without you and Reta. i miss y'all all the time.
patrick*

patrick martin - September 17, 2016 at 05:29 PM

PM

“ 1 file added to the album daddy- click once 2 times



pat martin - July 30, 2015 at 08:39 AM

PM

“ 1 file added to the album daddy- click once 2 times



pat martin - August 02, 2014 at 08:11 AM

CM

“ In 1993, the day before I was to have surgery, Bill walked around introducing himself as our New Publisher of Longview News Journal. He caught me as I was leaving early that day to get ready for that surgery. I was on leave for 6 weeks, during that time he sent me a get well card for a speedy recovery. I thought that was the most thoughtful thing ever, we knew each for all but 10 minutes and he sent me a get well card and wrote look forward to my return. Upon my return to work, he came to my office gave me a hug, and told me how wonderful it was for me to back. I had never worked with someone who was so compassionate, not only to his work but his employees. You could hear his whistling echo through the building. Every day we worked together at Longview News he never failed to hug or say hello to me. Even when he retired and came to visit, he would come to my office to say hello and give a hug. I love Bill Martin and the person he was....I was truly blessed to have him touch my life. He will forever be missed.

Charlotte J. Minor
Former Longview News Journal Employee

Charlotte J Minor - August 09, 2013 at 02:17 PM

GD

“ *Gene and Carole Dixon purchased the Sacred Cross Bouquet for the family of Billy Earl Martin.*



Gene and Carole Dixon - August 07, 2013 at 09:21 AM

GF

“ *Between 1965 and 1969 I worked with Bill Martin at the San Angelo Standard-Times. Mr. Houston Harte was alive and very much in our midst each day. Bill Martin, Dale Walton, Ross McSwain, Elmer Kelton, Harry Wood, and so many others guided all us young eager journalists. Rena Pederson, Arnold Garcia, Kenneth Broadnax. . . and so many more of us received the best training in the business from these men. Two editions each day -- there was an excitement that is gone. Those of us who were guided by Bill will never forget his talent, humor, and most of all patience. God Bless You my friend. My deepest condolences to your family.*
Golda Foster

Golda Foster - August 05, 2013 at 01:13 PM



“ *Bill E. Martin taught me that journalism was more than just writing a story. It was about knowing people and what moved them to do what they do. It's a lesson that has served me well. My deepest condolences to the family of this remarkable man.*
Arnold Garcia Jr., Editorial Page Editor, Austin American-Stateman

Arnold Garcia - August 05, 2013 at 11:23 AM

CB

“ *Bill gave me my start at the Standard Times in 1970 when I didn't have a clue what I was doing. When I told him I wasn't sure he told me to "just do it", so I stayed. He was a good man and very fair. I always will remember Bill and be grateful for what he taught me.*

Carolyn Batten - August 04, 2013 at 11:26 AM