

st. clair news-aegis

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Circuit Clerk's



Thursday, April 13, 1972

Edmund R. Blair, Editor And Publisher, Passes

EDMUND ROBERTS BLAIR, editor of the St. Clair News-Aegis and the Leeds News, passed away Sunday evening, April 9, 1972 in the St. Clair County Hospital after an extended illness. He was 65 years old.

Edmund was born on July 29, 1906 at Henry Ellen, Alabama, which was located at that time between Leeds and the Old Red Diamond Mines. His father had been working there while as an engineer he was helping to lay out the railroad line that now runs from Birmingham to Atlanta. At an early age, Edmund moved to St. Clair County where he remained the majority of his life. Upon graduation from Pell City High School in 1924, he attended Birmingham Southern College and the University of Alabama where he was active in athletics. Since that time, he had devoted his life to public and industrial relations and journalistic endeavors.

He purchased the Pell City News in 1939, at which time consisted of only two pages. Later purchasing the Southern Aegis from the family of Bays Cather of Ashville and merged the two into the St. Clair News-Aegis, serving as its editor and publisher until the time of his death. He also served as the editor and publisher of the Leeds News.

Edmund was among the first of the newspaper editors of the State to support George C. Wallace for statewide political office. The editorial columns in his paper actively upheld States Rights Causes.

At the city and county level, he had served a four year term as a member of the City Council. While on the council he took the lead in constructing a new high school football stadium and was active in the successful effort to merge Pell City with the outlying communities of Eden and Oak Ridge; he was a past director of the Pell City Chamber of Commerce and a former member of the Pell City and St. Clair County Industrial and Development Board. Being very active in his county's concern for the betterment of their health facilities, Edmund, was one of the original sponsors of the St. Clair County Hospital.

Actively interested in all aspects of sports, Edmund established an award for scholastic achievement which is presented annually to a member of the Pell City High School football team with the highest scholastic standing.

Edmund served three times as Presidential Elector from Alabama (1948, 1960 and 1964). In 1948, as an Alabama Elector, he supported Senator Strom Thurmond of South Carolina for President instead of the Democratic Party nominee, Harry S. Truman. Later, he challenged the Party's "loyalty pledge" and won his case in the State Courts. The Supreme Court of the United States reviewed the case and upheld the "loyalty pledge". On another occasion, Blair, gave his electoral support to Senator Harry Byrd.

Admired by not only the citizens of this county, but by his peers for his journalist endeavors, he was named as recipient by United States Steel in 1964 to receive their first weekly "Journalist of the Year" Award. The citation commended him for "his long and effective work for the betterment of his community both through the columns of his newspapers and as an active civic leader."

He was a Master Mason (Ben M. Jacobs Lodge); a Shriner (Zamora Temple, Birmingham); Pell City Lions Club; and a member of the Barracca Class of the First Baptist Church, of which he had been president for the past three years.

In addition, he had the following affiliations: Past Potentate's Aide of Zamora Temple; Member of the Pell City Quarterback Club; Past President of the Alabama Press Association; Member of the National Editorial Association; Past President of Alabama Newspaper Advertising Association (ANAS); Past Chairman of the Board of Directors of ANAS; Member of Sigma Delta Chi (Professional Journalistic Society); Past Staff Member for Governors Frank Dixon and Chauncey Sparks; Lt. Col. Personal Military Staff of Governor George C. Wallace; Member of the Alabama State Sovereignty Commission; Member of THE CLUB Birmingham; Listed in Who's Who in Alabama; Charter Member of St. Clair Chapter 437 OES; Member of the St. Clair County Hospital Board.

He is survived by his wife, Mrs. Ethel G. Blair; two brothers, Dwight Blair of Leeds, Alabama and Carl Blair of Birmingham and numerous nieces and nephews. Funeral services were held Tuesday, April 11, 1972 at 10 a.m. from the First Baptist Church, Pell City with interment in the Valley Hill Cemetery. Rev. I. Cole Skelton and Dr. Austin F. Staples, Jr., officiated. Masonic Rites were performed by members of the Ben M. Jacobs Lodge of Pell City. Kilgroe directed.

Pallbearers were nephews of Edmund Blair. Honorary pallbearers were members of the Men's Barracca Class of the First Baptist Church and Sam Jones, administrator of the St. Clair County Hospital.

