Chronicling America

Members of the Mississippi Digital Newspaper Project advisory committee during an pre-opening tour of the Museum of Mississippi History saw an exhibit exploring the important influence of local newspapers at the turn of the 20th Century. Pictured are committee members (from left) Dr. Robert Luckett, Jackson State University; Layne Bruce, Mississippi Press Association; Charles Yarborough, Mississippi School for Mathematics and Science; LeAnna Dawson, Northwest Rankin High School; Timothy Gardner, Southaven High School; Mona Vance-Alli, Columbus-Lowndes Public Library; Marisela Madrigal, Jo Miles-Seely, project coordinator, and Jeff Giambrone, Mississippi Department of Archives and History; Dr. Stephanie Rolph, Millsaps College; and Dr. Jennifer Ford, University of Mississippi.

Newspaper digitization project in 3rd wave

JACKSON
A project aimed at digitizing 19th and 20th century Mississippi newspapers on file with the Department of Archives and History has moved into its third phase. The Mississippi Digital Newspaper Project was founded in 2013 with a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities. Further grants continued the project, which seeks to digitize newspaper archives between 1836-1922, in 2015 and the current phase in 2017-18.

Over 200,000 newspaper pages from 168 titles have been digitized in the first two cycles of the project. The newspapers included are from 39 counties from all regions of the state. The titles represent a wide variety of political and cultural affiliation, including Democrat, Republican, Whig, Constitutional Union, populist, Socialist, African American, women’s suffrage, agrarian, and temperance.

With newspaper holdings from 1801 to the present comprising more than 13,000 rolls, microfilmed newspapers at MDAH are some of the most frequently used records on file, according to project coordinators.

Genealogists, local officials, journalists, documentary producers,

Improveing revenue is focus of Mid-Winter

Nationally renowned sales trainer Ryan Dohrn will keynote the upcoming MPA Mid-Winter Conference this January in Jackson.

The event will be Jan. 25-27 at the Hilton Jackson and again kick off with the annual Celebrity Roast to benefit the program of work of the MPA Education Foundation.

Dohrn is the principal of Brain Swell Media and is the creator of the Selling Backwards and 360 Ad Sales System used by thousands of sales executives around the world. He has helped companies build over $500 million in sales revenues, overseen nearly 2,000 web site builds and has been hired as a professional business speaker for scores of national, regional and state trade groups. He recently covered the advertising and revenue track during the MPA-LPA Joint Convention in

Salter opens up about battle with cancer, return to job at MSU

Monroe Journal subject of j-student feature

Members of the Mississippi Digital Newspaper Project advisory committee during an pre-opening tour of the Museum of Mississippi History saw an exhibit exploring the important influence of local newspapers at the turn of the 20th Century. Pictured are committee members (from left) Dr. Robert Luckett, Jackson State University; Layne Bruce, Mississippi Press Association; Charles Yarborough, Mississippi School for Mathematics and Science; LeAnna Dawson, Northwest Rankin High School; Timothy Gardner, Southaven High School; Mona Vance-Alli, Columbus-Lowndes Public Library; Marisela Madrigal, Jo Miles-Seely, project coordinator, and Jeff Giambrone, Mississippi Department of Archives and History; Dr. Stephanie Rolph, Millsaps College; and Dr. Jennifer Ford, University of Mississippi.
PRESIDENT’S COLUMN

New year will bring Mid-Winter and effort to improve public meeting laws

WAYNESBORO

As we all push through the early deadlines and the hustle and bustle of the Christmas season, I wanted to remind everyone that the new year is just around the corner (as if you didn’t already know).

With that in mind, I want to encourage everyone to join us in Jackson Jan. 25-27 for the MPA Mid-Winter Conference. With the constant changes and challenges in our industry today, this conference will be extremely valuable to all of the attendees.

One of the key presenters at this year’s event will be Ryan Dohrn. A well-known sales and marketing expert, Dohrn will definitely help managers and sales reps get organized and motivated for improving their results.

In addition, there will be panel discussions on Friday, Jan. 26 to discuss topics such as new revenue from event marketing, niche products and magazines.

We’ve shortened the conference a little bit this year after reaching out to many of our members to solicit their input. One of the things we’ve heard over and over is that — especially during these difficult times — it is often times hard for a manager to pull his sales staff off the streets in order to attend those Friday morning sessions.

With that in mind, we’ve cut out the Friday morning sessions in the hopes that more sales reps can make it to the afternoon session and then join us on Saturday morning, along with attending the BNC Awards Luncheon that day.

I would remiss if I didn’t also mention that we will be “roasting” Attorney General Jim Hood the night of Thursday, Jan. 25. Please make plans to attend this important event, which serves as the biggest fundraiser of the year for the Education Foundation, which provides numerous scholarship and internship opportunities for many of our members.

As we roll into the new year, we also want you to know that MPA is working to strengthen the opening meetings laws during the next legislative session. While a formal bill has not been drafted to date, we are going to ask the legislature to create a law that will nullify any action taken in a meeting that is later found to be in violation of the act. MPA has long fought to strengthen the opening meetings and open records laws in the state, and it is a battle that has to continue. Your Association is also continually monitoring and working against any bills that may affect public notices and having them published in local newspapers. All three of these issues are vital to our members on many levels, which is why we will continue those fights.

We can’t be successful in these battles without each member working as a teammate to help us in these fights. That makes attending things such as the Mid-Winter Conference so vital to our members. It is there that you hear about the many issues, share ideas and help develop solutions that benefit the entire membership.

I look forward to seeing many of you in January at the Jackson Hilton Jan. 25-27. If you can only come for one day, we welcome you.

Meanwhile, good luck with all the Letters to Santa, the Christmas Greeting sections and the myriad events to be covered. As Secretary of State Delbert Hosemann recently wrote to me in a personal letter, “Newspapers are the voice of the community!” It is during seasons such as Christmas when we prove that time and time again.

Merry Christmas to you and your family, and here is hoping that you have a very Happy and Blessed New Year.

MPA-MPS President Paul Keane is publisher of the Wayne County News in Waynesboro. His email address is publisher@thewaynecountynews.com

Supreme Court sides with newspaper in DMR case

JACKSON

The Mississippi Supreme Court on Nov. 16 ruled in the Sun Herald’s favor in a long-running battle between the media company and state officials over records from the Department of Marine Resources.

The court found that Chancery Judge Jennifer Schloegel correctly ruled the records are public records created during the course of DMR business, not investigative records exempt from the state’s Public Records Act as state officials claimed. The court sent the case back to Schloegel to enforce her original order.

Henry Laird, attorney for the Sun Herald, said the ruling should help media companies across the state.

“That holding is very helpful to journalists,” he said. “Also, the holding is helpful in that you can’t convert records to criminal records after a subpoena.

“This decision, again, narrowly construed an exemption to the Mississippi Public Records Act and says that these are public records. If a state agency or city government has records that are turned over to investigate a crime, they’re not criminal investigative records."

Investigative records are exempt from disclosure.

The Supreme Court also ordered the Office of the State Auditor to pay the Sun Herald’s legal fees of about $37,000.

The state Court of Appeals last year reversed Schloegel’s 2013 decision that the records were public records and her decision to hold state Auditor Stacey Pickering, his investigators and the DMR in contempt for failing to turn over the records as she ordered.

The Sun Herald then appealed that decision to the high court. The Supreme Court ruled that only Deputy State Auditor David Huggins was in contempt and ordered him to pay a $100 fine.
MID-WINTER CONFERENCE

Attorney General is honoree at Celebrity Roast

Mississippi’s top law enforcement official will be roasted by the state press association at a January benefit for its education foundation.

Attorney General Jim Hood, a Democrat first elected to the job in 2004, will join the ranks of other notable Mississippians such as cartoonist and author Marshall Ramsey, Secretary of State Delbert Hosemann, Mississippi State University President Dr. Mark Keenum, and former state Supreme Court Justice Reuben Anderson in being roasted to raise funds for the program of work of the Mississippi Press Association Education Foundation.

The event will be held Jan. 25 at the Hilton Jackson at the outset of MPA’s Mid-Winter Conference.

“We're very appreciative to the Attorney General for accepting our invitation to be roasted,” said MPAEF Chairman Joel McNeese, publisher of The Calhoun County Journal. “We know it will be a fun and entertaining evening for a cause very important to us.”

Jim Hood

Panelists for the event include former Mississippi Attorney General Mike Moore, former Arkansas Attorney General Dustin McDaniel, Greenwood attorney Lee Abraham, Deputy Mississippi Attorney General Onetta Whitley, and author and editorial cartoonist Marshall Ramsey.

A Chickasaw County native, Hood formerly was a law clerk at the Mississippi Supreme Court and a special assistant attorney general. In 1995, he was elected the district attorney for seven counties in North Mississippi. As attorney general, he prosecuted the 2005 case against Edgar Ray Killen, accused in the murder of three civil rights workers in 1964.

Hood serves as a past president of the National Association of Attorneys General (NAAG) and leads several NAAG committees. He serves on the Board of Directors for Jason Foundation, which is dedicated to preventing teen suicide, the National Association of Model State Drug Laws, and as a Non-Regional Director for the National White Collar Crime Center (NW3C).

He and his wife, Debbie, have three children, Rebecca, Matthew and Annabelle Leigh. Tickets for the roast are $80 each, or a table of eight is available for $600. Corporate sponsorship opportunities are also available. Visit mspress.org/event/roast for more information or to buy tickets.

AGENDA

PRE-CONGRESS
THURSDAY, JAN. 25
3 pm MPA Education Foundation Board Meeting
6 pm MPA Legislative Reception
7 pm MPA Education Foundation Celebrity Roast Honoring Attorney General Jim Hood

FRIDAY, JAN. 26
9 am MPA-MPS Board Meeting
11 am Opening Session and Welcome
1:15 CONCURRENT SESSIONS
» Newspaper Sales Boot Camp – Presenter: Julie Darling
» Magazines and Niche Products Panel Discussion – Presenter: Diane Makamson
» Magazines and Niche Products Panel Discussion – Presenter: Diane Makamson
2:30 Coffee & Cookie Break
2:45 CONCURRENT SESSIONS
» Newspaper Sales Boot Camp continues
» Event Marketing Panel Discussion – From cooking shows to sports award banquets, hear from newspaper members who've succeeded in branding and building revenue with special events.
4:00 Networking Hour — Visit one on one with peers and colleagues in a fast-paced hour of sharing your best ideas. Refreshments and great conversation.
6 pm Reception & Wine Pull Benefit
7 pm Dinner on Your Own

SATOYDAY, JAN. 27
8 am Registration desk opens
9:15 CONCURRENT SESSIONS
» Why Buy Now? Learn the top 10 reasons an advertiser should start advertising right now. This workshop is focused on handling client objections and creating compelling arguments.
10:30 Break & Check-Out
10:45 CONCURRENT SESSIONS
» Flipping Objections on the Spot! Objection handling is a skill that all sales people need to master. Successfully answer the six most common objections media sales people face on a daily basis and flip those objections into closed deals with ease and style.
2 pm Conference adjourns

BYLINES & DATELINES

Jackson
David Karabag has been named director of sales for the Clarion Ledger and Mississippi Media. He previously was a group sales manager for C-L parent company Gannett, Inc.

» Mississippi's Crime Stoppers chapters have closed deals with ease and style. People face on a daily basis and flip those objections into compelling arguments.

Ridgeland
Harvey Parson has been named managing editor of Mississippi Today, the digital news site located in Ridgeland. A native Mississippian, he most recently was copy desk operations manager for Cox Media in Dayton, Ohio.

Magee
Pat Brown, publisher of The Magee Courier and Simpson County News, was the Community Award recipient at the annual luncheon of the Mississippi Coalition Against Domestic Violence in Jackson. He serves on the board of the MCADV Member Shelter program.

Cleveland
Diane Makamson, publisher of The Bolivar Commercial, was recently presented the S.E. Kossman, Jr. Award for service by the Cleveland-Bolivar County Chamber of Commerce at its annual banquet.

New members
HottyToddy.com was recently approved as the newest Digital Affiliate Member of MPA. Two new Associate Members were also approved: Venture South Media, publisher of Laurel-based Venture South Magazine, and Reeves Consulting, a Vicksburg-based editorial and design consulting firm.
Digitized newspapers engrossing record of history

This is probably a surprise to no one, but I’ve been a newspaper junkie since I was a kid. Even as a teen working at my hometown paper, there was nothing I enjoyed quite like flipping through archived copies in the morgue.

My preference was to look through bound editions from the years after my birth (naturally) and read about and see pictures from important news stories that took place in our town.

As time marched on and I began to move to other communities and other newspapers, I’ve grown to enjoy looking through bound copies of papers for which I once worked. Rarely a visit to the Times Leader in West Point or The Star-Herald in Kosciusko would pass without me ending up with my nose in the archives.

So imagine my delight recently to find copies of The Star-Herald dating to the 19th Century available in digital form online at Newspapers.com.

That company has entered into an agreement with Emmerich Newspapers a while back that led to the digitization of about two dozen newspaper titles in Mississippi, making thousands and thousands of local newspaper pages from as far back as the late 19th century available for viewing online.

The cost of subscribing to Newspapers.com is about what one would expect to pay for a month of streaming HBO or Netflix. But to an avowed junkie like me, it is a bargain.

In addition to the Emmerich titles, which include papers in Greenwood, McComb, Greenville, Charleston, Winona and scads more communities, the entire library of the Clarion Ledger and its forerunner newspapers are available through the service, including the Jackson Daily News. Having access to the capital city newspapers is like a time capsule of the 20th Century at your fingertips.

THE PAPERS AND pages on Newspapers.com come from the microfilm holdings at the Department of Archives and History in Jackson. Those records include millions of newspaper pages from three centuries, and all of it is available for viewing by the public.

But microfilm, as innovative as it was in the 1960s, is now arduous and requires one being physically present at the MDAH to view the files. Meanwhile, newspapers are finding new streams of incremental revenue by allowing vendors like Newspapers.com to digitize the microfilm holdings.

It’s a win-win situation for both newspapers and the public who may be interested in community and state history.

And while Newspapers.com and similar services require a subscription to view newspapers housed on their sites, there are millions of newspaper pages from the 1860s-1922 available for viewing free at ChroniclingAmerica.loc.gov, which is a joint project of the Library of Congress and National Endowment for the Humanities.

FOR ABOUT four years now I have served on the Mississippi Digital Newspaper Project committee that prioritizes newspaper records on file at MDAH for digitization through the Chronicle America program. Cycles I and II of the program, conducted in 2013 and 2015, have already digitized over 200,000 pages from the Civil War period up to 1922, which is the year in which copyright laws were enacted.

We’re entering Cycle III of the program now, which will focus on African American newspaper titles in the post-civil war period leading up to civil rights, as well as more specialized titles that catered to political parties – be them Republican, Democratic, Socialist, Whig or other. We expect to be able to digitize another 100,000 pages through the Cycle III grant.

Like I said, the pages on Chronicling America are available to the public for viewing at no charge. It’s a fascinating look at history as it was written in our state and across the country.

And for those who don’t mind paying for access, the more current pages on Newspapers.com are engrossing. I’ve lost more than one afternoon reading through old stories I either wrote, edited or simply remembered.

It’s a cheap way for a news and newspaper junkie to get his fix.

Layne Bruce is executive director of MPA-MPS. His email address is lbruce@mspress.org. Follow the Association on Twitter @MPAnewspapers.

Monroe newspaper committed to community, embraces technology

By TUCKER ROBBINS
Meek School of Journalism & New Media

AMORY

Innovation and creativity are top priorities for the Monroe County Journal’s Managing Editor Ray Van Dusen.

“From the front page to the back page, everything is about Monroe County,” he said.

Since his start with the Monroe Journal in 2009, it has just that. Today’s journalism industry has obstacles, and there is only one constant in the business – change.

Van Dusen said when he was first hired at the newspaper, there was no internet. If he needed it, he would walk to the city library. Today’s challenges are more audience-based.

As the only full-time news writer for the newspaper, Van Dusen covers all things in the county, from local government to the obituaries.

“Not every single person is going to care about it,” he said, “but we’re going to put it out there.”

A typical week for Van Dusen and the newspaper staff begins on Tuesday afternoon with a budget meeting to discuss the agenda for the upcoming deadline. The staff discusses topics, such as advertisement sales, pitching story ideas and events – like the upcoming Chilifest or open house – to stay ahead in the game.

Van Dusen later returns to his office to begin uploading content to the newspaper websites. All of their photos are uploaded for purchase to bring in more revenue.

“We can sometimes have a lot of courtesy photos,” Van Dusen said as he finished uploading the week’s pictures, “but, really, I prefer if we take our own photos, because it’s the headlines and the pictures that draw people in.”

On a second website, Van Dusen strategically plans when to upload articles before the next deadline. Although the paper is moving more towards digital, he prefers the nostalgia of print.

“Do we embrace the
Salter back on the job at MSU after cancer battle

By ZACK PLAIR
The Commercial Dispatch

Editor's note: This story appeared in the Thanksgiving Day edition of The Commercial Dispatch in Columbus.

STARKVILLE
The Saturday before Thanksgiving, Sid Salter placed flowers on his parents’ graves at a cemetery in his native Neshoba County.

Beside their plots is his own, one that remains empty since Salter is still “on the right side of the grass.” He reflected on that fact a bit longer this time than in past visits, he said, and for good reason. After the last six months, being alive is something he’s unlikely to ever take for granted again.

Salter, 58, talks a little softer than he once did. He walks a little slower, too, using a cane when he’s changing elevations because he still has trouble with balance.

He’s 65 pounds lighter than he was in May, though he’s starting to regain both weight and strength. His hair is gone.

But Salter, as he learned last week, is cancer free -- news that effectively ended a six-month battle where he kept telling himself losing “wasn’t on the agenda.”

“Cancer can come to dominate your thoughts,” he said. “For the last week, I’ve enjoyed cancer not being the first thing I think of when I open my eyes in the morning, ... Every day feels more normal. I’m thankful for that.”

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SALTER, ONCE ONE of Mississippi’s best-known journalists, has served as Mississippi State University’s chief communications officer since 2012.

Up until this year, he’s been one of the state’s most prolific political voices for nearly three decades, with his weekly syndicated column publishing in newspapers across Mississippi.

In early May, he committed to delivering commencement addresses to the spring graduates of Jones County Community College in Ellisville when he started feeling under the weather.

He and his wife, Leilani, noticed knots forming on the side of his head, and though he felt increasingly worse, he white-knuckled through the speeches and drove home on a Friday to Starkville where he tried to sleep it off. By then, his jaw was swollen.

A nurse practitioner at an Urgent Care he visited the following day thought it might be mumps. His regular doctor, whom Salter saw two days later, referred him to a hematologist at North Mississippi Medical Center in Tupelo because his white blood cell count was three times the normal amount and constantly rising.

By the end of that week, Dr. Jiahuai Tan had diagnosed Salter with Stage 4 Burkitt lymphoma -- an aggressive non-Hodgkins lymphoma that had already involved 57 percent of his cells. Tan gave him a 65 percent chance of survival.

Between Sid and Leilani, they have four grown children and five grandchildren -- with hopes of more grandchildren in the future. Thinking of them, Sid said, gave him much-needed motivation.

“You can say ‘Woe is me’ or you can bow up and fight,” Sid said. “I have a lot to live for, and it’s not in my nature not to fight.”

Chemotherapy began immediately, including around the clock treatment for 14 days. He gave up his column, which he started writing in 1978, after his treatment began.

When he felt strong enough, he walked down the hospital hallways pushing an IV pole.

After that first round of chemo, a PET scan showed the cancer still inhabited 50 percent of his cells.

“That was kind of a ‘Come to Jesus’ moment with the fight we were in,” Sid said. “But it was headed in the right direction.”

LEILANI, WHO HAS been married to Sid since November 2005, knows every date of the cancer battle by heart.

She knows the name of every chemical used for Sid’s treatments and the detailed results of every scan. Her husband never spent a night at NMMC where she wasn’t sleeping on the couch in the room beside his bed.

It was a role reversal for Sid, whose first wife Paula died from multiple sclerosis in spring 2005. Paula battled the disease for 22 years, spending the last 10 mostly bed-ridden, and Sid served as primary caretaker for her and their daughter, Kate.

When Sid’s cancer treatment began, though, he had to watch Leilani play his old position.

“I never wanted her to have to do that,” he said. “But she did it with an incredible amount of love and compassion. When the indignities of chemo came, she was there and went through it with me. ... I can’t emphasize enough that I couldn’t have survived this without her.”

Leilani said she did whatever she could -- things like helping nurses put ice packs around his neck and shoulders when he got too hot. Sometimes being there was all she could do, as she watched the disease and the treatment ravage her husband’s body.

“I didn’t let him see me cry,” she said. “But I cried a lot when he was asleep. Sometimes, my thoughts when I laid down were so overwhelming that I couldn’t even find the words to pray.

“... But we were both in battle mode,” she later added, tears welling up in her eyes as she remembered. “We were just bound and determined to beat it.”

AFTER THE INITIAL two-week round of chemo, the Salters lived their lives in three-week loops until the last chemo treatment on Oct. 23.

There was a week of treatment, a week of Sid being at home ill from the treatment and a week where he started bouncing back just in time to do it all again.

If he could stand, he went to work, even though it wasn’t particularly in line with his doctor’s or wife’s recommendations.

He even continued to take media requests during his treatments, though he took special note to mention all the reporters he spoke with expressed concern and empathy.

His bosses -- namely MSU President Mark Keenum -- and Sid’s staff at the Office of Public Affairs were also very supportive, he said. When he couldn’t make it to his office, he often attended staff meetings via video conference.

“The only time I felt normal was when I was working,” he said. “I could’ve gotten annoyed by the media calls in the hospital, but I didn’t. When I was talking to reporters and editors, I wasn’t thinking about cancer.”

Sid, an MSU graduate who “bleeds Maroon and White,” also found an unlikely confidant while he was battling Burkitt lymphoma -- a “Rebel” who shared friendly words and sometimes frank advice.

“The only person I knew who had this type of cancer and survived it was (former Ole Miss Chancellor) Dan Jones,” Sid said. “He kind of became my spirit guide and was instrumental in
Sellers, publisher of George County Times, dies at 81

O.G. “Buddy” Sellers and his wife, Sheila, on an MPA trip to Washington in 2013

LUCEDALE
Oscar Garnett “Buddy” Sellers, owner and editor of the George County Times, died on Friday.
He was 81, and died at George Regional Hospital after suffering a heart attack, the newspaper reported.
Sellers’ grandfather started the weekly newspaper 113 years ago, in 1904.
Sellers was a Mississippi College Graduate and a U.S. Army veteran. He was a member of the 82nd Airborne Division, according to his obituary, posted online by the Sigler Funeral Home.

He was a member of the First United Methodist Church of Lucedale, where funeral services are set for Tuesday. Visitation starts at 9:30 a.m. followed by the service at 11 a.m.
Instead of sending flowers, his family asks that friends consider giving to the Mississippi Press Association Education Foundation for scholarships, grants or internships, or the Men’s Sunday School Class at First Methodist Church of Lucedale.
Sellers’ life was enriched through the years by friends he shared coffee with and by his golfing buddies, his obituary said.

Survivors include his wife Sheila, daughters and newspaper employees Tanya Sellers and Garnett Colburn, and stepdaughter Kim Winesett. Garnett Colburn is the newspaper’s assistant publisher.
Sellers and his father, the late Ernest Garnett “Cotton” Sellers, were featured in the 2017 Gingham Tree print in an illustration that showed the men in front of the newspaper office in days gone by.
The print was the featured art for the annual Gingham Tree Arts and Crafts Festival, held Nov. 11. The festival is a fundraiser of the Lucedale Fine Arts Club to benefit George County Schools.

O.G. “Buddy” Sellers and his wife, Sheila, on an MPA trip to Washington in 2013

Biggs, longtime publisher, former Iuka mayor, dies

IUKA
John H. Biggs, 87, former Iuka Mayor, City Judge and businessman died Thursday, July 20, 2017 at Southern Magnolia Assisted Living in Iuka.
After serving in the U. S. Army, he and his wife, the former Daisy Daugherty and daughter, Charlotte, made their home in Iuka and Biggs went to work at the local newspaper office in 1953 as a pressman. He continued his career in the newspaper business purchasing Iuka’s local newspaper “The Vidette” in 1969 and began publishing “The Tishomingo County News – The Vidette.”
Mr. Biggs’ political career began in 1965 when he was elected to the seat of Alderman. Two years later in 1967 he was elected Mayor following the resignation of Mayor George Cutshall, who had been elected county sheriff.
Beginning his long career in 1969 he served the people of Iuka for 20 years until his retirement in 1989.
Biggs was a member of the Iuka United Methodist Church, a United States Army Veteran, a 60 year member of Iuka Lodge #94 F&AM, and a member of the Hamas Temple in Meridian. He worked with the Mississippi Department of Transportation in the early 1950’s and traveled throughout Mississippi making friends.
Funeral services were at 4:00 p.m., Saturday, July 22, 2017, at Iuka United Methodist Church, officiated by Rev. Kerry Powell with a personal remembrance by Coach Jerry Long. Interment followed in Oak Grove Cemetery. During viewing on Friday evening, the Color Guard from the Iuka Police Department,: Chief Randy Stringer, Jamie Stuart, Chuck Dean, Randy Trim, and Ricky Cornelison proudly stood vigil over the body of the former Mayor.
Cutshall Funeral Home of Iuka, MS was entrusted with arrangements.
Pallbearers were nephews, Derrick Tapp, Jon Tapp, Glenn Tapp, Nick Tapp, John Dennis Daugherty, and Gary Biggs. Honorary pallbearers were Charles Biggs, Larry Biggs, Dale Tapp, Chris Daugherty, and Billy Franks.

Mr. Biggs is survived by his daughter, Charlotte McVay, and husband Jimmy of Iuka; his sister, Mary Louise Biggs of Iuka; his grandchildren, Hayley Franks of Iuka and Brandy Dodd and husband Chris of Knoxville, Tennessee; and his great grandchildren, Kathy Franks, Leigha Brown, and Charlotte Dodd.

He was preceded in death by his wife, Daisy Daugherty Biggs; his parents: Charlie and Blanche Davis Biggs; three brothers: Howard, Jesse, and Alton Biggs and two sisters: Rayma Biggs and Alma Ruth Daugherty.

Memorial contribution can be made to the Iuka United Methodist Church, Shriners Children’s Hospital, or St. Jude Hospital.

Winter

From Page 1

Biloxi.
Also on the Mid-Winter agenda is a boot camp for newspaper sales reps, covering the basics of time management and prospecting, as well as round table sessions and panel discussions on niche products and event marketing.
Friday evening’s reception will include another Wine Pull benefit for the MPA Foundation. The event will also include the traditional Silver Dollar Breakfast Idea Exchange and culminate with the presentation of the Better Newspaper Contest Advertising Awards.
Nightly rates at the Hilton Jackson are $99. Information on registration and hotel reservations can be found online at mspress.org/midwinter.
When does a political tweet become defamatory?

United States Supreme Court Justice William Brennan traced the history of public debate about political affairs in our nation in 1964 in the landmark decision New York Times Co. v. Sullivan, concluding that public officials could recover for defamatory statements about their conduct in public office only if they could prove that the statements were false and that the speaker subjectively knew that they were false. In Sullivan, he famously wrote that in our country there is "a profound national commitment to the principle that debate on public issues should be uninhibited, robust, and wide-open," permitting "vehement, caustic, and sometimes unpleasantly sharp attacks on government and public officials." In the most recent presidential campaign and the first year of his term of office President Trump has vigorously exercised this principle in social media such as Twitter when responding to his critics.

A recent example is President Trump’s tweet about U.S. Senator Kirsten Gillibrand (D.-N.Y.), subjected to much scrutiny of late. Here’s the tweet: “Lightweight Senator Kirsten Gillibrand, a total flunky for Chuck Schumer and someone who would come to my office “begging” for campaign contributions not so long ago (and would do anything for them), is now in the ring fighting against Trump. Very disloyal to Bill & Crooked-USED!"

One reporter wrote in The Washington Post that this was “a (clearly intentional) sexually suggestive and demeaning comment” about Sen. Gillibrand. Others have gone further using more far colorful language to describe the images that the tweet conveys to them. At the same time numerous people, including people who do not support the President or his policies say that when they read the statement, it fails to carry any such connotation to them. At what point do President Trump’s “sharp attacks” made on Tweeter become actionable as defamation unprotected by Sullivan’s actual malice standard? Put to the side what his tweet about the New York Senator might imply. What about his labeling her as “Crooked-Used”?

This week a New York state appellate court issued its ruling in a defamation suit brought by Cheryl Jacobs, a public relations consultant, about a Trump tweet made while a presidential candidate. Responding to her statements about why Trump might not take part in a debate, Trump tweeted among other things that Jacobus “begged us for a job. We said no and she went hostile. A real dummy!” and later that she “begged my people for a job. Turned her down twice and she went hostile. Major loser, zero credibility!”

The trial judge ruled that Trump’s tweets “are rife with vague and simplistic insults” that deflect serious consideration and are defamatory. On appeal, the New York intermediate appeals court affirmed the trial court. In doing so, it explained: “The statements are too vague, subjective, and lacking in precise meaning (i.e., unable to be proven true or false) to be actionable. The immediate context in which the statements were made would signal to the reasonable reader or listener that they were opinion and not fact.”

So what about Trump labeling Sen. Gillibrand as a “Crooked-Used”? Ordinarily is the charge that someone is a “crook” capable of proven true or false when it was made? Or does the statement fall into that curious exception to defamation known under the First Amendment called the rhetorical hyperbole principle? This doctrine holds that each statement must be reviewed in its particular context and if the reasonable hearer would understand that the charge was so outrageous and inflammatory that it was not a statement of fact, then the statement is non-actionable. There are several cases by the U.S. Supreme Court holding that statements similar to those employed by Trump are fully protected by the First Amendment.

Monroe

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technology? Oh yeah definitely,” he said.

But Van Dusen said he’d be rich if he could strike a profitable balance with digital and print. “If we can figure that out, we could write books about it and sell it to every single newspaper across the country,” he said.

Because of the growth of digital, many newspapers, including this one, have downsized in various ways. The first change was printing on smaller paper.

Today’s sizes differ dramatically from those a few years ago, but that’s not the only thing that has been cut. Journalists have been lost at newspapers around the country because of smaller budgets and larger workloads.

At the Monroe Journal, there are only six staff members, and only two are full time writers. “Gotta put in way more hours than what we get paid for,” Van Dusen said. “One thing, too, that I’m hopeful for from the millennial generation is that everything that’s old is new again.”

He hopes print becomes popular again and society begins to think that reading the paper is “cool,” because losing revenue is the biggest struggle for many papers today.

“Writing is my passion,” he said. “It’s my creative outlet. Do I want (to do) it every single day? No. But it is what it is, so I have to make the best of it.”

“The pay isn’t always that great, and the hours are pretty long,” he said, “but there are plenty of rewards to this.”

When asked what advice he’d give journalism students today, he said: “Keep your options open beyond journalism. With changing times, you see more blogs and less job opportunities.”

Sports editor Melissa Meador encouraged students to get lots of experience, “whether (it is) working with something on campus or reaching out to a paper like the Monroe Journal. “As bad as it is, nobody is going to hire someone straight out of school without experience,” she said.

Meador began working with the company as a copyist for the Northeast Mississippi Daily Journal, but she longed to get back into sports writing like she did in college.

A year and a half later, she was offered a position with another company to cover strictly news, but when she...
This experience has changed all of us. I’ve been stunned by how brave he has been, and I have so much more respect for his strength than I ever have. That’s saying something because I’ve always believed he was strong.”

A MONTH BEFORE Sid’s first wife died of MS, his mother died of Alzheimer’s. By January 2006, his twin sister, Sheila, died from a brain tumor.

He said after Sheila’s death, he became angry at God. He still attended church, but he “didn’t feel it.”

“It hardened my heart,” he said.

Sid doesn’t have that problem anymore, especially when he recalls the outpouring of support he received from friends, fellow church members, colleagues and even strangers.

“Going through this restored my faith more than I think anything else could,” he said. “I felt people’s prayers. I felt their support.

“If surviving this doesn’t make me a better person, I think I’m pretty foolish,” he added.

Another thing he noticed at NMMC was people on his floor fighting cancer -- sometimes alone and with fewer resources -- with even worse prognoses.

“I was never the sickest one on that floor any day I was there,” he said.

The experience, he said, has made him more aware that people all around him are dealing with cancer every day.

“I hope I can be as good to them as everybody was to me,” he said.

SID AND LEILANI had Thanksgiving with their kids and grandkids in early November. Thanksgiving Day, they both worked at the Egg Bowl -- the annual football rivalry between MSU and Ole Miss hosted this year at Davis Wade Stadium.

Leilani, also a former journalist, works as an event planner for Keenum’s office and hosted guests in the president’s box during the game.

Sid kept his eye on media requests and also support Keenum and his staff.

This is about as normal as it’s been in a while for the pair, and they are plenty happy about it. Sid even recently announced he will resume writing his weekly column in January.

He can feel his strength return a little more each day.

His hair, though, specifically his ever-recognizable salt-and-pepper goatee, is another story.

“I don’t know if my hair will come back, where it will come back or what color it will be,” Sid said. “And I don’t care.”

He does, however, care about making every day count.

“Once you get cancer, I feel like you are ‘you plus cancer,’” he said. “It’s not a matter of if it comes back so much as it’s a matter of when. ... If I have two years or 42 years left, I intend to live with as much joy as I can. If the cancer comes back, we’ll cross that bridge when we get to it.”