

from our viewpoint...

Death closes career of remarkable man

The untimely death Saturday night of Oakley's Stan Clark closed a remarkable political career.

In a decade in the Kansas Senate, Clark surprised us again and again.

He won the 40th District seat in a coup against the "moderate" wing of the Republican party, regular Republicans who thought the post pretty much belonged to them. He won re-election twice, and likely would have won again this fall.

His quiet demeanor and serious nature belied a keen political sense. Opponents usually underestimated him.

He won the seat in a special Republican convention called after Sen. Sheila Frahm of Colby resigned to become lieutenant governor under Bill Graves. Frahm, who left the statehouse to replace Bob Dole in the U.S. Senate when he ran for president, was a key figure in the moderate wing in these parts. And that group thought it had a lock on her seat.

When the delegates convened, though, Stan Clark had the votes.

When he ran for re-election, the moderates usually thought they could beat him. They were wrong.

His position as a conservative left Clark at odds with the more liberal Senate leadership much of the time, but he became an effective and knowledgeable senator. No one has a better grasp on the state budget or what it meant to people in this area. Colleagues remarked that he actually read all the bills and caught many errors.

Stan Clark grew to know the budget and the legislative process as well as anyone. Even those who disagreed with him knew him as a man of good will and personal integrity.

As a legislator, Clark was available to those he represented. He spent long hours on the road, traveling to Topeka and back, and toured his vast 18-county district — covering the entire northwest corner of the state — each year.

In Topeka, he gained seniority and became a committee chairman. The moderates may have thought him a bumpkin, with his thick glasses and his personal commitment to his religion — he was a member of the Dunkard Brethren Church — but those who knew him called him a kind and decent man. His boyish grin and sandy hair won many friends.

Stan Clark was a rare politician, honest, hard-working, knowledgeable. His passing leaves his seat up for grabs. The voters will pick a suitable candidate to take his place, but it will be some time before his successor can fill his shoes.

There was even talk that he might have run for president of the Senate next year. His opponents, undoubtedly, would have underestimated him. — *Steve Haynes.*



Meeting in the middle can be tough

Steve is a night person. I am a day person. I get up early. He stays up late. We meet in the middle.

The middle sometimes gets stretched, however. This means he gets up a lot earlier than he wants and I stay up a lot later than I plan.

This makes us both a little grouchy at times. Last week, I figured I had it made. Steve would be out of town. I could go to bed early and live at my own pace.

That was before I found out about prom. Each year, the Oberlin Rotary Club sponsors the after-prom party. It starts at 12:30 a.m. and ends about 3:30 a.m. I was signed up to work the 12:30-1:30 a.m. shift. So much for early to bed.

I also needed to take pictures for the paper, so I got to the party at 11 p.m. and started shooting pictures of the kids dancing and having a great time.



cynthia haynes

• open season

I then got pictures of the crowning of the king and queen and a bunch of shots of the after-prom party, after the kids changed from tuxedos and ball gowns to T-shirts and cutoffs.

I gave up about 2:30 a.m. and headed for the office. I had drunk a couple of cups of diet Pepsi and was wired. I downloaded my pictures, chose the ones I wanted and headed home.

It was 3:30 a.m. and I was still wide awake. A hot bath and a good book got me to sleep as the clock struck 4 a.m. I was glad I had been to church Saturday night. I definitely wasn't planning to get up before noon on Sunday.

At 10 a.m., though, the phone rang. My husband — on the way to New York for a memorial service — was lonely and wanted to talk. I pointed out that I hadn't had enough sleep since I had been up until 4 a.m. He got up at 6 a.m. He said he would call one of our children and wake them up.

I couldn't get back to sleep, so I got up and fiddled around until it was time to leave for Norton's graduation.

After the graduation, I downloaded pictures and headed for home and the couch. I had no sooner gotten to sleep when the phone rang.

Yep. It was Steve checking in. That was twice in one day.

He'll be home tomorrow and he'll want to sleep in after a long weekend on the road.

Of course, he may have a rude awakening every day for the rest of the week.

Band of brothers meets in New York

We were an unlikely band of brothers.

Bob Neal, reporter, editor, journalism teacher. Today, a turkey farmer in Maine.

Jim Steele, who hit his stride as perhaps the best investigative reporter in the country, and collected a pair of Pulitzer medallions at the Philadelphia Inquirer

Tom Stites, former deputy national editor at *The New York Times*, former managing editor of *The Kansas City Times*. Now the top editor for the Unitarian Universalist Association.

Rick Serrano, a Kansas City native, published author, currently at the Washington bureau of the Los Angeles Times.

Me, a country editor from the far edge of Kansas. I felt a humble, but I think I had the prize for traveling the farthest.

The thing we had in common was that we all started our careers, or at least stopped over, at *The Kansas City Times*, the late and lamented morning edition of *The Kansas City Star*.

We had gathered in Central Park West, in midtown Manhattan, in the apartment where Paul Haskins had spent his last years.

There, surrounded by people from the great, gray lady of our industry, we talked about Paul, who died at his place in Cancun. He was only 62, but his lungs were shot.

Paul was the finest editor I've ever known. I shake my head when I think of his career. He was the only editor who came to work at *The Times* in cowboy boots, a lifelong trademark. He split his career, nearly 20 years in Kansas City and 20 in New York. The fascinating thing is how he got there.

A high-school dropout from California, part Native American, he stumbled into a job at *The Kansas City Times* as a copy boy. In those days, it was the custom to hire young men to answer phones and run errands, and give them a chance to learn the trade. Many drifted away, more went on to college or other jobs. One I knew just retired as president of one of Kansas City's largest banks.

But a lucky and talented few took root and blossomed there in the newsroom. Paul had been one of those. Stites, I think, was there when he started. Steele came after him. I was just a college boy, starting as a reporter. Serrano may have been the



steve haynes

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last one to start out as a copy boy.

We all stood in awe of Paul's skill, his insight, his passion for the news. So, apparently, did his colleagues in New York. It's unheard-of for anyone without a college degree to be hired at *The New York Times*. Paul never did graduate from high school, let alone college, though he taught editing one year at the University of Kansas.

He rose from copy boy to city editor in Kansas City, leading *The Times* to a Pulitzer for its coverage of the Hyatt Hotel balcony collapse in 1981. In New York, he rose to chief deputy national editor, responsible for assignments across the country. One former boss called him "the heart of the national desk."

It would be easy to call Paul a piece of work. He was tall, gruff, imposing. He was a demanding boss, but you knew he cared more than anyone. He was the first one to the bar after work, he smoked two to three packs of Pall Malls a day,

and he lived the news.

He was one of a diverse and talented crew that worked the night shift in Kansas City in those days. None of us would ever say that we had worked at *The Star*. We might have shared the newsroom with the day crew, and our paychecks bore the company name, but we were never of them.

We worked for *The Kansas City Times*. Later, the company was sold, the afternoon paper was closed and a lot of those talented people drifted away. The business has become more corporate, less romantic.

After a decent amount of conversation and food, words were said. Paul's widow urged us to have another drink. When the party broke up, we went our ways. Stites and Bob were on the same train out of Penn Station, and we went downtown together. Tom swiped us through the subway turnstile with his farecard; they don't have tokens anymore.

It was a long weekend for me, but on the way back from the Denver airport, tired as I was, I had to smile.

Paul came from another era, a wonderful tradition. And I just felt so proud to have been a part of that.

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