



Sam Wells Harvey

August 22, 1930 - April 18, 2017

Sam Harvey, 86

- He was born in Dodge City, Kansas, and experienced the “dust bowl” storms of the 1930s
- He served in the Air Force during the Korean War and met his future wife while stationed in Washington D.C. for training.
- He was editor of the Advertiser-Gleam for 47 years, from 1967 to 2014.
- He wrote and published, High Adventure: Porter Harvey and The Advertiser-Gleam in 1997. Later he compiled and published a book of letters between his parents, Love, Alice – Love, Porter.

Sam Wells Harvey died on Tuesday, April 18, 2017, at Shepard’s Cove Hospice of complications from recently discovered liver cancer. He was 86. The funeral will be Monday, April 24 at 11:00 a.m. at St. William Catholic Church, with Rev. Tim Pfander officiating. A visitation will be held Sunday, April 23 from 3:00 to 6:00 at Guntersville Memorial Chapel.

Sam was born August 22, 1930, to parents Alice and Porter Harvey in Dodge City. His father was a newspaper reporter and his mother taught school. The Harveys moved to Birmingham when Sam was seven, where he skipped the second grade after displaying advanced reading and writing ability. The family lived for a time in Trussville, AL, in the Cahaba Project, an innovative New Deal-era federal planned community. They moved to Guntersville in 1941 when Porter started his own newspaper, The Guntersville Gleam.

As a young boy he loved building and flying model airplanes, sometimes

traveling alone by bus to competitions in Birmingham and other Alabama cities.

Working for newspapers began at the age of 12, when he carried a paper route for the Gleam. He also helped out in the mail and press rooms, and by the age of 14 was running the hot type printing press.

He wrote for The Wildcat, his high school newspaper and served as an occasional correspondent to the Gleam for school sports stories.

After graduation from Marshall County High School in 1947 he attended the University of Alabama, where he studied journalism and worked on the college newspaper, The Crimson White. He was named editor his senior year. While at the University he caught the attention of the state and even national press for his editorial "The Southern College and the Colored Line." In it he predicted that before long black students would be admitted to the University: "We fail to see what would be so terrible about it." This proved a provocative declaration in the segregated South of the 1950s, and the piece was picked up by the newspaper wire services. It ran in a number of Alabama daily papers and was cited by an article in The New York Times.

He joined the Air Force ROTC while in college and after graduation served 2 years of active duty during the Korean War, mostly as a psychological warfare officer. While stationed in Washington D.C. on a training assignment, he met Valerie Yenchka of Pennsylvania, who was working there for her congressman. He and Valerie were married in 1953, and after release from the Air Force he spent a year in graduate school at the University of Alabama.

He began his first daily newspaper job in 1954 as a reporter for The Columbus Dispatch in Ohio. He joined the staff of The Louisville Times in Kentucky in 1959, first as a reporter and then as assistant city editor. For several years while working at the Times he also moonlighted nights and weekends writing copy for a Louisville advertising agency.

In 1967 he moved back to Guntersville to join his father's newspaper, The Advertiser Gleam. He was named editor of the paper, but like Porter, who remained as publisher, his chief duties were reporting and writing up local

news stories. As editor of the Gleam he supervised an estimated 4,700 issues of the twice-weekly paper and had a hand in in more than 150,000 published articles. During his tenure the Gleam became the largest circulation non-daily paper in Alabama.

Sam worked with Porter at the Gleam for 28 years and with his brother-in-law and business partner Don Woodward for 30. During that time Porter and Sam managed the news and Don oversaw the advertising and business aspects. Sam's son John Harvey joined the paper as Business Manager in 1998 following Don's retirement.

In 1993 he served as president of the Alabama Press Association. He was presented their Lifetime Achievement Award in 2008. David Moore, then editor of the Arab Tribune, wrote in his nomination, "If there is a newspaper in the state of Alabama that is an institution in and of itself, it is the Advertiser-Gleam. And if there is a newspaper professional in the state of Alabama who is an institution in and of himself, it would have to be Sam Harvey."

The Auburn University Journalism Advisory Council named Sam their 2008 Distinguished Alabama Community Journalist, citing his work as "widely recognized as a stellar example of community journalism, as well as being used for lessons in college classrooms."

In 2005 the Lake Guntersville Chamber of Commerce honored Sam as its Citizen of the Year.

Sam was a member of St. William Catholic Church in Guntersville where he often served as lector during mass. He was a long-time member of the now defunct Guntersville Kiwanis Club, and a board member and supporter of the Friends of the Guntersville Library. He was a patron of the Whole Backstage, where he made cameo appearances in several stage productions. With his wife Valerie he was a regular in a couple's bridge club for many years, and he played in a monthly poker club. He was a voracious reader, primarily of non-fiction, and regularly subscribed to a half a dozen newspapers.

He is survived by 4 children, Kenneth (Jane Armstrong) of San Antonio,

Texas, John (Sheila) of Guntersville, Anne Hails (Andy) of Montgomery and Mary Porter Grizzle of Mobile; and 8 grandchildren, Alice Jones (Blake) of Birmingham, Evan Harvey (Libby) of Memphis, Tennessee, Jane Harvey of Tuscaloosa, Thomas Harvey of Tuscaloosa; John Hails of St. Louis, Missouri, Rebecca Hails of Montgomery; Sam Grizzle of Mobile and Sarah Grizzle of Mobile; and a sister Mary Woodward of Guntersville, and brother Joe Harvey (Jo) of McMinnville, Tennessee.

He was preceded in death by his wife of 57 years, Valerie Yenchu Harvey.

The family suggests memorial donations to United Way of Marshall County, 709 Blount Avenue, Guntersville, AL, 35976, or St. William Catholic Church, 929 Gunter Avenue, Guntersville, AL, 35976.

Previous Events

Visitation

APR **23**. 3:00 PM - 6:00 PM (CT)

Guntersville Memorial Chapel
1601 Henry Street
Guntersville, AL 35976
(256) 582-7931
guntersvillememorial@gmail.com

Service

APR **24**. 11:00 AM (CT)

St. William Catholic Church
929 Gunter Avenue
Guntersville, AL 35976
fr.tim@stwilliamchurch.com
<http://www.stwilliamchurch.com/>

Tribute Wall

DK

“ I am visiting a friend n Huntsville, and mentioned to my father, Ramon Kyser, that we were planning to go to Guntersville Lake while I'm here. My father said I should look up Sam Harvey, who was his best friend in Trussville and moved to Guntersville; so I did, and found the obituary. My father had told me about his friend Sam Harvey a number of times over the years. He also said that Porter Harvey pulled him out of Lake Guntersville when my father almost drowned. I passed this news on to my father, who cried to learn his old friend was gone, but rejoiced in the memory of him and in what he had done with his life!

Debbie Kyser - July 13, 2017 at 07:35 PM

KS

“ Kenneth and the rest of the Harvey family: so sorry to hear of your Dad's passing. He was a revered figure to all us Auburn journalism students. Karan (and Tom) Sims Simskade@aol.com

Karan Sims - April 20, 2017 at 02:33 AM



“ Days of Sunshine Bouquet was purchased for the family of Sam Wells Harvey.



April 19, 2017 at 01:36 PM