

Comment by the Editor

MASTER EDITORS

The ethics of the racketeer seems to be prevalent. Too many people measure character in terms of financial success or Machiavellian principles of expediency. The popular test appears to be not whether a man is honest and decent, but whether he has escaped being caught at disgraceful conduct. Threats of the gangster are akin to pressure politics and manipulation of markets. Private gain at any price seems to be the prevailing attitude.

If civilization is to survive, idealism and merit must be held in high esteem. Monuments are erected for services rendered, not for profits made. As long as a man is not without honor for unselfish work among his neighbors, wisdom and virtue will triumph over cunning and deceit.

In recognition of worthy living and in contrast to the ethical standards of the racketeer, the Iowa Press Association in April, 1932, awarded the title of Master Editor-Publisher to Joseph W. Grawe of Waverly, Harvey Ingham of Des Moines, and Elmer E. Taylor of Traer. A committee of five judges, after careful investigation, reported that each of these veterans of Iowa journalism, having

“worked hard, lived honorably, thought soundly, and influenced unselfishly,” was entitled to the “highest honors in his profession.”

Each year men who have long maintained high achievement in editing and managing their newspapers and have shown “superior worth in their relationships to family, community and state” are honored with the title of Master Editor-Publisher. In 1933, E. P. Adler of Davenport, W. G. Ray of Grinnell, and Ed. M. Smith of Winterset were named; in 1934 the distinction was awarded to Grant L. Caswell of Des Moines, William C. Jarnagin of Storm Lake, F. A. Moscrip of Marshalltown, and William P. Wortman of Malvern; and in 1935 the roll of honor was lengthened by the addition of M. A. Aasgaard of Lake Mills and John C. Hartman of Waterloo. Through the generosity of Grant L. Caswell, the managing director of the Iowa Press Association, a silver plaque is presented to each Master Editor-Publisher.

This is the centennial anniversary of journalism in Iowa. For a hundred years the newspapers have chronicled the times and guided public opinion. The Commonwealth owes deep gratitude to the men who have had the courage and ability to develop traditions of responsible leadership.

J. E. B.