

W. Earl Hall

W. Earl Hall, 72, longtime editor of the *Globe-Gazette*, died Saturday, April 12, 1969, at St. Joseph Mercy Hospital in Mason City.

Earl Hall was a newspaperman his entire working life. He was editor of the *Daily Iowan*, student newspaper at the University of Iowa, in 1917-18, coming to the *Globe-Gazette* in 1920 after army service during World War I.

Earl Hall served in various editorial positions, including editor and editor-publisher, for 43 years. He retired from the *Globe-Gazette* in 1963, but continued to work with his son, Reeves Hall, of Independence, on family newspapers.

The range of his interests was matched by his intense work, as newspaperman and advocate, in their behalf. He was concerned, and involved, in improving traffic safety . . . education at all levels . . . the judicial system . . . music . . . government.

During his 43 years with the paper, Earl Hall wrote thousands of words in the news columns and the editorial pages of the *Globe-Gazette*. His hallmark was a personal column, "One Man's Opinion," which also was used for radio broadcasts over Station KGLO, Mason City, and other Iowa radio stations.

W. Earl was honored for his newspaper work on many occasions. In 1946, he was named Master Editor-Publisher by the Iowa Press Association. He also received the Dr. C. C. Criss Mutual of Omaha Safety award in 1954 for his continuing efforts to improve traffic safety. In 1957 he won the Trans World Airlines 20th annual aviation writing award, based on stories written on a 1956-57 world tour.

The Iowa State Education Association's award as "Iowa layman of the year" for services to education went to Earl Hall in 1960.

In 1963, the University of Iowa presented its first Distinguished Service awards—and one of them went to Hall. Another went to his close friend from Mason City, Meredith Willson, the noted composer of "The Music Man" and other Broadway musicals.

Earl Hall was named in 1959 to the Kappa Tau Alpha Journalism Hall of Fame at the University of Iowa.

The W. Earl Hall Endowment fund was established by Hall in 1967 to provide an annual award for excellence in student writing at the University. The gift of \$2,000 was to be used to reward excellence particularly in the field of interpretive writing.

In 1964 he received a Luther College (Decorah) Distinguished Service award. He held an honorary LLD degree from Cornell College.

His hobbies were as wide-ranging, and profitable, as his work. He loved music, travel and "weather lore."

Earl Hall was a member of a University of Iowa quartet that celebrated its 50th anniversary in Milwaukee in 1968. He also was a member of the "Rusty Hinges," a Mason City barbershop quartet that served as the prototype for Meredith Willson's "board of education quartet" in "The Music Man." He seldom attended a meeting or convention without gathering people around him for a songfest.

Earl Hall traveled widely, reporting as he went . . . covering World War II action, Olympic Games, international affairs. Wherever he went, his typewriter went along.

W. Earl Hall was born April 7, 1897, in Rippey. He received his B.A. degree at the University of Iowa in 1918, then served as an infantry sergeant in World War I.

In 1919, he joined the staff of the *Milwaukee Journal* as police reporter, then went to the *Globe-Gazette* in 1920 as managing editor at age 22.

On the death of W. F. Muse in 1931, Earl Hall became editor and then was named editor-publisher in 1962, a position he held until his retirement in May, 1963. He also served as consulting editor for another year.

In 1932-33 he served as commander of the Iowa Department of the American Legion. He was one

of 14 Iowans chosen to go on the first cruise of the battleship, USS *Iowa*, following the ship's reactivation in 1951.

In 1956 and 1957, Earl Hall visited 31 countries, including Russia, and the following year was a member of a fact-finding group for Radio Free Europe. This sparked a continuing interest in the work of the American broadcasts that are beamed into Communist-controlled nations. In 1958, he was chairman of the Iowa Crusade for Freedom.

Earl Hall founded the Iowa State Safety Council and served as vice president of the National Safety Council from 1944 to 1948. He was chairman of the National Committee for Traffic Safety from 1946 to 1948, then succeeded Paul G. Hoffman as chairman of the Public Support Committee on Traffic Safety in 1949.

In the early 1950's, Earl Hall played a leading role in obtaining a state constitutional amendment that modernized the Iowa judicial system. He was chairman of a state citizens' committee and, after adoption of the amendment, twice served on the governor's advisory committee to nominate Supreme Court judges.

After retirement, Earl Hall traveled widely for the American Red Cross. He held administrative jobs and wrote from disaster areas.

BOB SPIEGEL, Editor, and THOR JENSEN, Managing Editor
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