

Elmer Brock, former co-owner of Tribune, dies after illness

Editor's Note: The following is a re-print from the September 16, 1983 edition of the Mount Olive Tribune. In 1968, I came to Duplin County as editor and publisher of the Duplin Times-Progress Sentinel. At that time our paper was printed by the Tribune in Mount Olive. As a rookie editor/publisher, there was a lot that I had to learn and needed to know. Elmer's help, advice and encouragement certainly made my learning experience much easier. I also enjoyed playing golf with Elmer over the years. He was a true competitor, gentleman, and friend who I will truly miss.

Ike F. Riddick
Publisher/Editor
Duplin Times

BY MARTHA STOKES

Elmer Brock, a former owner of The Tribune and a key force in its growth from a small printing shop to one of the busiest central printing plants in Eastern North Carolina, died Tuesday afternoon at N. C. Memorial Hospital in Chapel Hill.

Brock had suffered a period of declining health for six years. He would have been 65 on November 28.

In accordance with the deceased's wishes, the body was cremated, and a private funeral service will be held at a later date. It is requested that no flowers be sent, and persons wishing to remember the family should make donations to the Baptist Children's Home in Thomasville, or to their favorite charity.

He is survived by his wife, Mrs. Katie Vinson Brock of the home; two sons, Clayton of Greensboro and Richard of Seneca, S.C.; two sisters, Mrs. Howard (Azile) McLamb and Mrs. Charles (Verna Gray) McAdams, both of Raleigh; three brothers, Cletus and Vaden, both of Mount Olive and Avery of Reidsville; and two grandchildren.

GREW UP IN PRINTING BUSINESS

Brock grew up in the printing business. His father, the late Homer Brock bought The Tribune in 1916 from the late Fred R. Mintz.

Homer Brock was owner and publisher for 33 years. Following his death in 1949 the property passed into the ownership of his widow, the late Mrs. Ella K. Brock.

Upon her death in 1965 sons of the Brock couple, Cletus, Elmer and Vaden Brock purchased all interests in The Tribune from other members of the family. They retained ownership until 1979 when the Brocks sold the paper to Mount Olive Printing and Publishing Co., a wholly-owned subsidiary of the News and Observer Publishing Co. of Raleigh.

Brock worked in the newspaper shop from the time he was a boy, his brother, Cletus, former editor of the paper, recalled in an interview. He graduated from Mount Olive High School in 1935. He served with the U. S. Army Combat Engineers during the World War II. He helped build the Alaskan Highway and later saw duty in England, France and Germany.

He returned to the family business following military service and worked as business manager and secretary of the company. He held that position until the Brocks sold the paper in 1979.

After the paper was sold, he remained on at The Tribune for 15 months, carrying out many of the same duties that he had performed as business manager of the paper. He also continued to write a weekly column, "Out of

Grove Homecoming

Grove Presbyterian Church in Kenansville celebrates 247 years of its ministry in Duplin County this Sunday, Sept. 25. Sunday school begins at 10 a.m. and morning worship at 11. The morning offering will help meet the church's commitment to Presbytery's benevolence budget.

Following the service of worship, a covered-dish luncheon will be served on the grounds. The community is welcome to attend.

LANGSTON REUNION

The descendants of Albert Sydney and Sallie Humphrey Langston will hold their annual reunion at the Deep Run Community Building on Sunday, Sept. 25. Dinner will be served at 1:30 p.m. Bring a covered dish and have a



ELMER BROCK

Doors," about hunting and fishing in the Mount Olive area.

AVID SPORTSMAN

He told his friends and co-workers many times that writing the column was one of his favorite duties at the paper and one of the rewards of being in the newspaper business.

He wrote the column for 23 years. During those years, he reported the hunting and fishing activities of literally hundreds of Mount Olive area residents in the "Out of Doors" column. A gifted writer, he wrote with affection, wit and extraordinary expertise about the outdoors, giving his readers—even non-sportsman readers—a true-to-life glimpse of a real sportsman.

Brock also used his column, in a low-key but consistent way, to champion respect for the environment and for the conservation of its wildlife.

In a column he wrote on September 7, 1979 about the opening of dove season, the following is typical of his writing style and is "pure" Elmer Brock:

From my observations at three or four shooting sites, last Saturday's dove season opener was on a moderate level. By that I mean it was not a day of massive shooting at endless flocks of birds, but there was enough action that a good many of the hunters I checked with were able to get their limits by late afternoon.

Much of the action came after a mid-afternoon shower that lasted an hour or so. Before then, it seemed that a lot of the birds were sitting in shady trees looking out at hunters sweltering in the fields.

I didn't get into any hot action, but that worried me less than it would most people, I guess. Each fall, I'll take one mess of doves home for a pastrystew stew, but after that I don't care much for them. And, shooting the birds and discarding them is out of the question.

The column was started by Charlie Whitley, who is now the Congressman for the Third Congressional District, on March 29, 1957. Whitley wrote it under the "pen name" of Rod-N-Gun and continued it until he first went to Washington as then-Congressman

David Henderson's assistant. Cletus Brock wrote it for a short time before Elmer Brock began writing it on a weekly basis.

Whitley, in a telephone interview Wednesday from his Washington, D.C. office, recalled Brock's love for hunting and fishing, recounting hunting trips the two went on in search of quail, goose, dove and rabbit.

"He was one of the best shots that I have ever seen. I remember that he could shoot squirrels with a .22 pistol—not many folks can do that," Whitley said.

"He was a hard hunter and an ultra courteous hunter. He was an excellent wing shot," he added.

Whitley said that Brock's writing about hunting and the outdoors "made (the reader) feel a part of it—very much like the writings of (nationally known writer) Robert Ruark."

"In his later years, Elmer wrote a lot more of the editorials (for the paper) and I thought they were very good editorials. He was very good at expressing himself, in his column and in his editorials."

"Elmer was personally conservative. His philosophy of government was conservative and yet at the same time he was not a selfish person," Whitley said.

Whitley noted that since Brock's retirement he had had the time to join the "regulars" who frequent Audrey Parker's Friendly Restaurant every morning about 9:30 or 10 o'clock for "coffee but mostly to solve the world's problems." Whitley said that he joined "the regulars for coffee whenever I have an opportunity. They'd all tell me how things should be done in Washington and Elmer was a part of that. I'll miss him."

Brock was also an avid golfer. Just two months ago he shot a hole-in-one on hole number 5 at Southern Wayne Country Club. It was his fourth hole-in-one and the second one at Southern Wayne Country Club, with the other "aces" coming at Pinehurst and at Goldsboro Country Club.

ON HUMAN RELATIONS COUNCIL

Brock was not a "joiner" of many civic clubs and organizations, preferring a "less high profile" way of performing community service. He was a past commander of the American Legion.

During the racial unrest and turmoil which the nation witnessed in the mid 1960s, then-Mayor D. F. Odom appointed Brock as one of the charter members of the Mount Olive Human Relations Council, a group of black and white citizens who discussed community racial relations and worked out methods to resolve any situation before it became a problem.

MAJOR ROLE IN GROWTH
Cletus Brock credits his brother, Elmer, with playing a major role

in helping chart much of the growth and success that the company enjoyed.

In 1951 the paper required a faster press with more page capacity. The Brocks bought an eight page flatbed Duplex Model A press from a firm in Rochester, N.Y. and installed it in the Tribune building on Center Street.

Before long, by careful attention to press requirements and operation, The Tribune achieved a reputation of obtaining about as good a print, especially from pictures, as could be obtained from this type of press. Several smaller publications began to have newspapers printed by The Tribune.

It was during the early 1950's, after the webpress installation that The Tribune began printing the Camp Lejeune Globe, the base newspaper with over 20,000 circulation.

For about 10 years The Globe was printed by presses of The Tribune and it was not until the Jacksonville daily paper installed offset presses of its own about 1965 that The Globe ceased to come to Mount Olive each Wednesday for its paper. In the meantime, the Brocks built a new building in the 100 block of S. Center St., moving in 1957.

The Brocks often credited The Globe for The Tribune's move to offset printing in 1962. For most of the years the military paper was printed in The Tribune shop it won the Corps-wide competition as the best-printed newspaper.

But in 1960 a Marine Corps newspaper in California, printed for the first time by the offset method, won the prize and the Marines at Camp Lejeune didn't like it. The Brocks soon began negotiations which led the paper to install its own 12-page offset press. The first issue by this new, photographic, highspeed, chemically-controlled press method was printed October 23, 1962.

It was an excellent business move, because almost immediately, as area newspapers began to phase out their own

outmoded letterpress equipment, they changed to offset printing.

The Tribune, because of its convenient location, began to print many of them. As the third newspaper in North Carolina to switch to offset, behind Tarboro and Newton, it soon became one of the busiest printing plants in Eastern North Carolina.

In March, 1974 The Tribune moved its operation into a new building on Highway 55 West, at

117 Bypass where a new 28-page press which almost doubled the capacity of its previous press.

Brock was highly respected by his newspaper peers for the quality printing work that The Tribune printing plant produced both for the newspaper itself and for the numerous other papers the plant printed.

Congressman Whitley said that Brock's contributions to the community were many and that his keenest recollection of him was as a person of great integrity.

"Elmer Brock was a person of total integrity. What he told you, you could absolutely count on. He was a person of total integrity—that is a rare thing to be able to say about anyone."

Couples Marrying After Oct. 1 Will Pay \$5 To Child Abuse Fund

By Christine W. Williams

Senate Bill 291 enacted by the 1983 Legislature established a program to prevent child abuse and neglect and created a children's trust fund to finance it.

The marriage license fee of \$10 will be increased to \$15. The new law requires the register of deeds to collect the additional \$5 and turn it in to the county. The county is then directed to forward the fee to the state treasurer to be deposited in the fund.

The Children's Trust Fund will be used by the state

Board of Education to fund child abuse and neglect prevention programs. The board is directed to designate an interagency advisory council to assist the state board of education in awarding contracts from the fund.

This act becomes effective Oct. 1 and the increase in the marriage license fee is effective on that date. With an average of 300 couples purchasing marriage licenses in Duplin County each year, the new fees collected and forwarded to the state fund will amount to about \$1,500 a year. This new law applies to all North Carolina counties.

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By ELMER BROCK



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