

Battle Urges Citizens' Political Involvement

Fieldcrest President's Legacy Is Public Service

Editor's note: Following the recent shareholders meeting in New York, William C. Battle, president of Fieldcrest Mills, Inc., was interviewed by Ed Craig, a reporter for the New York bureau of United Press International. The following article, written by Ed Craig, appeared in a number of newspapers.

NEW YORK — William C. Battle regrets he wasn't able to achieve as much politically as his father, acknowledged as one of Virginia's finest governors. But as the son of John S. Battle, a lawyer who served in the Virginia legislature before his father, Bill Battle, was elected governor, Bill Battle says he is more blessed than most men.

My father devoted himself to public service, and he impressed on all of those around him that it was among the highest of callings. This was the best legacy any man could have," he said. The elder Battle was Virginia governor from 1950 to 1954. He died in 1972 at the age of 82. His son, also a lawyer, gave most of his time to public service but his political career ended after he failed to win the

Virginia governorship in 1969 as the Democratic candidate. He has been president of Fieldcrest Mills, Inc., since 1971, as well as its chief executive officer since 1972.

Before his unsuccessful gubernatorial try, Battle threw himself into the 1960 presidential campaign of John F. Kennedy, served as ambassador to Australia in the Kennedy administration and in 1966 helped William B. Spong win election to the U.S. Senate from Virginia.

He served with Kennedy in the Pacific during World War II — both were PT boat skippers — and commanded one of the two boats which plucked Kennedy and his companions from the remote island where they were stranded after a Japanese destroyer rammed their PT boat.

He has warm memories of Kennedy. Of the juicy

revelations which made their way into print recently regarding Kennedy, Battle has nothing but scorn. "The Kennedy I knew was a witty, fun loving, charming companion, and if there was anything to that side of his nature, it was completely unknown to me. And I was with him daily for months," Battle says.

Battle, a good looking, slim 56-year-old, is a strong advocate of involvement by everyday citizens in the political sphere.

"It is the obligation of every citizen to take part in the political process," Battle says. "Today we see the fruits of the lack of leadership, Watergate and the rest of it.

"If citizens projected themselves into politics, then those with ill intent couldn't get into high places."

He acknowledges it isn't for everyone to be a political candidate. "But people should at least be informed, should participate to some degree in the art of government, possibly become unpaid members of

groups that oversee the affairs of local government.

"The lack of involvement is the price we pay for special interest groups to take over."

Battle came to the attention of Fieldcrest directors through his years of legal work for the company and major shareholders. He admits he knew next to nothing about the textile industry when chosen president and chief operating officer in 1971.

But I knew the company had talented people in various areas, and I saw my function was to bring them together, to motivate them, to instill an esprit de corps." One shock to Battle was when he called together the top brass of Fieldcrest and Karastan Rug mills, a major division, only to learn this was the first time both groups had come together.

"You may be sure that first meeting wasn't the last," he says, with a smile.

He has tried to convey the same attitude of cooperation to the members of his family "but

in a more personal way, of course."

"If something should happen to go wrong and I know the reason, I try to explain where the wrong occurred," Battle says.

He is married to the former Barry Webb of Martinsville, Va. They have three children: Cullen, 21, attending the University of Virginia; Robert,

(Continued on Page Seven)

Vacation Schedule

Employees are reminded that Fieldcrest plants generally will close for vacation at the end of the second shift Friday, July 2, and will resume operations Sunday evening, July 11, at 11 p.m.

If there are any exceptions to this schedule, the employees affected will be notified by their mill management.

Distributor Sales Meeting Is Held By Laurelcrest

"Service with a Style" was the theme introduced at the Laurelcrest Carpets Distributor Meeting held at the Pine Bluffs Country Club at Pine Bluffs, Mo.

Officials representing Laurelcrest distributor firms from all over the nation met with key Laurelcrest marketing, manufacturing and sales service executives to get a preview of new products, new merchandising and sales promotion programs for the Fall selling season.

In a keynote address at the opening session, Francis X. Larkin, president of the Laurelcrest carpet and rug marketing division, told the meeting that Laurelcrest has made a strong commitment to its direct channel of distribution through leading distributor firms covering 11 markets across the country.

Larkin stated: "As a marketing man I recognize that

60 percent of the soft surface floor covering business today is being done by distributors such as yourselves. I also recognize the necessity for our company to participate in this market in a meaningful way!"

Mr. Larkin told the distributor executives, "Laurelcrest has developed a plan of action to exploit Laurelcrest's strengths for our mutual benefit. Some of the results of these plans as they relate to product and promotion will be unveiled to you at this meeting. Some of the longer term plans will take years to accomplish, but, I believe, they solidly demonstrate our direction and determination."

The Distributor Sales Meeting was conducted by Robert K. Nicoll, vice president of sales for Laurelcrest.

Also participating in the meeting were Ben W. Binford, vice president for merchandis-

(Continued on Page Three)

NOTICE

EAR PLUGS REQUIRED IN THIS AREA

For Your Protection —

In Fieldcrest's continuing hearing conservation program, new protective devices called Com-Fit inserts are now in use throughout the company. See page Five.