

The world lost the ultimate newspaper man

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JEFFERSON, Texas - Fred Bandy once posed for his mug shot that ran alongside his columns and editorials in an old-fashioned press hat complete with badge and seated next to a typewriter; the familiar image of newspapermen for decades.

The world lost the ultimate newspaper man when Bandy, who has lived in Jefferson, Texas, since his retirement from The Daily Iberian, died Saturday at age 83 in Marshall, Texas.

He spent 50 years chasing the news, with his last post of 15 years as senior news editor at The Daily Iberian. His son, Steve Bandy of Rayne, who also was drawn to the profession and now works as the general manager of The Scott Connection and the Rayne Independent, said his mom and dad retired to east Texas far away from where his dad's newspaper career unfolded because they knew he would not be able to stay out of the newsroom. He had many stories he liked to share, Steve Bandy said, of those he encountered during his long career, including former Gov. Edwin Edwards. Fred Bandy covered Edwards first election to political office to the Crowley City Council in the 1950s. The two remained friends up until his death, Steve Bandy said.

It was always fun to get him talking, Steve Bandy said, adding his east Texas home was full of mementos, photographs and old writings spanning five decades.

Bandy was a member of the first graduating class from Northwestern State University School of Journalism in Natchitoches. After a tour in the U.S. Navy during the Korean War, Bandy's career in journalism began at the former Daily Signal in Crowley. He moved from there to the Daily Star in Hammond, The Daily World in Opelousas and KATC-TV in Lafayette before coming to New Iberia.

His years in New Iberia were some of the most enjoyable of his career, his son said. Fred and Marie Anne Bandy loved New Iberia and knew few strangers here.

He enjoyed writing his regular column, which was called Bandyng About, a favorite among readers, particularly military veterans.

Hearing the news of Bandy's death was a sad moment for longtime Daily Iberian Teche Life Editor Jennifer May, who retired in 2009.

He hired me, and on good days I thanked him for that and on bad days not so much, May said with a chuckle.

May said when she met Bandy he was the ultimate newspaper man and all that she imagined a newspaper person would be like. He was tough but fair and offered high praises for a job well done, she said.

He retired from The Daily Iberian in October 1995 and has spent the past several years enjoying retirement with his wife in east Texas.

Daily Iberian Publisher Will Chapman said Bandy's death is a great loss. Fred was a terrific newspaperman but an even better individual, Chapman said.

A memorial service for Fred Hall Bandy will be held at 7 p.m. today with a burial in DeQueen Cemetery in DeQueen, Ark., at a later date. Haggard Funeral Home of Jefferson, Texas, is in charge of the arrangements.