

AKRON BEACON JOURNAL

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C. L. KNIGHT, June 18, 1867-Sept. 26, 1933
JOHN S. KNIGHT, Oct. 26, 1894-June 16, 1981

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Publisher

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Associate Editor

A4

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Editorials

Editor Ben Maidenburg was energetic, dedicated

BEN MAIDENBURG was a fine newspaper editor who, under the direction of John S. Knight, guided the Beacon Journal for almost 30 years as executive editor and then also as its publisher.

He was also an unusual public citizen, who devoted enormous personal energy and great commitment to the betterment of the Akron area.

From 1948 until his retirement from the Beacon Journal in 1975, there was almost no civic activity or community progress effort that was not, somehow, shaped or in part guided by his firm hand and aggressive intellect.

Acting as a private citizen, but one with the clout of his editorship, he mediated strikes in both the public and private sectors.

He worked to bring jobs to Akron, and area leaders gave him high credit for the location in Summit County of such facilities as Terex, the Coliseum, the Cascade Holiday Inn and the federal courthouse building.

His sometimes brusque nature and tart tongue masked a deep humanitarian strain. He helped students from poor families get through college, often reaching into his own pocket. He befriended and helped prison inmates, even after his aid occasionally backfired on him. He created the Beacon Journal Charity Fund, which thrives today, to fill in the cracks of emergency community assistance when no other help was available.

He was an editor and community activist, and he made no apologies for the dual role, even when it caused concern, conflict and hairpulling within the ranks of his reporters and editors at the paper.

His era may have been a different one, but Ben Maidenburg saw his role as larger than simply being editor of

a newspaper. If there was a leadership vacuum in town or during consideration of a particular project, he eagerly filled it and usually with skill and success.

His association with the Beacon Journal began in 1929. With time out for wartime service in the Pacific, he was a key figure in Akron, Miami, Chicago and Detroit during the early growth of the late Jack Knight's newspaper group.

He was a sharp and aggressive editor. If some reacted adversely to what they saw as tirades in the newsroom, others realized his fierce commitment to quality and accuracy. He had much to do with making the Beacon Journal into a modern-day newspaper committed to excellence and fulfilling a role as a strong voice for community progress.

After he left the Beacon Journal in 1975, he continued his contributions to the community through his leadership of the Knight Foundation until illness forced his retirement in 1978.

Physical problems kept him from getting about in recent years as much as he had previously, but he still kept close track of community events. His mind was alert and he was active behind the scenes as a counselor to many in recent years.

Many of those who work at the paper today worked with him and for him. Those of us who followed him here valued his friendship and his advice about the newspaper and the community.

For decades, Ben Maidenburg was one of Akron's most energetic and dedicated citizens. In death at age 76, he leaves a legacy of commitment to community seldom matched in this or any other metropolitan area. We at the paper will miss him; so will countless others whose lives he touched in a myriad of ways.