

Dear Nominating Committee Members:

I am writing to nominate four individuals for the Indiana Journalism Hall of Fame. All four have connections with each other and with the *Palladium-Item* in Richmond, Indiana. Their involvement in the newspaper business spans much of the twentieth century. **Rudolph G. Leeds (1886-1964)** purchased the Richmond Palladium in 1906 and through acquisitions and effort built it into a great newspaper. **Edward H. Harris, Sr. (1880-1937)** was hired by Leeds to help run the newspaper. Harris eventually became known nationally as a newspaperman who dealt with the rise of radio in the 1920s and battled the suppression of free speech under Roosevelt and the New Deal in the 1930s. **Edward H. Harris, Jr. (1917-1969)**, his son, followed in his father's footsteps under the tutelage of Rudolph Leeds and Luther Feegar (1977 inductee to the Indiana Journalism Hall of Fame). The son carried on the strong tradition of the *Palladium-Item* and introduced new publishing technologies to keep it at the cutting edge.

The final person I am nominating is **Mark Ferree (1905-1982)**, who was a brother-in-law to Edward H. Harris, Sr. After attending Indiana University in the early 1920s, Ferree worked at several different newspapers, culminating in nine years at the *Indianapolis Times*. In 1945, he became assistant general business manager for Scripps-Howard. Four years later he became the general business manager, a position he held until 1969. He also served on the board of the Richmond *Palladium-Item* following the untimely death of his nephew, Edward H. Harris, Jr., in order to smooth the transition and to assure that the *Palladium-Item* would continue to be a great newspaper.

These four men participated in politics, from helping start the Progressive Party of Theodore Roosevelt in the 1910s to meeting with President John F. Kennedy over news coverage of national secrets during the Cold War. They all believed strongly in the freedom of the press. They fought for what they thought was right, from standing up for business interests in Richmond to standing against the Ku Klux Klan in 1920s Indiana. They earned the respect of their peers and of the people in their community. They served the publishing industry by holding positions in the American Newspaper Publishers Association, the Inland Press Association and the Hoosier State Press Association. Ultimately, they made an impact on journalism in Indiana and across the United States.



Rudolph G. Leeds (1886-1964)

When Rudolph G. Leeds and his mother bought the Richmond *Palladium* in 1906, it was a struggling daily newspaper. They added the *Sun-Telegram* a year later and purchased the *Item* in 1929. The *Item* continued as an evening paper until 1939 when it merged with the *Palladium*. By bringing these papers together and placing his powerful imprint on them, Leeds created the Richmond *Palladium-Item* and used it to make his mark on Richmond and the world.

Leeds came from a wealthy family. His father had made millions as one of the founders of the tinplate business in America in the late 19th century. Rudolph grew up shuffling between homes in Richmond, Chicago and New York, but he always considered Richmond his hometown.

Buying the newspaper was probably an attempt by his mother to bring some stability to Rudolph's life, and in fact he spent his remaining 58 years at the Richmond *Palladium-Item*. Even though he had no academic or practical training in journalism, he was able to use the newspaper effectively to support causes he held dear.

One of the first causes he supported through the *Palladium* was the Progressive Party of Theodore Roosevelt. Leeds was one of the organizers of the Progressive Party in 1912. With his support and leadership in Progressive politics,

Wayne County became the only county in Indiana to elect a complete and sweeping Progressive local ticket. Leeds was a national committeeman from Indiana and remained a strong supporter of the Progressive Party until 1916, when he withdrew because the party had lost its center after Theodore Roosevelt left the country.

When the Ku Klux Klan infiltrated the Republican Party in Indiana in the 1920s and began to have a deleterious effect on Indiana politics, Leeds stood against it. He used the newspaper to speak out against the KKK, even though it put him at personal risk and resulted in the wrecking of his newspaper plant.

Rudolph Leeds was an independent thinker. Although the Richmond *Palladium-Item* was a Republican paper, Leeds himself supported Franklin Roosevelt for President in 1932. However, when FDR's New Deal came out, Leeds became a strong opponent. He believed it was "a betrayal of the American system; that it was dictatorial in

intent, socialistic in purpose and inimical to popular rights." He used the full power of the *Palladium-Item* to speak out against Roosevelt's plan. FDR's attempt to control the Supreme Court also came under vigorous condemnation.

Economic and business matters were of particular interest to Leeds. He studied and analyzed economics throughout his life. For several years he wrote a weekly pamphlet called "The Resolve" in which he discussed both economic and political matters. In 1911, he published "The Equal Price Law" as a supplement to the *Palladium*.

No matter where he was in the country or what he was doing, Leeds stayed involved in the *Palladium-Item* by calling in on speaker phone and giving direction. He maintained a keen interest in the newspaper and the news of the day, even as his health was failing. Leeds died of a heart attack at the age of 78 in 1964. In his will, he left a significant amount of money to support Reid Hospital in Richmond and to set up a fund for *Palladium-Item* retirees.



Edward H. Harris, Sr. (1880-1937)

Rudolph Leeds and his mother invited Edward H. Harris, Sr. to join the Richmond *Palladium* in 1910. Leeds asked Harris to take over the management of the newspaper. Harris had previously been a teller at the bank where the Leeds family did business. Like Leeds himself, he had no training or experience in the newspaper business. Nevertheless, Harris proved to be a very capable manager and a talented newspaperman.

Like Leeds, Harris stood up for causes that were important to him. "In trying to make the newspaper stand for the best ideals and purposes in the community, I believe that I at some time or other lost every friend I ever had, temporarily at least," Harris once said. From 1926-1928, he wrote a series of reports that attacked state and local Ku Klux Klan politicians. His influence at that time helped the *Indianapolis Times* win the 1928 Pulitzer Prize for its exposure of the Klan in Indiana.

Harris helped organize the local Young Men's Business Club and was active in many organizations that advanced the civic and cultural aspects of Richmond. When a national committee formed to found a memorial to Will Rogers, Harris joined many prominent and well-known people on it.

In the field of publishing, Harris served on several committees and played an important role in the interactions between radio and newspapers in the 1920s and 1930s. The positions held by Harris include secretary of the American Newspaper Publishers Association, chairman of the board of

directors of the Inland Press Association and president of the same, chairman of the Publishers National Radio Committee and a member of the Newspaper Industrial Board and the Code Committee for Publishers under FDR's National Recovery Act. In these positions, he took a leading part in the fight to preserve the freedom of the press.

When broadcast radio first became popular in the 1920s, Harris devoted much of his energy to facilitating the interactions between radio and the rest of the journalistic world in a way that preserved the significance of newspapers. He gave speeches at publishing industry conferences to promote cooperation of newspapers and the radio industry, many of which were reprinted or covered in national publications including *Editor and Publisher* magazine and the *New York Times*. Under his influence, the Richmond *Palladium* became the second newspaper in the country to broadcast market reports and programs over its own radio station.

Harris was largely responsible for the creation of the Press-Radio Bureau that began supplying news to radio stations in March of 1934. He was also a strong opponent of government control of radio, saying, "if we destroy freedom of expression over radio, we may soon find that radio may be used to destroy the freedom of the press because of the possibilities of tremendous emotional appeal in radio broadcasting."

In the 1930s, as the United States government considered how to control the flow of propaganda from

Hitler's Germany to America's radios, Harris fought to maintain a balance of freedom for the American journalists. In 1934, he told the ANPA, "newspaper publishers have been passing through one of the most interesting and, we might add, one of the most hazardous periods in the history of American journalism."

When Harris died at the age of 57 in 1937, tributes came from across the country mourning his loss and celebrating his impact on the publishing world. Arthur Hays Sulzberger, publisher of the *New York Times*, said, "Those of us who were privileged to know Edward H. Harris through newspaper association realize how constructive was his influence on journalism." Kent Cooper, general manager of the Associated Press, said, "In the death of Ed Harris, American journalism loses a forthright character and one who has made his mark upon it. I had known him intimately for 40 years and shall miss not only his friendship but his good advice." Alfred E. Smith, former governor of New York and presidential candidate, said, "I wish to extend my sincere sympathy on the death of Edward H. Harris who during his life contributed so much to journalism and civic affairs." Kermit Roosevelt called Harris "an outstanding executive whose influence was felt far beyond the confines of the State in which his progressive paper was published."

When the *New York Times* ran his obituary on October 25, 1937, it listed many of his positions in publishing associations and then said simply "He was known as a defender of the freedom of the press."



Edward H. Harris, Jr. (1917-1969)

Edward H. Harris, Sr. raised his son, Edward H. Harris, Jr., to enter the newspaper business. During high school in the early 1930s, the father sent the son to Europe to observe and report on the handling of radio programs and news by British newspapers. In 1936, his father sent him to Europe to study the relationship of radio and TV broadcasting to the press. The elder Harris used the information from these trips in his correspondence with other publishers about the relationship between radio and newspapers.

The younger Harris began his publishing career by working at the *Palladium-Item* during summers and other vacations from school. Following the death of his father in 1937, he worked in the photoengraving, circulation, news and advertising departments at the *Palladium-Item*. He learned the newspaper business under the oversight of his father, Rudolph Leeds and Luther Feegar (1977 inductee to the Indiana Journalism Hall of Fame).

From 1943 to 1945, Harris worked as assistant circulation manager of the *Charleston Daily Mail* to learn more about how to run a newspaper. Then in 1945, he returned to the *Palladium-Item* as assistant publisher. Seven years later he

became co-publisher with Rudolph Leeds. When Leeds died in 1964, Harris became publisher of the *Palladium-Item*.

Following in his father's footsteps, Harris served on many community boards including the historical society, the Rotary Club, the Chamber of Commerce and the local association for mental health. He also served as a member of the board of the Hoosier State Press Association from 1950 to 1956 and as president from July 1954 to July 1955. Like his father, he was a member of both the American Newspaper Publishers Association and the Inland Press Association.

Harris showed an interest in technological advances in the newspaper publishing industry. During his five-year tenure as publisher, he added color advertising to the *Palladium-Item* and installed a computer to aid in the setting and handling of type.

Communism was always a topic of great interest to Harris. He gave a speech before the Richmond Kiwanis Club on October 19, 1962 to encourage the community to become informed, alert and active in furthering Americanism

and combating communism. He paid special attention to communism and its infringement upon freedom by studying it carefully and using his influence to fight it.

In the summer of 1960, Harris wrote a series of articles exposing the leftist leanings of a local camp that was sponsored by the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC). The AFSC had been suspected of subversive activities for many years, so the articles resonated not only locally, but even nationally. Hundreds of reprints of the articles were distributed to people across the country.

Freedom of communication, the pursuit of private enterprise and individual liberty were all important values to Harris. He stressed these in an address to journalism students at Indiana University on July 27, 1958.

Following the death of Edward H. Harris, Jr. in 1969 at the age of 52, his son Edward S. Harris took over as editor and publisher of the *Palladium-Item*. Edward H. Harris, Jr.'s uncle Mark Ferree joined the board of the *Palladium-Item* to help smooth the transition and to assist the young son of the deceased publisher.

Mark Ferree (1905-1982)

Mark Ferree, the brother of Edward H. Harris, Sr.'s wife, also had a successful career in the newspaper business in Indiana and beyond. He was born and raised in Marion, Indiana. During high school he worked as a reporter and editorial writer at the *Marion Chronicle*. After attending Indiana University in the early 1920s, Ferree worked for the *Evansville Courier* and the *Miami Herald*. Within a few years, he had been a reporter, copy reader, editor, advertising salesman and business executive. Later he went to the Washington (D.C.) *Daily News*, where he renewed an Indiana University friendship with Nelson Poynter, who was then business manager of the paper.

In 1933, he became advertising manager of the *Daily News* until 1936 when he became advertising director of the *Indianapolis Times*. From 1937 to 1945, he served as business director of the *Times*. On January 1, 1945 he was named assistant general manager for all Scripps-Howard newspapers and became the general business manager in 1949. He became an executive vice president and a director of E.W. Scripps Company in 1952. He retired as business manager in 1969 and from the vice president post in 1970. During his years at Scripps-Howard he worked closely with Roy Howard.

The Indiana Society of New York named Ferree "Hoosier of the Year" in 1959 for outstanding achievement in the newspaper field. Governor Harold Handley and other top officials from Indiana came to New York to present the award to Ferree. Also in 1959, Indiana University awarded him the Distinguished Alumni Service Award, hailing him as "journalist, editor and distinguished administrator in the



complex world of newspaper publishing.”

Ferree became a board member of the American Newspaper Publishers Association in 1955, treasurer in 1957 and vice president in 1958 and 1959. He served as president of the ANPA from 1960 to 1962. As an ANPA executive, he participated in special committee work on a program for national promotion of the daily newspaper. Upon his election as president of the ANPA, he said, “newspapers need to be promoted as an important part of the political, economic, social and cultural life of the United States. And just as surely, strong competition between newspapers must continue.”

When President John F. Kennedy called the leaders of U.S. newspapers to the Oval Office for a discussion about press coverage of national secrets in 1961, Ferree was among the eight newsmen who attended. Two weeks prior to the meeting, Kennedy had said in a speech that U.S. newspapers should practice

self-censorship to suppress news endangering the national interest. At the seventy-minute meeting in the Oval Office, Kennedy and the editors and publishers in attendance talked about the responsibilities of the press in the midst of the Cold War.

After his retirement from Scripps-Howard, Ferree became an important advisor to Edward S. Harris, the son of Edward H. Harris, Jr. who had succeeded him as editor and publisher of the *Palladium-Item*. Ferree served as vice president and director of the *Palladium-Item* following the death of Edward H. Harris, Jr. in 1969 until 1975, just one year before the paper was purchased by Gannett.

One year prior to his death in 1982, Mark Ferree and his wife Ruth established a \$100,000 endowment for journalism education at Indiana University. The endowment now supports the Mark and Ruth (Welborn) Ferree Scholarship for undergraduate journalism majors.

Conclusion

Edward H. Harris, Sr. is my great-grandfather. I am very proud of his achievements and those of the other three I am nominating. I think their contributions to journalism warrant their inclusion in the Indiana Journalism Hall of Fame.

Along with this nominating letter, I am submitting a sample of each person's work. For Rudolph Leeds, I have included his “Equal Price Law” supplement from the *Palladium*; for Edward H. Harris, Sr., three of his reprinted speeches, two from *Editor & Publisher*, one from a journal called *The Annals of The American Academy of Political and Social Science*; for Edward H. Harris, Jr., his articles on the AFSC camp controversy; and for Mark Ferree, two articles about him from *Editor & Publisher* that quote him often.

I have many more materials relating to these individuals in my personal possession, including photos, correspondence and writing samples. The papers of Rudolph G. Leeds and Edward H. Harris, Sr. are held in an archive collection at Indiana University East in Richmond. Papers related to the history of the *Palladium-Item*, Rudolph G. Leeds and Edward H. Harris, Sr. are also held at the Wayne County Historical Museum in Richmond. I would be glad to provide more material at your request.

Thank you for considering these men for induction into the Indiana Journalism Hall of Fame. If you have any questions or need any further information, please contact me by email at kevin@harfam.org or by postal mail at the address listed below.

Sincerely,

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Writing samples are available online at <http://www.harfam.org/ijhof>