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FRANK LEE MARTIN

1881-1941

From the Portrait by Wallace Bassford

DEAN MARTIN AND THE SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM

Thirty-four years ago, in February, 1909, a tall, dark-haired, carefully dressed, somewhat solemn-faced young man came to the University of Missouri from the *Kansas City Star* to succeed Silas Bent as instructor in the new School of Journalism.

After one semester of teaching journalism, Bent had returned to newspaper work in St. Louis; and the young man from *The Star* had obtained a leave of absence with the expectation of returning to his job as assistant city editor at the end of the school year.

But that leave of absence of Frank Lee Martin continued until his unexpected death of a cerebral hemorrhage, July 18, 1941. In those thirty-four years he was instructor in journalism, assistant professor, associate professor, professor, acting dean, associate dean and dean.

At first, the handful of students in the new school did not know how to take this seemingly austere young man who came fresh from the discipline of the newspaper office; but with his ready smile, kindly, sometimes sardonic humor, and warmth of personality, he soon established a place for himself in their esteem that will remain as long as the memory of his familiar figure lasts.

The year after he joined the faculty, Dean Walter Williams and nine students established Kappa Tau Alpha, an honorary scholastic fraternity in journalism. At that time, newspapers were prodigal with the title of "Hon." for persons in the public eye; and the members of the new fraternity, with tongue in cheek, perhaps, ruled that all those who gained this honorary distinction should have the title of "Hon." bestowed upon them. The new instructor was the first initiate and was christened "Hon" Martin. The appellation was eagerly seized by all the students, and for many years Dean Martin was affectionately known only as "Hon" to all students and alumni of the School of Journalism.

Mr. Martin went to *The Star* immediately after his graduation from the University of Nebraska in 1902, and spent his formative years under William Rockhill Nelson. He was dubious of the attempt to teach the practice of journalism in a university; he doubted if the venture would

succeed; and he left *The Star* with the understanding he might return at the end of the academic year.

When his leave of absence was up, Dean Williams was on a world tour, and the subject of Mr. Martin's returning to *The Star* was not brought up again except in jest. He and Dean Williams were associated in the development of the School of Journalism until the death of Dean Williams in 1935, and together they gained world prominence as educators in journalism.

During Dean Martin's service with the School of Journalism, more than 3,000 students were graduated. Most of these went into some phase of journalism in forty-five states and twenty foreign countries.

The untimely death of Dean Martin at the age of 60 was a severe shock to these 3,000 alumni. Newspaper men all over the world who had learned the practice of journalism from "Hon" Martin of the mock-serious attitude, the sardonic humor, the friendly smile, felt a sense of personal loss at his passing.

THE MEMORIAL AND PORTRAIT

The first thought in the minds of his former students was some fitting memorial for the man who had devoted his life to the teaching of journalism. At least four organizations gave independent consideration to the establishment of a permanent memorial. After consultation among representatives of these four organizations, the University administration, the Journalism Alumni Association, the faculty of the School of Journalism and the Missouri Press Association, it was agreed that it would be a fitting memorial to dedicate the library of the school to his memory and name it the Frank Lee Martin Memorial Library.

After the Board of Curators of the University had voted to name the Journalism library in Walter Williams Hall for Dean Martin, a committee was appointed by Senator Paul C. Jones, of Kennett, president of the Journalism Alumni Association, to obtain a portrait of Dean Martin to hang in the library.

Painted by Mr. Wallace Bassford of St. Louis, the portrait was hung on the south wall of the library, opposite the doorway. Here it is seen immediately as one enters the library and one is immediately impressed by the life-like quality of the painting of Dean Martin seated at his desk in Jay H. Neff Hall.

The portrait was unveiled at a dedication ceremony May 15, 1942.

In dedicating the library to the memory of the late dean, President Frederick A. Middlebush of the University said it was "altogether fitting and proper that the University should set up permanent memorials honoring the memory of members of its staff who have rendered the University, and the state of which it is an integral part, outstanding service. Such

memorials give concrete evidence, to some small degree, at least, of our affection, respect, and esteem for the one so remembered."

"Dean Martin was a lover of books," the president continued. "Certainly no more suitable memorial could be set up in memory of Dean Martin than that which we are dedicating today."

Expressing appreciation of the action of the alumni in providing the portrait, the president concluded: "It is my sincere hope that the generations of students who, in the future, will carry forward their training in this School, may here in this room catch something of the fine human and humane spirit of the man we honor today, that they become the permanent and real possessors of the high ideals which he held for his great profession, and that they may go out from these halls with a lively sense of appreciation of the lasting importance for the journalist of good books."

Senator Jones, representing the alumni, unveiled and presented the portrait; and Mr. Joseph Finley, president of the Journalism Students' Association, responded on behalf of the students in the School.

Present at the ceremony were students in the School of Journalism, alumni, members of the faculty of the University, townspeople, Journalism Week visitors, Mrs. Martin and daughter, Mrs. Ralph P. Swofford, Jr., and grandson, Frank Wood Swofford, and Mr. Martin's sister and brother, Miss Annette Martin of Lincoln, Neb., and Mr. Orville H. Martin of Kansas City, Mo. Mr. Frank Lee Martin, Jr., stationed abroad with the Associated Press, could not attend.

The inscription, *Frank Lee Martin Memorial Library*, is engraved in the marble above the entrance door of the library.

DEAN MARTIN'S CONTRIBUTION TO JOURNALISM

Dean Martin's contribution to journalism was not limited to the University. From 1915 to 1916, he was news editor of the *Japan Advertiser* in Tokyo during a leave of absence from his teaching and in this position reorganized and Americanized the staff. From 1931 to 1932, he was an exchange professor of journalism at Yenching University, in Peiping, China. Here Mr. Martin established the *Yenching Gazette*, an English language daily. He traveled extensively in the Orient and in Europe and conducted journalistic field trips to Germany and Mexico, as well as in this country. In 1931, Dean Martin became permanent convention chairman of the World Press Congress and presided at the meeting in Mexico City that August. He was a fellow of the British Institute of Journalists as an overseas member, a rare honor given to American newspaper men, and a member of the American Association of Foreign Press Correspondents.

With Dr. Williams, Mr. Martin became author of *The Practice of Journalism*. He also published *The Journalism of Japan* and *News Writing*

for Teachers. For five years he was editor of *The Quill* and was associate editor of the *Journalism Quarterly*, beginning in 1929.

Dean Martin was also a member of the National Press Club of Washington, D. C., a member of the board of governors of the American Press Society, director of the Missouri-Yenching Foundation, president of the Walter Williams Memorial Journalism Foundation, and a member of the Missouri Press Association and of the American Association of Teachers of Journalism. His social fraternity was Chi Phi.

Mr. Martin also held honorary membership in Sigma Delta Chi and Alpha Delta Sigma, national journalism fraternities. He was chairman of various committees of the American Associations of Teachers of Journalism and the American Association of Schools and Departments of Journalism; and in 1936, he was president of the latter association.

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