



Mr. Bruce Wescott Hotchkiss

October 31, 1928 - October 13, 2019

Bruce Wescott Hotchkiss, long-time editor at American Farm Publications Inc., died peacefully Oct. 13 at his home in Easton with his wife by his side. He was 90. A Celebration of Life will be held Tuesday, Oct. 22, from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m., with a service at 6:00 p.m. at the Fellows, Helfenbein & Newnam Funeral Home in Easton, Md.

Mr. Hotchkiss was born Oct. 31, 1928, in Appleton, Wis., son of Elizabeth Wescott Hotchkiss and Thomas Freelon Hotchkiss.

He graduated from The Lawrenceville School, then Princeton, Columbia and Rutgers Universities. He rode a horse to graduation in Rutgers Stadium, and went to work the next day as a cub reporter in Newark, N.J.

Mr. Hotchkiss edited newspapers in New Jersey and Colorado before moving to Easton in 1977 to become editor of The Star Democrat. He turned the Central Shore Farmer, a weekly insert, into a major agricultural newspaper, The Delmarva Farmer.

Mr. Hotchkiss attempted to retire in 1995 but remained senior editor until 2018, in addition to running his own family business, Agri-Media Services Inc.

Mr. Hotchkiss received an Honorary American Farmer Degree from FFA and was an honorary County Ag Agent in Maryland. He received awards from several state, regional and national agricultural organizations, including the Dr. James R. Miller Award given annually by Maryland Grain Producers Association.

Mr. Hotchkiss was a member of St. Mark's Methodist Church, Easton. He enjoyed life, loved being with people and "working the crowd." Everyone has a story, he said. A favorite pastime was surf fishing at the Delaware sea shore.

He is survived by his wife of 37 years, Phyllis Meredith Hotchkiss; his children, Heather, Tim, Mandy and Jeff Hotchkiss and Karen G. Leonard; grandchildren, Michael and Nathaniel Hotchkiss, Lindsay Long and Mitch Hughes; and great-grandchildren, Sophia, Maddie and Avery.

Memorial donations may be made to the American Farm Publication's Ag Scholarship Fund, P.O. Box 2026, Easton MD 21601. Include "Bruce Hotchkiss Scholarship" on the memo line.

Events

OCT **Celebration of Life** 05:30PM - 07:30PM

22

Easton Location

200 South Harrison St., Easton, MD, US, 21601

OCT **Service** 06:00PM

22

Easton Location

200 South Harrison St., Easton, MD, US, 21601

Comments



“ It was my second newspaper job. Bruce and his wife adopted us cub reporters, having us to dinner, hugging us after we had covered a fatal and rejoicing with us when our stories won awards. He was a compassionate and intelligent man, who brought out the best in our writings and in our lives. To have had Bruce Hotchkiss as an editor was an undeserved blessing. I always hoped the best for him Back East and for his family.

margie McAllister - October 22 at 04:04 PM



“ In memory of Bruce Hotchkiss

There were several people who gave birth to the Delmarva Farmer from the womb of The Star-Democrat in the late 1970s, but foremost among them was Bruce Hotchkiss, the paper's editor for more than 40 years. If the Delmarva Farmer is the voice of Delmarva agriculture, then Bruce has been its lead vocalist.

Bruce hired me out of college to work for the paper in 1980, one of a string of young reporters he mentored. At that time, he was not long removed from editing the Star-Democrat, the local paper in Easton, MD., and several other small-town newspapers around the country.

Bruce was a journalist out of the golden age of newspaper journalism, a jack of all trades who could write his own copy, take his own pictures and do his own layout. He could have stepped out of the frame of a Hollywood movie about journalism, sitting in his office with a phone cradled to his ear, a cigarette in the ash tray (at that time, he had not yet given up smoking), talking to a source he would quote in one of his columns or stories, fingers on the keyboard of his beloved Royal. His gruff voice. His booming laugh.

He was probably an anachronism even then, at the dawn of the computer age. He stuck to his typewriter for years. People in the office tell me he was still using it for notes to the end of his working life a few short months ago, even as he had adapted, reluctantly, to the cell phone and the computer.

I've been googling around for journalistic comparisons. I thought of Hildy Johnson and Walter Burns of fictional Front Page fame myself, but they are far too cynical for Bruce. Nor was he from the crusading class of muckrakers, like Sinclair Lewis from an earlier age, or the investigative journalism school of Woodward and Bernstein of Watergate fame. He fits best with the columnists and story tellers, like Jimmy Breslin and Studs Terkel. Like Terkel, he believed that journalism was fundamentally stories about people.

With Bruce's passing, the farmers of Delmarva have lost their best biographer, their most eloquent story teller, their Homer.

Karl Berger,
Oct. 22, 2019

Karl Berger - October 22 at 10:41 AM



“ Small Garden Dish was purchased for the family of Mr. Bruce Wescott Hotchkiss.



October 21 at 06:51 AM



“ Andrea Toulson Edwards lit a candle in memory of Mr. Bruce Wescott Hotchkiss



Andrea Toulson Edwards - October 18 at 10:15 AM



“ I was heartbroken to heard the news of my friend Bruce's passing. One of my favorite people. We were neighbors for a few years and stayed pals after I moved. Such a sweet man. Always had a smile for you. Rest In Peace my friend.



Bianca Russo-Davis - October 18 at 08:07 AM



“ Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Mr. Bruce Wescott Hotchkiss.



October 17 at 01:05 PM



“ The community has lost a truly great guy. I always enjoyed my conversations with Bruce, whether they were about a current event or a sports event. He had that rare combination of a great sense of humor and special insight into things going on around us. Although I did not run into him very often in recent years I will remember fondly the times that I was fortunate enough to do so. My thoughts and prayers are with Phyllis and all of his family and friends.



Phil Foster - October 17 at 03:31 AM



“ Phyllis Ann: Thinking of you and your family in our prayers during the loss of Bruce. May the great memories you have always remain in your hearts. God Bless your family at this time and know others are thinking of you with love, peace and prayers. God Bless. Gene and Lynda Palmatary



Lynda Palmatary - October 16 at 04:37 PM



“ Lisa Plummer lit a candle in memory of Mr. Bruce Wescott Hotchkiss



Lisa Plummer - October 16 at 04:31 PM



“ Dear Phyllis and family,

I read about Bruce's passing in today's paper. Unfortunately, I have a conflict for next Tuesday or would be in attendance. This is to let you know that you are in my thoughts and prayers. Bruce was a true gentleman and I enjoyed knowing him and working with him, even if only for a short while. Now his voice has been added to the heavenly chorus.

Take care.

Fondly,

Bob Huntington

Bob Huntington - October 16 at 03:35 PM



“ June Clark lit a candle in memory of Mr. Bruce Wescott Hotchkiss



June Clark - October 16 at 12:03 PM