

Worth spoke his mind forcefully, and he was also humorous. Two of the very popular talks he gave at AAS were: 'George Washington and the Doctors: Treating America's First Super-hero,' and 'Selling Medicine with Science: Patent Remedy in Nineteenth-Century America.'

When Worth was an advisor for my film, *A Midwife's Tale*, he frequently sent me articles he came across that he believed would be useful. He was always enthusiastic and opinionated, generous with his suggestions, willing to go out on a limb and hazard historical guesses, and unfailingly kind.

Worth continued working through a long and difficult illness. His death was not unexpected. But he will be missed by everyone who knew him.

Laurie Kahn-Leavitt

JAMES RUSSELL WIGGINS

Some individuals are blessed with an acute and capacious mind, with an unshakable devotion to truth, with abounding energy, and with a vibrant, generous spirit. James Russell Wiggins was such a one. Life-long learner, newspaper man, diplomat, sailor, husband, and father, Russell was a leader in his profession, a friend of the mighty and the less so, and was the eighteenth president of the American Antiquarian Society.

Luverne, Minnesota, is the county seat of Rock County, which is bounded on the south by Iowa and on the west by South Dakota. Russell Wiggins was born on a farm near Luverne on December 4, 1903, to James and Edith (Binford) Wiggins.¹ In 1905 his family moved into town where his father owned a construction business. While in high school, from which he graduated in 1922, Russell was editor of the school paper, *The Echo*.

1. For a thorough account of the life of JRW, see the *Ellsworth American*, November 22, 2000; also obituaries in the *Washington Post*, November 20, 2000, the *Boston Globe*, November 20, 2000, and the *New York Times*, November 21, 2000.

Equally important, he was the suitor of Mabel E. Preston. They were married in February 1923, when he was on the staff of the local newspaper, the *Rock County Star*. Two years later, Russell borrowed \$10,000 and bought the paper. In addition to publishing and editing the *Star*, Russell contributed editorials to the *St. Paul Pioneer Press*. This activity resulted in the sale of his newspaper in 1930 when the Wiggins family moved to St. Paul and where he became a fulltime editorial writer for the *Pioneer Press* and the *St. Paul Dispatch*. Sent in 1933 to Washington as correspondent for the papers, he was brought back to St. Paul in 1938 as managing editor of the two newspapers. Russell remained thus until joining the United States Army Air Corps in 1942. He served overseas in World War II as a major in combat intelligence. Russell returned to the St. Paul newspapers upon his release from active duty, but in 1946 was fired out of hand by the owner, B. H. Ridder. Russell was then presented with two opportunities—assistant to Arthur Hays Sulzberger, publisher of the *New York Times*, or editor of the *Washington Post*. Wiggins chose the *New York Times*. Only a year later, however, he heeded a renewed invitation to come to Washington.

Katherine Graham was the daughter of Eugene Meyers and the wife of Philip Graham. Her father had bought the bankrupt *Washington Post* in the early 1930s. Her husband was the CEO of the newspaper. Over time, the *Post* rose from its lowly position as the third of four, purely local Washington newspapers to one of international stature and a major player in our national life. Mrs. Graham in her book, *Personal History* (published by Knopf in 1997), amply acknowledges Wiggins's crucial role in that transformation. Russell was managing then executive editor of the *Post* from April 1947, editor from 1960, and was named vice president and editor in September 1967. Russell professionalized the staff, established strong ethical policies, maintained high editorial standards and independence in a highly volatile community, and dealt masterfully with Philip Graham, the psychologically troubled publisher of the *Post*. Wiggins and Katherine Graham became

close colleagues when in 1963, following the death of her husband, she became publisher. She relied greatly upon Russell's experience, intelligence, and probity and makes clear her affection and respect for him, calling him 'our incomparable former editor.' Russell's abilities and contributions to American journalism were recognized by his election to the presidency of the American Society of Newspaper Editors and to Washington's Gridiron Club. Over his long life Russell held memberships in learned and social organizations (too many to list here). His election to the American Antiquarian Society was at the April meeting in 1963. He received many awards, including Colby College's Elijah P. Lovejoy Award for his stalwart defense of the freedom of the press, and not a few honorary degrees.

Although opposed to Communism, Wiggins detested the unscrupulous demagogue, Senator Joe McCarthy, just as he had battled corruption by attacking the chief of the Washington, D.C., police department. The playing out of the Vietnam War, however, brought heavy stress at the *Post*. Russell Wiggins was a socially liberal, New Deal Democrat who grew up in mid-western Progressivism of the 1920s and the Great Depression of the 1930s. He read American history and biography voraciously. He had served overseas in World War II. Russell was, as J. Y. Smith called him, 'an American primitive.' Thus, Russell supported the Vietnam War, establishing the *Post*'s 'deliberative' editorial position by stating that the United States was obliged to prevent the usurpation of legitimate political power in Vietnam. At last, though, Russell became appalled by the debased Vietnam regimes that resorted even to murder to retain power.² Wiggins's personal and editorial stance on the war and the passage of more than twenty years in office brought a sense for the need for change at the *Post*. The young and flamboyant Ben Bradlee (who later wrote that 'it was [Russell] who put the *Post* on the track of excellence') was brought in as head of the *Post*'s news operations. Russell's

2. The above is a summary of Mrs. Graham's remarks on Wiggins's Vietnam War position, one with which she agreed and followed for some time.

planned retirement in June of 1968 was forestalled by his appointment as permanent representative to the United Nations by a grateful Lyndon Johnson. His tenure at the UN, 1968-69, was marked by his comment that the veto power held by the UN's major nations enervated its effectiveness. He resigned the post upon Richard Nixon's accession to the presidency.

Thereupon, Mabel and Russell Wiggins moved to Brooklin, Maine. They had bought property there in that long-time Washington summer colony some years before. Mabel took their four children during summer vacations to escape Washington's heat and humidity, and Russell in 1966 had purchased the nearby weekly newspaper, the *Ellsworth American*. Thus, the Wiggins family began a new life in coastal Maine. With his characteristic, unflagging verve, Russell built the *American* into a major editorial voice within the state. Circulation rose from 6,000 to 11,000 subscribers. He railed against the practice of closed meetings held by local officials, against the organization of the Ellsworth police department by the corrupt Teamsters' Union, and against state-sponsored gambling. He and his friendly neighbor, E. B. White, complained about poor postal service. Russell defended the constitutional right of the freedom of the press in his editorials and in books: *Freedom or Secrecy* (1957), a contribution to *Civil Rights, the Constitution, and the Courts* (1967), and an essay, 'Afterward: The Legacy of the Press,' in the AAS volume, *The Press and the American Revolution* (1980). Russell wrote a column, 'The Fence Viewer,' in which he commented upon the local scene. Although Russell sold the *American* in 1991, he remained its editor and continued to write all the editorials and to contribute a homely verse each week that accompanied a photograph of some Maine locale or event. Russell went to his office daily until failing strength prevented him from doing so.

The Wiggins's handsome farmstead, Carlton Cove on the Benjamin River, was a destination for visiting sailors—Walter Cronkite and the American Antiquarian Society's 'Buz' Knowlton among them. Russell sailed his own 1902 Friendship sloop, *The*

Amity (rebuilt from the keel up to keep her afloat) on Eggemoggin Reach. Children and grandchildren gathered there regularly. The McCorison family was invited to use the Wiggins's other summer place, 'Grayledge,' during the month of August for several years during the 1970s. Open and friendly, Mabel and Russell Wiggins served as *parentis in locis* to scores of family members, friends, and neighbors.

In the fall of 1969 the undersigned drove to Brooklin to ask Russell Wiggins if he would accept an invitation from the AAS Council of a nomination of vice president of the American Antiquarian Society. Russell agreed to stand for election at the annual meeting in October 1969. The following year he was elected president, succeeding C. Waller Barrett. Russell retired from office at the annual meeting of 1977, but those seven, short years were exciting ones. His leadership and unbounded faith in the future of AAS encouraged dramatic changes. The staff of the Society was professionalized and expanded from eighteen members in 1970 to thirty-two in 1977; the endowed funds rose from \$3,314,000 to \$4,164,000, and the budget from \$216,000 to \$654,000. Although endowment and annual fund-raising remained an active enterprise (to which Russell was a generous contributor), operating deficits appeared upon the financial statements. An addition to and renovation of Antiquarian Hall was accomplished. The fellowship program was inaugurated. AAS instituted computerized cataloguing of its acquisitions and became a partner in the international project, the English Short Title Catalogue. Much to Russell's dismay and embarrassment, the nomination to AAS membership of Richard M. Nixon was defeated at the 1971 semiannual meeting. The Society's manuscript collections were reorganized, as were the graphic arts and the newspaper collections. AAS was an organizing institution of the Independent Research Libraries Association and the earliest financial support from the National Endowment for the Humanities and from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation was received. Publications proliferated and innovative projects were achieved

to celebrate the 1976 Bicentennial. Having been succeeded in the chair by John Jeppson 2nd in 1977, Russell remained active on the Council for six more years, actively encouraging the acquisition of the Goddard-Daniels House for use as a residence for visiting fellows. He and Mabel were enthusiastic participants at the Society's annual and semiannual meetings. Both possessed high spirits. Russell, especially, entertained us by telling innumerable stories and he was not unknown to break into a rousing rendition of 'Danny Boy,' claiming his Irish heritage authorized such nonsense. In recognition of his contributions to the welfare of the Society and of his life-long commitment to freedom of the press, an endowment was established by his friends to fund the annual 'James Russell Wiggins Lecture on the History of the Book in America.' The incumbents of the lectureship include the brightest exponents of this field of scholarship that was established at AAS during Russell's era of leadership.

Russell Wiggins died at Carlton Cove on November 19, 2000. He was ninety-six years old. His once indomitable heart just grew tired. His beloved companion Mabel died in 1990. Three of their children also predeceased him: William in 1991, Geraldine Thomssen in 1994, and John in 1997. Patricia Schroth, of Sedgwick, Maine, survives him, as do a multitude of grandchildren, other family members, and friends.

Marcus A. McCorison

ROBERT ALLEN RUTLAND

Robert Allen Rutland, former research professor of history at the University of Tulsa and professor emeritus of American history at the University of Virginia, friend and member of the American Antiquarian Society, died at his home in Tulsa on December 30, 2000. Bob was born in Okmulgee, Oklahoma, on October 1, 1922. After army service in World War II from 1943 to 1946, Bob

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