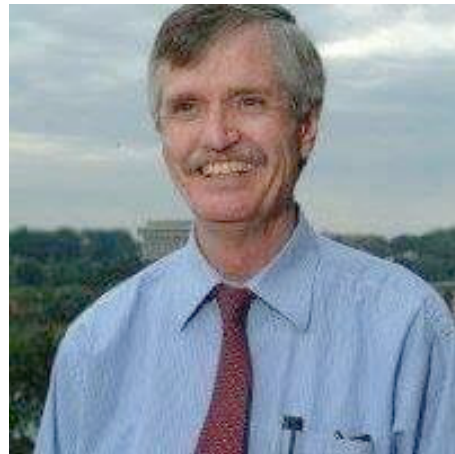


Larry McQuillan, White House reporter for 25 years, dies at 70

By CHRIS CONNELL

Larry McQuillan, who covered the Attica prison riots and traversed the globe with presidents from Gerald Ford to George W. Bush for UPI, Reuters and major dailies, died Saturday, Sept. 19, at the age of 70 in Silver Spring, Md. His wife Geraldine, said Larry lost a three-year battle with cutaneous squamous cell carcinoma.

The ever-smiling McQuillan spent the past decade as director of public affairs for the American Institutes for Research after three decades as a newsman in New York state and Washington. He covered the White House for a quarter century and was a past president of the White House Correspondents Association.



He and AP's Charlie Hanley were classmates in St. Bonaventure's School of Journalism in the 1960s. "Larry and I went back to antediluvian days together -- in the Bonaventure journalism program, then working together as draftee Army journalists in Vietnam, and then competing across the hall from each other -- AP and UPI -- in Albany in the early '70s. An absolutely wonderful human being whose loss leaves a hole in a lot of hearts," said the retired AP special correspondent.

Another classmate, Dennis Mulhearn, fondly recalled that fellow students called Larry "Clark" for his passing resemblance to the television version of Clark Kent.

McQuillan and Hanley were both recipients of St. Bonaventure's Hellinger Award for distinguished alumni journalists, as was Bob Dubill, former AP bureau chief in New Jersey and retired executive editor of USA Today. "I knew Larry well-before, during and after we worked at USA Today. Giant of a journalist, sweetheart of a man. A staggering loss," said Dubill.

Marlin Fitzwater, in *Call the Briefing*, his memoir of his years as press secretary to Presidents Ronald Reagan and George H.W. Bush, described McQuillan as "a bedrock journalist" who "knew how to read a police blotter, how to get a hospital nurse to discuss her patients, and how to tune in to a police scanner to be first at a fire. He was real people."

He was also a devoted father to son Sean and more recently a doting grandfather to Sean and Kendra McQuillan's two daughters, ages 5 and five months. When Sean was an infant, Larry would tote him along to Camp David, Maryland, where wire service reporters and photographers spent the weekend just to watch the president's helicopter come and go.

Jimmy Carter took a shine to the little boy and made a point of greeting him. The late Frank Cormier chronicled one encounter in which the lad, then 4, turned his head away as the president approached. The father explained his reticence: "Sean told me he is only shy with two people - you and Santa Claus." Frank's account was carried in newspapers across the country.

Gerrie McQuillan, a senior researcher with the U.S. National Center for Health Statistics, called her husband "a kind and gentle man ... who will be missed by many." That is an understatement.