

# ShapTalk

Editor  
Lisa O'Donnell Connors  
Extension 6803

## Saying Goodbye to Mrs. Graham

On Monday, July 23, Post employees, retirees, and independent distributors, along with the country's leaders in government, media and business filled National Cathedral to capacity to pay homage to Katharine Meyer Graham, the newspaper's former publisher and former chairman and chief executive of The Washington Post Company. Mrs. Graham died on Tuesday, July 17, the same date as her father, Eugene Meyer, who passed away in 1959.

It was a difficult week for many employees who read in the newspaper last Monday morning that Mrs. Graham was in critical condition from head injuries suffered on Sunday when she fell on a walkway while attending an annual conference of business leaders in Boise, Idaho. An e-mail message from Publisher **BO JONES** on the status of Mrs. Graham produced a flood of replies from employees throughout the newspaper voicing concern about the health of the woman they had worked with, in some cases, for 30 to 40 years. On Tuesday afternoon, the sad news came that Mrs. Graham died from her injuries.

Throughout the week, employees gathered in hallways and lobbies to share their favorite Mrs. Graham stories. **BRIAN NOYES**, Magazine, recalled a difficult time in Paris 15 years

ago, when Mrs. Graham saved the day. He and Nina Hyde, the late fashion editor for The Post were trying to get back to the United States with the fashions used for a photo shoot in Paris. Noyes and King were held up for two weeks by French customs officials who told them that their paperwork wasn't in order. Luckily, Mrs. Graham happened to be at the Paris bureau and they explained the problem to her. It was mysteriously and quickly cleared up the next day. "At a staff reception a year later, I greeted Mrs. Graham and recounted the incident, telling her I'd been curious whether she had anything to do with the sudden release of the clothes," said Noyes. She held my arm and with a wink answered, "Just know that good chocolates speak an international language."

**EDNA HORNBERGER**, Human Resources, recalls being in the lobby of the Northwest Building a couple years ago when the presses were still



in the building. It was during one of the early press runs for the MegaEmployment section. "Mrs. Graham was walking through the lobby and stopped and turned to me and said, 'Oh Edna, the presses are running, it's so great to hear them running.' She was tickled to see the business at work."

"I'm a parent and I was so impressed that after her husband died she just picked up her boots and took care of her children and the newspaper," said **GAIL BURKLEY**, Classi-

fied. "I have a lot of respect for what she did as a woman and mother."

During the week, The Post's managers and vice presidents brought their staffs together to tell them the news of Mrs. Graham and the funeral arrangements. Executive Editor, **LEN DOWNIE**, and former Executive Editor **BEN BRADLEE** spoke to the Newsroom. "This is a very difficult time for all of us. I've been incredibly struck by the mood of this newsroom ever since we got word on Saturday that something bad had befallen Katharine Graham. All of you right from the start have been so concerned about her; our foreign correspondents, our

people in the bureaus have been calling in. This clearly is a member of each and every one of our families, not some distant owner of this newspaper, but somebody who has been very special to all of us," noted Downie.

In his remarks to a gathering in the Circulation Department, Hills commented, "The Post is a community and like a community, comes together in a time of grief...this is a huge loss to all of us who knew her. The best way we can honor her memory is to carry her torch forward."

On the day she died, the loss of Mrs. Graham was also felt by the rest of Washington and across the country. She was

eulogized on the floor of the Senate and the House of Representatives. Local radio and television stations immediately began running special features on her life. That evening, she was remembered on the network evening news and Mrs. Graham was the topic for ABC-TV's "Nightline." On Wednesday, July 18, news of her death made the front page of newspapers across the country, including the *New York Times*, *USA Today*, the *Wall Street Journal* and the *New York Post*.

In honor of Mrs. Graham, flowers, candles, holy cards and even a reporter's notebook soon began to accumulate on the front of the linotype machine at the entrance to the Northwest

Building on 15th Street. The flowers came with condolences from across the country.

All week, employees, readers, tourists and admirers stood in line at the entrance of the Northwest Building to write a note or a fond remembrance in a condolence book for the Graham family.

**DEREK VAN BUREN**, IT, wrote, "Mrs. Graham was an inspiration to us all. I remember her from when I was delivering The Post as a carrier during Watergate. I have since had the privilege to work for her company as an adult. She will be missed."

"What an honor it was to have worked for such a brave woman who inspired other



PHOTO - TRACY A. WOODWARD

The entrance to National Cathedral before the services.

women all over the world,” wrote **LESLIE WALKER**, News. “Her legacy and spirit will always be with us.”

An unsigned inscription in the book noted, “I didn’t do much more than hold the door for you, or help you up a step or two, but your presence was great. I try every day to live up to your standards both on the job and off.”

On Monday, July 23, twelve busses from the Northwest Building and two each from the Springfield and College Park plants brought Post employees to the celebration of Mrs. Graham’s life at National Cathedral. More than 1,300 employees and retirees came via the busses and untold

numbers of current and former employees also took cabs, Metro and their cars to National Cathedral

Two Post employees also had the privilege of participating in the funeral service. Thirty-eight-year Post veteran **STANLEY UTTERBACK**, Accounting, a 20-year volunteer at the National Cathedral was a verger in the funeral procession, carrying a staff called a verge, before the coffin. “Because I work at The Post, I was given the privilege of escorting Mrs. Graham in and out of the service.” **JANE HOFFMAN**, Budget, was asked by a friend in the Cathedral’s Choral Society to sing with the group during the

services. “It was a special honor...it was important to me that I could do any little thing to honor Mrs. Graham.”

A few hundred employees who were not able to attend the services watched the funeral on large screen televisions that were set up in the 3rd floor and 9th floor in the Northwest Building. “It was awesome,” commented **GLORIA NELSON**, Engineering. “It was like we had front row seats. I thought the service was breathtaking.”

“It was a touching service,” said **BOBBY BRYANT**, Security, who watched the services on the 3rd floor.

**JOYCE HARDY**, Centrex, attended the services at the

Cathedral. “It was something to behold,” she said. “It was very elegant, but then, she was an elegant lady.”

In his tributes to Mrs. Graham at the service, **BEN BRADLEE** said, “Kay’s laughter will ring in her friends ears for years to come. She was a spectacular dame and I loved her.” Post Chairman **DON GRAHAM** said of his mother, that she was lucky in her friends and impossibly lucky with her staff.

On Tuesday, an unidentified man came up the steps to the Northwest Building to sign the condolence book. “Guess she made it upstairs all right,” he said. “There was a meteor shower last night.”



Ushers Warren Buffet and Bill Gates look over the seating chart prior to the funeral services.

PHOTO - RICH LIPSKI

The 9th floor community room at the Northwest Building during the services.



PHOTO - GERALD MARTINEAU





**MARGARET GLASER**, Advertising, with the condolence book and the flowers that were left at the linotype machine outside the Northwest Building.



PHOTO - CARRIE MORSE

**NGHIA PHAN**, Accounting, writes a note in the condolence book at the Northwest Building.



Vice President/ Advertising & Marketing, **STEVE HILLS**, and Circulation Department staff listen as Vice President/ Business Manager **TED LUTZ** fills them in on details for Mrs. Graham's funeral.



PHOTO - REX POTTS

Above, busses line up outside the College Park Plant to take employees to the funeral.

Employees from the Northwest Building line up to board the busses going to Mrs. Graham's funeral.



PHOTO - DAVID JONES



**JOHN MINTZ**,  
News, watches the  
funeral services from  
the National Desk.

Watergate reporters  
Carl Bernstein, (left) and  
**BOB WOODWARD** after  
Mrs. Graham's funeral.



Post employees, includ-  
ing **NOEL EPSTEIN**,  
director of Washington  
Post Books, (center)  
exchanged hugs and  
shared memories outside  
the Cathedral.



Participants in Mrs. Graham's funeral included, (l-r) Vice President Dick Cheney, wife, Lynne, and daughter, Liz Cheney Perry; former President Bill Clinton, and wife, Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton, and New York Governor George Pataki.

PHOTO - RICH LIPSKI



**BEN BRADLEE** and his wife, Sally Quinn.

PHOTO - RICH LIPSKI



PHOTO - MICHEL duCILLE

**STANLEY UTTERBACK,** Accounting, stands before Mrs. Graham's coffin in his role as a verger in the procession.