



By Clarissa Start Davidson,

Bob Broeg

of the

POST-DISPATCH

The boy was 13 years old and thrilled beyond belief when his school teacher told him that she knew a school teacher who was the sister of a famed sports writer, J. Roy Stockton, of the St. Louis Post-Dispatch. Knowing of the boy's interest in sports and his hero worship of Stockton, she arranged a meeting. Stockton was kind and said the things writers say to young would-be writers. He told him to go to college and to study English because "you never know enough about the language you use." He also took him on a tour of the building and, following the time honored ritual extended toward small boys on tours of newspaper plants, saw that he got a slug of type which spelled his name—Bob Broeg.

All that was long ago. More than 30 years ago. Since then, the Post-Dispatch linotype operators have set the name, Bob Broeg, thousands of times. John E. Wray, editor of the sports department when he first visited the Post-Dispatch, retired and J. Roy Stockton took over. Then Stockton retired in 1958 and Broeg, B.J. '41, University of Missouri, became the editor.

"When I first came to work here, an old timer gave me a piece of advice—'Be neat and keep your sense of humor,'" says Broeg.

He has tried to follow both admonitions. Easy smiling, boyish looking, 44-year-old Broeg is neat—well, pretty neat for a newspaperman—although in the heat of deadlines, his bow tie may come untied. His desk by the window of the city room on the fifth floor of the Post-Dispatch building, 12th street and Franklin avenue, is also pretty neat for a newspaperman.

As for his sense of humor, it's very much intact. You ask him how he prefers to have his name pronounced—Breeg? Brigg?

"Rhymes with 'plague,'" he says with a grin.

The Broeg family lived in South St. Louis. Robert Michael Broeg and Alice Wiley Broeg had two sons, Bob and Fred. The father, who died in 1954, was a bread truck driver, later sales supervisor for Continental Baking Co. and president of Teamsters Local 611. He also had been Mississippi Valley lightweight boxing champion as a youth and his boys grew up with a natural interest in athletics. Fred played football at Missouri U. and St. Louis U. and is now sales manager for the George Miller Chevrolet Company. The boys' mother still lives in St. Louis.

Bob's athletic abilities showed up in high school

baseball and basketball, Muny League baseball and soccer, freshman baseball and intramural football at college.

Bob began his writing early. From age 8 on, he was writing—"for the waste basket," he says modestly. When he saw a baseball game with the Knothole Gang he came home and wrote it up.

Miss Mary Culver, his teacher at Mount Pleasant School, encouraged him with his writing and it was she who arranged the meeting with Stockton. Bob went on to Cleveland High, where he was editor of the Orange and Blue student paper. In the summer of '36 he worked at Sportsman's Park as their youngest ticket-taker. He worked nights as a softball scorer and announcer, receiving \$1 for his day job, \$2 for the night one; noon to midnight pay, \$3.

THAT FALL HE ENTERED THE UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI, became the first sports editor of the Missouri Student and a sports columnist for the Missourian. A typical depression day student, he washed dishes at the Sigma Phi Epsilon house to make expenses. When a full time job was offered, he took it even though it meant stretching his senior year out over two years.

"I had a job which no longer exists, campus correspondent for the Associated Press," he explained. "It paid magnificently—\$18 a week. I used to tell Paul Christman I was the only one making more money than he was. For \$18 a week, you not only could take a girl to Gaebler's for cokes but to dinner and a movie, too. Hal Boyle had had the job at one time. It was fine experience."

He's especially proud of the fact that he chose the job for its experience even though he was offered a higher paying one at the time. It came about in the summer of 1939 while he was on his vacation job with the Cardinals public relations office. He had assisted Max Patrick in the M. U. public relations department and when Patrick left, Virgil Spurling called and offered Bob the job at a whopping \$25 a week. It was tempting but Bob had kept up contacts with J. Roy Stockton and both Stockton and Jake Hamel, correspondent of the AP, had recommended him for the AP job.

Soon he was called to the Cardinal club house.

"All I could see when I walked in was Pepper Martin with a headlock on a man with curly hair. It was



Frankie Frisch, Sports Editor Broeg, and Stan Musial.

Bob Broeg continued

Paul Mickelson, AP division news editor, having a reunion with Martin. He had come to offer me the job. I took it with great trepidation—\$18 a week instead of \$25. Also I was going to have to do things I'd never done before, cover the test case for admission of a Negro student, cover such grim things as highway deaths involving students. You could make an awful fool of yourself."

Mickelson invited him to Kansas City to get his instructions for the job. Bob's '34 convertible broke down and he had to be towed part way. When he arrived, the AP office was like a madhouse. The state editor, Ed Mills, apologized and told him he'd have to wait. All day long he waited, watching the wild activity and thinking, "If this is a typical day, it's not for me." Finally the editor returned, apologized again, and said he wouldn't be able to see him but would mail the instructions.

"Mr. Mills," Bob asked, "is this a typical day?"

Mills looked at him in amazement. "Didn't you know what's happened?" he asked. "Great Britain's declared war on Germany."

The young reporter went back to Columbia without instructions but with great optimism. His first mishap was caused by the delicate touch of the punch teletype machine, which he used for his first story, a human interest account of a boy from the Ozarks who rode his pet mule, Rosie, to college.

He tied up precious machine time for 20 minutes instead of the normal four or five and the story was gibberish. The next day Mickelson commented, "I'm sure that was a good story on Rosie, if I could have read it. Who punched the story—you or the mule?"

IT WAS STILL WONDERFUL EXPERIENCE. In 1940 he took a summer off to work as executive secretary of the National Semi-Pro Baseball Congress at Wichita, Kan. Back to the AP, he was on the legislative staff at Jefferson City during the "governorship steal" session of

1941. Transferred to Boston, Mass. after graduation, he did rewrite and sports until September 1942 when he joined the St. Louis Star-Times. Three months later he talked himself into the Marines despite a weak eye.

He often says that he reached the Post-Dispatch by way of Cape Horn. During his long acquaintance with Stockton, the veteran writer had advised, "Make 'em come to you, don't go to them when you want a job." When jobs were scarce, this advice seemed strange. But when he finished his military service in 1945, he had offers from every place he'd worked, plus one from John E. Wray, sports editor of the Post-Dispatch.

"People often say to me, 'I suppose you've achieved your ambition, being sports editor of the Post-Dispatch,'" says Broeg, "but this never was my ambition. My ambition had been a simple one, and when I look back on it, a terribly narrow one. All I wanted to do was cover the Cardinals as a sports writer for the Post-Dispatch. When I started doing that, I had achieved my ambition. I had no further aspirations. After all, Mr. Wray was indestructible and Stockton was the star reporter. I came on as 13th man on the staff."

However, the indestructible Mr. Wray did retire and Stockton was named editor and in time, Broeg was the star. In 1958 when Stockton retired, Bob Broeg became the third man to hold the job as sports editor of the Post-Dispatch. It's a big job and often one with big headaches.

Broeg travels less now, only to World Series, Spring Training, All Star games, Kentucky Derby, and week end football games. Besides editing, he writes a daily column, works long hours, 8:30 a. m. to 6:30 or 7 at night, and in his spare time, he writes for other publications. He has had 12 stories in the Saturday Evening Post, the last one on Dan Devine, M. U. football coach. In 1946 he co-authored a sports book, "Don't Bring THAT Up," and now is working on a biography of Stan Musial.

A member of Kappa Tau Alpha, Sigma Delta Chi, a past president of the Baseball Writers Association, he is much in demand for speeches and appearances.

His wife, the former Dorothy Carr, B.J. '42, was a Savitar Queen. They met on a blind date—"blind for her, not me," says Bob, laughing. "I'm not dumb. As Jim Conzelman says of his wife, Dorothy is my 'severest friend and warmest critic.' She's a big help at editing stories and squeezing out a lot of hot air."

Looking back on their student days at M. U., Bob admits he sees them in "a golden glow."

"I remember the fun, the parties, the big traveling bands, the student bands that played at jelly joints in the afternoon, the fraternity house where I picked up some of the polish and social graces I needed, the kindness of the faculty, especially Dean Frank L. Martin. . . .

"I'm sure the kids are smarter now," he continues. "Certainly college is tougher, the school is bigger and better. But I'm sure they can't have more fun than we had."