



# Bill Callahan:

## Missouri's Sports Publicist

By ART MATHERS, '58

The morning after a Tiger football game, Mr. Average M. U. Fan grabs his copy of a metropolitan paper and scans it eagerly for the story of the game, the boxscore, team and individual statistics, and other sidelights of the contest.

The account of the game is the reporter's. But all the "extra's," including mimeographed play-by-play sheets available to the working press, represents the direct or supervisory efforts of William F. (Bill) Callahan, University sports publicity director and the man-behind-the-scenes at all Mizzou athletic events.

For a fellow recognizable to only a handful of Tiger backers Bill has a most important job. His various duties, which run anywhere from preparing brochures to maintaining a sports page clipping service, number close to 20.

Bill's regular staff consists of only three part-time student assistants, although a secretary was added about a year and a half ago to handle the unusually heavy load of outside correspondence.

Extra assistance is necessary for major sporting events. A home football game, for instance, requires 10 to 12 helpers. That includes three full-time statisticians, who file a report to the National Collegiate Athletic Association after the game.

Callahan's office in Rothwell Gym continually hums with activity, especially just prior to a major event. The busiest time, according to Bill, is the day before a football game at Memorial Stadium. Out-of-town reporters and radiomen start arriving Friday, and it is Bill's job to accommodate them in countless ways while he is still making pre-game preparations.

Bespectacled Bill has become such a fixture around the University athletic department the past eight years that few current Tiger athletes realize he is a Missourian only by adoption.

Callahan, a native of Newport, R. I., first broke into sports writing at Rhode Island State College. He majored in business administration, however, but found time to edit the college yearbook before being graduated in 1941.

Early in 1942 Bill entered the Army as a second lieutenant. Although he didn't do any writing during a service hitch which took him to Normandy, Okinawa and Korea, it was during this period that he definitely decided upon a career in sports writing.

He received his discharge just in time to enroll

in the University School of Journalism in February, 1946. It took him a year to pick up the Bachelor of Journalism degree, and he recalls writing a daily sports column—"Cal's Corner"—in the *Missourian*.

For five months after his graduation Callahan was the sports editor or, as he puts it, the "sports department"—of the Coffeyville (Kan.) Daily Journal. From Coffeyville he advanced to the Topeka State Journal where he spent a year as sports editor.

When veteran Tiger publicist Blaine Carr announced his impending retirement in 1948, Bill applied for the job. He was accepted soon afterward and reported to work in July of that same year.

How does Callahan feel about his background role which seldom permits him to see his creative work in print, at least the same as he writes it?

"It was hard to get used to at first," Bill discloses, "but I soon came to the realization that it was my business just to supply the facts as simple and readable as possible—and leave it to the correspondents to fashion the clever phrases."

The main responsibility of a sports publicity man, Bill explains, is "to sell his product to the public" just as a public relations man does.

Although he admittedly exerts a bit more effort on feature material, Callahan strives merely to point out interesting angles which the writers can develop.

There are other compensations. For example, Bill counts among his personal friends some of the most famous writers and radio personalities in the Midwest and the nation. He rubs shoulders with fellows like Bob Broeg, Bill Corum, Robert Burnes, J. Roy Stockton, Dave Condon, Bob Busby, Ernie Mehl, Harry Caray, Joe Garagiola and many others.

Add to these the names of many fine athletes and coaches Bill has known here at Mizzou and you can see how the 37-year-old New Englander has maintained a high degree of enthusiasm for his work.

Callahan hasn't added much poundage since his days at Rhode Island State. He still carries only 145 pounds on a 5-10 frame, and his boundless energy combines with frequent trips to the University handball courts to repel any threats to a middle-thirty paunch.

Bill is married to the former Barbara Morrissey of Cranston, R. I., and they have four children—Judy (12), Maureen (10), Steve (7) and Joe (5).