

The Magazine of the Mizzou Alumni Association

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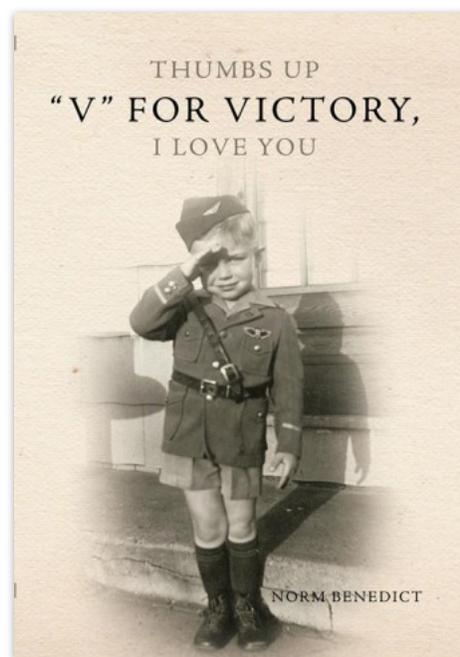
Meet Mr. Brady

Read a book excerpt about Tom Brady, BA '24, for whom Brady Commons was named.

By Norm Benedict

Published Nov. 7, 2012

In *Thumbs Up, "V" for Victory, I Love You* (AuthorHouse, 2011), author Norm Benedict, Arts '61, recounts tales of growing up in Columbia during the 1940s and 1950s. He attended University Laboratory and High School and later Mizzou. Among Benedict's childhood friends was Tom Brady, whose father, also Tom, was the eponym of Brady Commons (now MU Student Center). The elder Brady graduated from MU in 1924, later taught at MU and worked as an administrator. Here's an excerpt from *Thumbs Up* that sketches the well known MU figure.



Thumbs Up "V" for Victory, I Love You by Norm Benedict, Arts '61. (AuthorHouse, 2011)

Of all my friends' parents we were getting to know during this period, it was Tom Brady's father I remember most fondly. A vice president of the university and a Greek scholar, he looked like a good old boy farmer from the Missouri boondocks. Of Scotch-Irish descent and very much a gentleman, he chewed tobacco and, with his jolly Irish face leading the way, peered at you over his simple and somewhat bent spectacles — the type of fellow you'd normally expect to see lounging around a wood stove in the general store, ready to share some time with just about anyone passing by, a regular member of the "spit 'n whittle" club, as we used to say.

A master storyteller, Tom Brady had first appeared on the Missouri campus back in the mid-'30s, a handsome young man with all the positive facets of his heritage etched on his face. Many young women "set their caps" (as I'm told the saying went then) for him, but he wound up marrying a pretty, dark-haired young woman from Colorado, after spending a summer there.

Thomas Allan Brady Sr. later switched what religious allegiance he had to Catholicism, to match that of his new wife, and remained devoted to this conversion for the rest of his life. As Tom Jr. and I became better friends, we began spending more time in each other's homes — Tom having lunch or dinner at my house, and me doing

the same at his. I can't speak for him, but it must have been something of a shock for Tom to share a meal with my family, with only my parents, me and my younger brother, then around six, with whom to share the meal. When I did the same at his home, I faced a formidable gathering; eight children and two parents – eleven people, counting me at the table. I was pre-warned to stand my ground or risk going without food, and while it was an eye-opener for me, it was engrossing at the same time.

The Brady clan – all ten of them – lived in an average sized two story (with basement) home on West Rollins Road, on a rise as it came out of the 'quarry' area, making the location of the home in what became known as 'Quarry Heights' section, the name given to the then-new development built around these digs, but which came with a clear (and deep) good-sized swimming and fishing area. The home next door, where Will Johnson, another classmate, and his family resided, was an exact floor plan of the Brady home. Susan was the oldest of Tom's siblings, whom he followed. The others (I can remember their names but am not sure of the birth order) were Bob, John, Sally, Margaret, Theresa – and the baby, Bill.

After a meal at the Brady's, "old" Tom would sometimes hold forth, while we sat on the floor

around him, and listened intently as he took off with a few of his yarns. The University of Missouri, the oldest university west of the Mississippi River, had been founded in 1839 due largely to the generosity of one man, James S. Rollins, a wealthy farmer, landowner, member of Congress during the Civil War, and the fellow so many streets and buildings had been named for. As the years beyond that founding year began to pass, the name Rollins became almost god-like; without the actions of him and his family, Columbia might have floundered or returned to dust, and, like many other upstarts that sprouted in the early 19th century only to wilt later, never to be heard from again.

So it was alarming (and hilarious) when Tom revealed to us that an old acquaintance of his once told him that “The last male Rollins to do an honest day’s work in his life was born in 1858.” He also told us the uproarious anecdote about a time in the late 1930s when the city fathers decided to change some of the house numbers in town and, in some cases, the name of the street on which you lived.

One of the Rollins descendants lived in an area called Grasslands — actually a subdivision built on what had been (and named for) the farm of the oldest of founder Rollins’ sons. Most, if not all of the streets in this expanding and pleasant

neighborhood had been given the name of someone from the Rollins family. The Rollins in question lived on the corner of Wayne and Bingham roads – but had a Bingham address. When the Rollins in question received his new house number from the city, he found they had also changed his address to Wayne Road.

The Rollins descendant stormed down to City Hall and complained mightily. “Why are you upset?” came the reply. “It’s not as if we moved your home; it’s just now known by a different number and different street name – Wayne Road. How can that be such a problem?” the person in charge inquired. “Because,” the Rollins family member replied, “Uncle Wayne was a b—d, and I never liked him.”

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Published by MIZZOU magazine, 109 Reynolds Alumni Center, Columbia, MO 65211 | Phone: 573-882-5916 | Email: mizzou@missouri.edu

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