

THE CHASER

SPJ

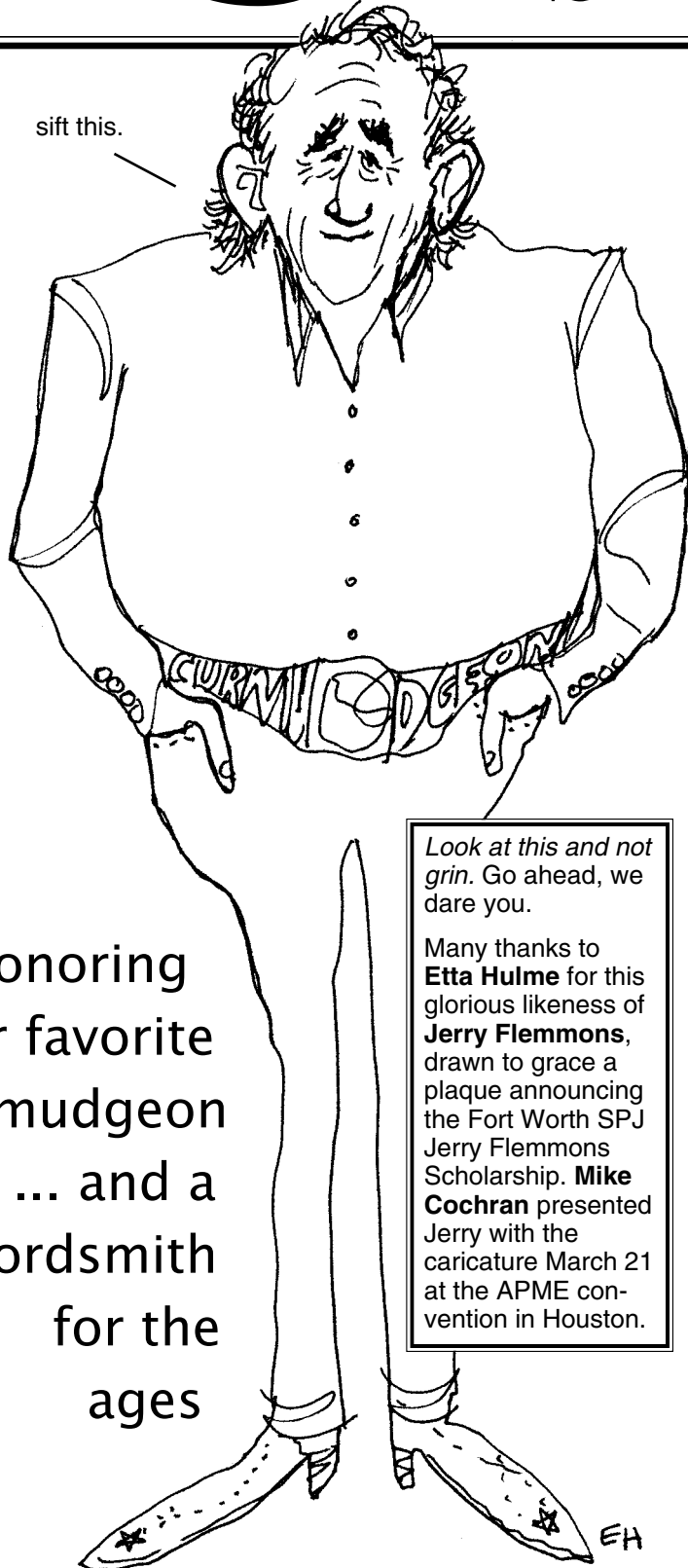
April 1998

Fort Worth Chapter / Society of Professional Journalists

*"If it happened in Fort Worth ...
it's news to us!"*

items: jdycus@arlington.net

sift this.



honoring
our favorite
curmudgeon
... and a
wordsmith
for the
ages

*Look at this and not
grin. Go ahead, we
dare you.*

Many thanks to **Etta Hulme** for this glorious likeness of **Jerry Flemmons**, drawn to grace a plaque announcing the Fort Worth SPJ Jerry Flemmons Scholarship. **Mike Cochran** presented Jerry with the caricature March 21 at the APME convention in Houston.

WHEN THE MEDIA SHOW UP FIRST

Before the defense team ever met the men it will defend in the killing of an Arlington teen, the pair confessed in TV and print interviews. Was this fair reporting ... or a rush to trial by typewriter?

Court-appointed defense attorneys Paul Conner and Tim Moore cannot discuss specifics of the case, but what they can talk about — the media's role in a high-profile crime, whether the justice system treats differently confessions made to police or to the press — should make for a fascinating and informative time as they join Fort Worth SPJ for the April meeting.

Robert Neville, represented by Moore, and Michael Hall, Conner's client, are charged in the slaying of 19-year-old Amy Robinson, a sacker at an Arlington Kroger.

In jailhouse interviews, Neville, 23, and Hall, 18, said they are white supremacists and had planned to go on a killing spree targeting minorities but instead chose Robinson, a friend, because she was an easier victim. They said they shot her repeatedly after taking her to a secluded field in northeast Fort Worth.

The two former Arlington residents indicated in interviews that they hope to receive

One parting shot for the cow boys

At the April SPJ meeting, attorney Chip Babcock shared his experiences in defending talk-show host Oprah Winfrey against charges of defaming the beef industry. Herewith excerpts from his closing charge to the Amarillo jury:

Oprah, you have heard, is powerful and influential, but she gets it. She gets the fact that she's powerful and influential, and every day before she does her show, she prays to God that she uses that power and influence wisely. In a few minutes, she will relinquish that power and influence to you.

You literally have the opportunity to silence one of the most powerful voices for good in America today by your verdict. I am looking for leaders on this jury, leaders to say that free speech in this country is not for sale. Oprah has been with you for each and every minute and every hour of these five-plus weeks. She is here to validate her reputation, but more importantly, to validate our right to free speech. And we should thank her. We should all thank her because if we are not free to ask the question what is, how can we ever hope to improve on what will be?

Free speech is not just the ideas that we agree with and that we like. Free speech is protecting the ideas that we like the least. They're the ideas that we have to protect the most because, ladies and gentlemen, this is America. And Oprah Winfrey is one of the shining lights that sheds light onto the darkness of so many people's lives. She is an angel over this country. And if they can silence Oprah, who are they going to silence next? If they can muzzle Oprah Winfrey, rich and powerful men can come after us. And that's my opinion.

TRIAL, from p. 1

the death penalty.

Conner acknowledged that he is concerned about the publicity the case has received.

"It all depends on where an impartial jury panel can be found," he told the Star-Telegram. "Obviously it makes for complications."

RSVP 257-5059

(by Friday, April 10)

where:

Water Street Seafood, University Park Village shopping center, a block south of I-30 on University Drive

when: Tuesday, April 14

board 5:30 p.m., mingling (cash bar) 6:30, dinner at 7

IN MEMORIAM

Long-time SPJ member Willard Barr, a civic activist and former Fort Worth mayor whom Jim Wright called "a towering example of decency and basic goodness," died March 29 after suffering a stroke. He was 90.

Mr. Barr's single term as mayor, 1965-67, forever changed the city. A town hall meeting in 1964 sparked the idea for the Tarrant County Convention Center, Tarrant County Junior College District, Turnpike Stadium and numerous capital improvements.

"There was in him no guile, no pretense," Wright said of his friend, Fort Worth's first popularly elected mayor in 42 years. "He never had to read an opinion poll to know what he believed."

A donation has been made to the SPJ scholarship fund in Mr. Barr's honor.

cost:

\$12 (includes tip); \$6 students

on the menu:

8-ounce mesquite-grilled chicken, 4-ounce brandy mushroom trout, mesquite-grilled shrimp-k-bob or fettuccine with fresh tomatoes, basil and garlic, all except the fettuccine served with a salad, rice pilaf, vegetable, fresh-baked bread and tea, soft drink or coffee.

SPJ

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