



Legion Display

In the center of the activity in Rochester's Midtown Mall, the Legion of Mary is distributing Catholic literature to interested passers-by. Scanning a copy of the Courier-Journal is Karen Poupart while her 5-month-old daughter Edelle takes a catnap. Kathryn Caruana takes a holy card from legionnaire Millie Barnes as Louise Rossi looks on.

IN THIS CORNER



George Beahon

The story said Tom Decker resigned as anchorman at Channel 8 because the numbers got to him. Not the bogeyman numbers of television, the ratings, but the numbers 6 and 11, p.m., twice a day. Be there.

Okay, that was part of it, after more than 20 years of broadcasting. Another part, was management's insistence on a new format that spits out film stories like a slot machine and reduces the anchorperson to someone dealing a series of 20-second "intros" to a film story.

Probably I mix in the wrong circles, but never in my life have I heard a viewer separate himself from a 30-minute news show and add up the number of film stories that were produced. One line from a critic can make some management minds do 90-degree bends. Even when some of the critics don't know a DEF from a PSA. That tells you something about the insecurity of the thinking at the top.

But this is supposed to be a sports column and that takes us back to a series of spring trainings that included some of the best days of my life. They were spent with our families, meaning the Deckers and ours, at Daytona Beach, and the kids played together and their parents played together. The kids got more sleep, but they were super times. Both of us should have backed up to the pay window with embarrassment to collect salary plus expenses.

Decker did play-by-play Red Wing baseball for seven years and he was not the best. The only one I put ahead of him was Jack Buck, who made it big and in a hurry. Tom Decker turned down several chances to do big league baseball, but he refused to start as Number 2 man in the booth and then he got away from the fun and games and into what supposedly is more important news.

People I work with in the crazy mixed up television business — and I refer to direct competitors — insist he was the best, and that was long before he passed the dice.

He was Number 1 for so long everybody else fought for Number 2. He pioneered great TV news anchoring, and when his

team dropped from first to last it was no fault of his. No more on that subject.

Relatively few people understand the pressures on an anchorman because it is something like hockey. You win by making fewer mistakes, by bailing out of trouble that does not always show on the receiving end. Decker devoured pressure.

Decker produced the image of class in an anchorman. He was a giant in his market. By contributing more than his share to broadcast journalism he created a Channel 8 dynasty that lasted a long, long time.

He appreciated and admired good writing, and abhorred bad writing. When they took away his typewriter, it amounted to major surgery. He survived some real serious surgery four months ago, and by getting out of the deadly numbers game he is certain to be happier and healthier.

Lest this sound like a tear-jerking obit, let me assure one and all that Thomas Joseph Decker and the former Helen Marie Sullivan of Pittsford, N.Y., are alive and well.

I don't know at this writing where T. Decker is going to land in the business world. I can predict, however, he can't possibly be as successful ever again. How many dynasties can one man build?

REMEMBERING ATTICA

"Attica — We Remember" will be the theme of a service at the First Universalist Church in downtown Rochester on Friday, Sept. 12 at 8 p.m. The open meeting will mark the fourth anniversary of the Attica rebellion.

Guest speakers will focus on the past, present, and future. Akil (Herbie Scott Dean,) one of the Attica Brothers, will reflect on what it was like to be there. Attorney for the Attica brothers, Heywood Burns, will report how the trials are proceeding. John Regier, executive director of the New York State Council of Churches, will look to the future and what can still be expected to stem from the events at Attica four years ago.

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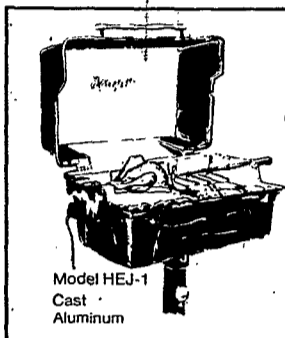
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