

"Gladys Wimert"

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By Jay A. Graybeal

Many local residents remember Westminster journalist Gladys Wimert who wrote about local events for the Hanover Evening Sun newspaper and was also the Westminster correspondent for the Associated Press. Mrs. Wimert was also well known for her community work and her extensive collection of fashionable hats. The Hanover newspaper described her career in the May 6, 1953 issue of the paper:

"Westminster Journalist With Paper For 27 Years

Mrs. Gladys Wimert Sets Envious Record While Reporting News For The Evening Sun

Gladys?

There is only one Gladys in Westminster. That is Gladys Wimert, in private life Mrs. Paul M. Wimert Sr.

Youthful and good-looking, with a trim figure, agile, graceful movements, and a happy voice, she is something of a sensation to anyone meeting her for the first time.

And evidently that is something more than a first impression.

For years of being in everything hasn't led Westminster to take her for granted.

Three years ago the Soroptimist Club picked her as the 'Woman of the Year in Carroll County.'

Recently the Westminster Chamber of Commerce honored her for her 'efforts to further the material prosperity, intellectual advancement and moral improvement of Westminster.'

She is the first woman ever to be honored thus by the Chamber. The last time the award was given was nine years ago.

Twenty-Seven Years on Paper

But Gladys doesn't think of herself as a sensation, she thinks of herself primarily (separating her private role as wife, mother and grandmother from her public life) as a newspaper woman.

Today marks her twenty-seventh year on the Hanover (Pa.) Evening Sun.

'I'm not a sensational reporter, I can't glamorize, so I have to depend on the facts, and they have to be right. And there isn't any place in Westminster where I can't go back,' she explains, proud of the fact that none of her stories has ever made her persona non grata in Westminster.

She began her newspaper work as Circulation, advertising, and news manager. For 21 years she bossed seventeen newsboys.

In the meantime she built up the circulation of the paper until she figured that it went into '99 per cent of the homes in Westminster.'

Although no longer handling circulation, she still takes care of the advertising.

As a reporter she is either out gathering the news or else making it by organizing, promoting or helping with most every community endeavor going.

Paid At Space Rate

Thus she doesn't miss out on anything. As she explains it, she thinks in terms of inches.

That's the way she is paid, by the number of column inches she writes for her paper, and the more news the better.

In addition, Mrs. Wimert has been Westminster correspondent for the Associated Press for twelve years, a job that grew out of her six-year association with the Baltimore Sunpapers, for which she worked also as Westminster correspondent.

Newspaper work was no burning ambition with Gladys 27 years ago.

She simply wanted to help out Mr. William Yingling, the Hanover (Pa.) Evening Sun correspondent, who was ill.

The fact that she wanted to help was stronger than the fact that she was 'scared to death' at the idea of writing for a paper. The pay was small there, but with her first savings she bought a labor-saving device for her home, so that she could have more time for the newspaper work.

That was a wooden washing machine, the cylinder of which she turned by hand.

It is impossible to list all of Mrs. Wimert's activities. Besides, everyone knows what they are, from Red Cross, cancer drives, March of Dimes (chairman for ten years, she directs all her own campaigns and in the 1953 drive raised \$15,518, the largest sum ever raised in a Westminster charity drive).

In that last endeavor she had the backing of the Civitan Club. That was a horse trade. She agreed to handle their publicity in turn for a helping hand with the drive.

Three Meetings A Night

Always on the go, her limit is three business meetings a night.

Mrs. Wimert prevents dissipation of her energies by working at home. Her office is next to her kitchen.

Here is where everyone is sent who arrives in Westminster looking for help or information.

She has no time for vacations. But there was one exception—when she flew to Germany after World War II to see her son, Major Paul M. Wimert Jr., and then toured Europe and got back to Westminster, all in fifteen days.

Now her only trips are flying ones to see her son, daughter-in-law and grandchildren at Fort Knox. Gone on Friday, she is usually back on the job Monday morning.

She gets away from it all by slipping into the movies. 'There I can sit in the dark for two hours where no one can get me,' she explains.

Born in Baltimore

Born in Baltimore 52 years ago, Mrs. Wimert, on the death of her mother, lived with her grandfather, Arthur C. Chenoweth, of Pikesville, who died when she was 12 years old.

He is her inspiration. Known as one of the best farm managers in Baltimore county, he introduced the first mules into the county, Mrs. Wimert recalls.

As a child, he also shook hands with Abraham Lincoln the day he delivered the Gettysburg address.

It was Grandfather Chenoweth to whom she went for guidance and counsel, returning to him to report whether she had failed or succeeded in her undertakings. And she still seeks this guidance.

Before undertaking any project, Mrs. Wimert sits before a portrait of Grandfather Chenoweth. She tries to think what his advice would have been.

After following that advice. Mrs. Wimert then returns to the portrait to tell Grandfather how she has succeeded.

Aboard Big Burma

As for relaxation, Mrs. Wimert simply goes out and buys a hat. The hat-buying also marks every celebration, anniversary or special event in her life.

Any excuse is a good excuse to Gladys for buying a hat, 'I don't smoke, and drink doesn't interest me, so I've got to do something— so I buy a hat,' she says.

Looking back over the years, one of her biggest thrills also entailed buying a hat. It all happened when she rode 'Big Burma,' an elephant, in a charity circus that played in Westminster.

She did this two successive years. Mr. Wimert wouldn't permit Mrs. Wimert to don a costume appropriate to the occasion, so she improvised.

The hat came first. That was a white feather hat with a big feather at the side. Then she donned a rope of pearls, a black satin and crepe dress and long white gloves. Thus Mrs. Wimert was ready to ride 3 1/2-ton Big Burma.

Dignified? Of course, and very smart in the bargain."

In addition to the work described in the article, Mrs. Wimert was also a good friend of the Historical Society of Carroll County. Over the years, she donated a number of photographs, including the one which accompanies this column.

Photo caption: Mrs. Gladys Wimert posed in the living room of her Westminster home with the contestants in the March of Dimes popularity contest in February 1957. Historical Society of Carroll County, gift of Gladys Wimert, 1957.