

# John Edward Faulconer

## April 20, 1903 – July 4, 1981

(From Hinton News - July 7, 1981)

### John Faulconer Passes Away

John Edward Faulconer, former publisher and editor of the Hinton Daily News and a driving force behind the development of Pipestem State Park, died Saturday in a Hinton Hospital. He was 78.

In his biography he wrote:

"The house in which John Edward Faulconer was born April 20, 1903, was built in 1878, the same year the Summers County Court House was built, by his great grandfather, Edgar Campbell, who brought his family and worldly possessions from Highland County, Va., in wagons pulled by oxen over the Allegheny mountains.

With the exception of two years spent at White Sulphur Springs, where his father, E.N. Faulconer, owned and operated the drug store in the famous Greenbrier Hotel, he lived his entire life in Hinton.

Always interested in sports, Faulconer, when he entered high school, personally appeared before the Board of Education and requested that a football coach be hired and the sport of football be resumed at the school. From this beginning the Hinton Bobcats through the years have been one of the state's AA powers in this sport, winning several state championships. He was the school's first three-letter man, earning letters in football, basketball and baseball.

Entering West Virginia University in 1923 his education was interrupted by the death of his father, and at the end of two years he returned to Hinton to assume the responsibilities of his family.

It was at this time he became interested in tennis and although never having played before, he later became West Virginia's eighth ranking player. The Hinton Tennis Club, which he organized, brought recognition to the city as one of the state's outstanding tennis centers.

His newspaper career started quite by accident when he accepted a part-time job as sports editor of the Hinton Daily News. In less than one year he was made editor, the youngest in the nation at that time. After working 15 years as managing editor of the News, then owned by the Ogden chain of newspapers, Faulconer accepted a position as assistant to J.G. Fredeking, who had a variety of interests, including insurance, theatres, banking, bakery, real estate, trucking, gas and oil distributing, ice manufacturing, and several others; thus he became versed in many types of business.

He and his brother, Thomas, in 1947 purchased the Daily News, and in less than two years tripled the circulation and volume of business to make Hinton the smallest city with a daily newspaper and the second highest per capita circulation in the nation. The paper was sold in 1973, however, John continued to write his daily column "Hinton Around" and served in various editorial capacities. His personal efforts and editorials in the paper resulted in many achievements for community betterment. This included the organization of the first Little League Baseball in the city, a soft ball

league, and construction of an outstanding city park with facilities for all ages, as well as establishment of several scenic roadside parks in the county. It was Faulconer and the late E.M. Starr of Huntington who brought about the construction of the Bluestone Conference Center, a \$2 million retreat facility owned by the Presbyterian Churches of West Virginia situated on a beautiful plateau with 30 buildings of 600 acres overlooking Lake Bluestone which attracts hundreds of people to the area annually.

Also, he was instrumental in securing the final funds for the Summers County Hospital, a project of the Hinton Jaycees, as well as securing funds for new street paving projects, home for juvenile delinquents, organization of the Hinton-Alderson Development Corporation, of which he was a director, that built a plant employing 150 persons and projected to employ 300.

As an editor, Faulconer had

interviewed several presidents and other celebrities. It was his friendship with the late President John F. Kennedy that brought about the Washington contacts enabling the county to secure funds for many public programs.

He was the first person in the state to interview the late Eleanor Roosevelt, "Toyko Rose", "Axis Sally", and many others.

At an early age Faulconer turned down opportunities to run for public office as he felt that he could be more useful to his community as an editor.

A writer in the "National Observer" called Faulconer the "Father of Pipestem", a \$20 million resort complex in the county, which has resulted in the employment of nearly 300 persons, and brings thousands of visitors from all parts of the world.

In 1967 when the Pipestem project was finalized, the EDA and the U.S. Department of Labor made a 20-minute documentary called the "The Hinton Story", the script of which was made from a "thank you" letter mailed by Faulconer to W. L. Batts, then head of the EDA. The letter also was read into the Congressional Record, and the movie shown on television and to civic groups as an example to other communities for "bootstrap" operations.

He was engaged in trying to secure a \$2 million airport;

He helped organize the Mountaineer Travel Council, Appalachian Regional Health Council, and the Resources, Conservation and Development, composed of three West Virginia counties and two Virginia counties. The RC & D resulted in many developments in the area including two public service districts, highway beautification, erosion preventive measures, etc.

While Exalted Ruler of the Hinton Elks Club, Faulconer engineered the purchase of Willow Wood Country Club by the Elks in order to perpetuate it as a recreational facility for the area.

He assisted in organizing the W. Va. Water Festival, helped promote the Summers County

Centennial celebration, and various other promotions in the city and county.

In 1962 he was presented with the Rush D. Holt Memorial Award for work in the Cancer Crusade, and in 1972 was given a plaque by the Boy Scouts of America for his civic achievements for the betterment of the community. Also, he was presented with a plaque by the W. Va. Department of Commerce for "outstanding contribution to the travel industry in W. Va."

Faulconer has served as a director of the W. Va. Chamber of Commerce, and was serving his second appointive seven-year term by the Governor as a member of the W. Va. Department of Highways Advisory Board, was a member of the President's Committee of WVU, director of the W. Va. Press Association, and a director in the National Bank of Summers.

Being an avid golfer, he played on 184 different golf courses in the nation and other countries and still shot in the middle 70s.

In May 1974, John received the Gene Morehouse Achievement Award from the West Virginia Sports Writers.

Only six other writers have been so favored.

John had been writing sports columns for more than fifty years."

He was a member of the First Presbyterian Church of Hinton, the Masons, the Moose, the Elks, and Phi Sigma Kappa fraternity.

Surviving: wife, Eleanor Wilson Faulconer; daughter, Mrs. Nancy Pettrey of King George, Va.; brothers, Dr. Newman Faulconer of Greenville, S.C., and Thomas Faulconer of Hinton.

Service will be at 2:30 p.m. Tuesday in the First Presbyterian Church of Hinton with the Rev. Stewart McMurray officiating. Burial will be in Hilltop Cemetery, Hinton.

In lieu of flowers, the family suggests donations in Mr. Faulconer's name to the Hinton High School Scholarship Fund, in care of the National Bank of Summers.