

Caucasian-American History

Ken Hechler, Ph.D.

Hechler graduated from Swarthmore College in 1935 and received an A.M. from Columbia University in 1936. He later earned a Ph.D. from Columbia University. He served as a historian and researcher to the Truman White House from 1949 to 1953 being named special assistant to President Truman. Later he entered politics serving in a variety of positions including the U.S. House of Representatives. In 1965, Hechler was the newly elected U.S. representative from WV. He was moved by the news reports of Bloody Sunday, the voting rights march across the Edmund Pettis Bridge in Selma, Alabama, (destined for Montgomery) in which the police attacked the marchers. A second attempt at the march was thwarted by Alabama authorities. A third attempt scheduled for that March 22 was-- by court order --under protection of national guardsmen under federalized orders by then-President Lyndon Johnson.

Moved by his conscience, Hechler flew to Birmingham then drove to Selma to take part in the march. He was the only U.S. government official to participant in the march. Hechler later recalled as the march was about to begin thinking that they were “about to undertake something that would have great meaning.” The Selma march and the brutality surrounding it would propelled the nation to the passage of the Voting Rights Act.

The demonstration's leader, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was so moved by Hechler's bravery that King assigned four of his bodyguards to drive a car back to Selma as Hechler lay on the floor of the car. Later, Hechler lost a reelection bid and a later bid for WV's governorship. He taught at the University of Charleston and Marshall University from 1981 to 1984; in 1985, Hechler was elected Secretary of State for West Virginia. (based on an Associated Press article, the University of West Virginia website and the U.S. House of Representatives website)

For more information, see Charles Moffat's book [Ken Hechler: Maverick Public Servant](#) (Charleston, WV: Mountain State Press, 1987)

Edmund Arnold

Arnold was born in Bay City, Michigan, and began his journalism career at a local paper at which he became co-owner and editor. He also worked as picture editor of the *Saginaw News* and night state editor of the *Lansing State Journal*. He served as a military journalist with the U.S. Army in France and Germany during World War II and in later years was active in the 70th Division Association, editing its quarterly magazine for more than 20 years. He moved to New York City in 1954 to become editor of *Linotype News*. He used this job to advocate change in newspaper design.

He believed that the newspapers with narrow columns and headlines in all capital letters were boring and difficult to read. Arnold's ideas caught the attention of hundreds of newspapers. He conducted workshops across the U.S., Canada, Latin America and Europe on innovations in newspaper design. Eventually, he was dubbed the “father of

modern newspaper design.” Arnold was awarded the George Polk Memorial Award in 1957 for his contributions to typography.

He later taught at Syracuse University and wrote the first textbook on graphic design which became the standard introduction to graphic art. He became a professor at Syracuse University in 1960 and later taught at Virginia Commonwealth University. Arnold wrote 27 books on typography, graphic arts and organizational publications. Arnold was named to the Journalism Halls of Fame in Michigan and Virginia, and the Society for News Design gave him a Lifetime Achievement Award in 2000. He died at 93 in early 2007. (based on an Associated Press article)

Jeannie VanVelkinburgh: A Valiant Heart

On November 18, 1997, VanVelkinburgh acted as a good Samaritan after witnessing two men attack another. As a result, she was shot in the back by skinhead Nathan Thill who had first taunted then killed a black immigrant, Doumar Dia, in a racist attack. The bullet left her paralyzed and in constant pain. VanVelkinburgh had just gotten off work at a nursing home and took a bus that she had never taken before. She then witnessed the attack. Not thinking of her own safety, she rushed to help and was gunned down.

Learning, that Thill had openly boasted of killing Dia and shooting VanVelkinburgh, VanVelkinburgh summoned all her strength and remaining courage to speak at his sentencing. She pleaded with the court that hate crimes must be stopped and to sentence the assailants to a term reflective of the heinous nature of the hate crime and of cold-blooded murder. Thill was sentenced to a life term Thill's accomplice, Jeremiah Barnum was sentenced to 12 years in prison. VanVelkinburgh never regretted her decision to intervene. Tragically, after enduring years of chronic pain from Thill's bullet, she died in July 2002 of an apparent suicide. (based on a *Rocky Mountain News* article)

Fred Haley

Fred Haley was the president of Brown & Haley, the makers of Almond Roca chocolate tins. Though highly successful in business, Haley is also known for his work in defending civil rights. As a member of the Tacoma, Washington, School Board from 1954 to 1965, Haley encouraged hiring minority teachers and pushed for desegregation of schools, advocating magnet schools to help further that goal. While on the School Board, he and two other board members voted to retain a school counselor who had been accused of being a communist by the House Un-American Activities Committee. That act led to a boycott of Brown & Haley for a time. He participated in the 1963 March on Washington and was honored with the American Civil Liberties Union's William O. Douglas Award. He died in April 2005 at age 92. (based on an Associated Press article)

Myron T. Herrick

Herrick grew up in Huntington, Ohio. We worked as a teacher and newspaper reporter to earn money to attend college. He then read law and was admitted to the Ohio Bar in 1878. He later opened a law office and became a business leader, founding Quaker Oats and helping to form Union Carbide (now Praxis). He later entered politics and rose to become governor. Losing his reelection bid as governor, Herrick returned to his business

affairs and later accepted appointment by President William Howard Taft as Ambassador to France.

During his time in France, he founded in 1914 the American Relief Clearing House and the War Relief Clearing House for France and Her Allies to aid hungry French people during World War I. The organizations raised the equivalent of 86 million francs and distributed aid to the French during the dark days of the War. This accomplishment was achieved despite the mixed feelings at the time to war and the push to isolationism.

He was reappointed Ambassador by President Warren Harding in 1921. As Ambassador in 1927, he was among the delegation that greeted Charles A. Lindbergh upon the completion of his successful solo flight from America to France. Herrick remained Ambassador to France until his death in 1929. Because of his war time service to France and his service to America and France, Herrick was accorded a French state funeral.

Joseph Darby: A Soldier of Conscience and a Gentleman

Darby was a soldier stationed in Iraq and assigned to the 372nd Military Police Company. The unit was responsible for running the military prison, Abu Ghraib. By chance, he was given two CDs of images when he asked a fellow soldier for photos of Iraq to send home. The CDs contained horrific images of torture of Iraqi prisoners. Acting on his conscience and on his duty to the nation and Constitution, Darby handed over the images to the Army's Criminal Investigation Command. He would later tell a reporter, "I've always had a moral sense of right and wrong. And I knew that you know, friends or not, it had to stop."

Tragically and bizarrely, after his identity was exposed in a press conference by then-Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld, Darby's life entered a tailspin. He eventually was placed in protective custody and received death threats. Even more tragically, his family at home in Pennsylvania received death threats. They continue to live in fear. (based on the MSNBC website)