One of the biggest New York stories in 2023 was the sudden arrival of tens of thousands of migrants from around the world. Many were bused in by Gov. Greg Abbott of Texas in his zeal to punish “liberal” northern cities for their unofficial status as “sanctuaries” for the hordes of homeless refugees wandering the world. Others arrived after hearing that New York was, by law, required to accommodate them.

The crisis that the migrant flood created for the city also presented a unique challenge for local journalists eager to cover every aspect of this complicated news story. That test was met and surpassed by The New York Times in a series of stories and photographs by reporters Andy Newman, Dana Rubinstein and Julie Turkewitz, and photographers Todd Heisler and Juan Arredondo. Their efforts earned them one of two President’s Choice Medallions at the Silurians Awards in the Silurian Press Club’s annual Excellence in Journalism awards.

Newday was the other President’s Choice winner, with a monumental series titled “Feeling the Squeeze: The High Cost of Living on Long Island.” The 12-part series, complete with charts and videos, paints a deep, comprehensive and affecting portrait of how hard it is for many middle-class and low-income Long Islanders to get by in a time of rising prices for virtually everything.

The New York Times and the Newday team will receive Medallions at the Silurians Awards Dinner at the National Arts Club on June 12. They will be two of the 23 Medallions honoring local journalists to be awarded this year.

The Times won a total of seven Medallions and three runner-up Merit awards. Newday took two Medallions and four Merits, while THE CITY, an ambitious online news service, brought home three Medallions and two Merits.

Another winner of multiple awards was The Record/northjersey.com, which won two Medallions and a Merit, while Bloomberg News earned a Medallion and two Merits. The New York City News Service at CUNY’s graduate journalism school earned a Medallion with a package on the migrant crisis, headlined “The Newest New Yorkers,” which won in the Minority Affairs category.

“The quality of the competition this year was as high as it has ever been,” said Awards Chairman Jack Deacy. “Whether the category was to a porn actress. Beyond this scandal, from their home communities. Following are our Medal winners this year.

BREAKING NEWS

The Medallion goes to William K. Rashbaum, Jonah E. Bromwich, Ben Protess and the Staff of The New York Times for their coverage of the Manhattan district attorney’s indictment of Donald Trump. The Times team broke the news that a Manhattan grand jury had indicted former President Trump in a case centered on his hush-money payment to a porn actress. Beyond this

Continued on Page 2
President's Report
Pursuing Truth

Dear Silurians,

At a much-anticipated luncheon in April, Joe Kahn, the executive editor of The New York Times, scanned the room packed with Silurians and took note of the fact that he was surrounded by "a large number of veteran journalists who all know" that journalists need to be independent and impartial in their work. Kahn, along with the younger reporters on his staff, he suggested, is striking.

"People these days look at news, view, less open to vigorous debate from rival sides on the key and divisive issues of the day," he said.

In his two years at the helm, Kahn has been confronting a new generation of journalists who speak of impartiality as an anchor to their craft, not as an end in itself. They are more activist, even partisan approach. "I think we're at a point where we're trying to be more activist, even partisan," Kahn said.

Some of this is a reaction to what Kahn calls the "shift in the cultural landscape." The country is more divided, more polarized, and journalists are trying to find ways to be part of the conversation, not just report on it.

"The challenge is how to be a voice in that conversation," Kahn said.

Still, Kahn is clear that journalists must be impartial. "We're not trying to say that we're neutral," he said. "We're saying that we have to be transparent about our biases and that we have to be honest about the facts."
Continued from Page 2

MINORITY AFFAIRS REPORTING

The winner is “The New York Times on the South Side: A Civil Rights Story,” part of Sight and Sound, a film and television production by The New York Times. The project was a collaboration with the New York History Collaborative, a nonprofit organization that aims to preserve and share the history of African American communities in the city. The film includes interviews with survivors of the 1967 New York City blackout, as well as footage from that time period.

The project was directed by Ava DuVernay, who previously worked on several documentaries that have been nominated for Academy Awards, including “13th,” “When They See Us,” and “The Central Park Five.” The film was produced by DuVernay’s company, ARRAY, and distributed by HBO Documentary Films.

The New York Times also won a Peabody Award for its series “The 1619 Project,” which explored the legacy of slavery in the United States. The series included articles, videos, and podcasts that examined the ways in which slavery continues to shape American society.

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The series was nominated for several other awards, including a Primetime Emmy Award for Outstanding Writing for a Nonfiction Program and a Peabody Award for Overall Excellence.

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2024 SILURIAN MEDALLION AND MERIT AWARD WINNERS

PRESIDENT'S CHOICE AWARD: “New York’s Struggle to Respond to the Migrant Surge” By Andy Newman & The Staff of The New York Times

PRESIDENT'S CHOICE AWARD: “Feeling the Squeeze: The High Cost of Living on Long Island” By The Staff of Newsday

BREAKING NEWS REPORTING

Merit: “Coverage of the Arrest in the Gilgo Beach Murders” The Staff of Newsday

FEATURE NEWS REPORTING

Merit: “Three Stories About New York City’s Mishandling of the Migrant Crisis” By Lana Nahmias, Fola Akinnibi, Maria Paula Mijares and Sarah Holder, Bloomberg News

INVESTIGATIVE REPORTING
Medallion: “Investigative Pieces on Rikers Island, the NYPD and Mayoral Campaign Finances” Bianca Pallaro, Haidee Chu, April Xu, Katie Honan, Tom Robbins, George Joseph, Reuben Blau & Yoav Gonen, THE CITY

Merit: “Ghost Tags: “Inside New York City’s Black Market for Temporary License Plates” By Jesse Coburn, StreetsblogNYC

SCIENCE & HEALTH REPORTING
Medallion: “Hazards Next Door” By Scott Fallon and Liddy Washburn The Record/northjersey.com USA Today Network

Merit: “Will AM Radio Survive?” By Verne Gay, Newsday

ARTS & CULTURE REPORTING
Medallion: "Inside the Hogwarts of Fashion" By Alex Vadukul, The New York Times

Merit: “The Parable of a Book Collector” By Arlene Schulman, Next Avenue

PEOPLE PROFILES
Medallion: “Anderson Cooper’s Newest Assignment: Grief (His Own)” By Rukmini Callimachi, The New York Times

Merit: “Meta’s True Believer” By Emma Hinchliffe, Fortune

MINORITY AFFAIRS REPORTING
Medallion: “The Newest New Yorkers” By New York City News Service, Craig J. Newmark Graduate School of Journalism at CUNY

Merit: "The Deed Finders" By George Joseph & Saharshana Maldonado, THE CITY

BREAKING NEWS PHOTOGRAPHY
Medallion: “Image of Sam Bankman-Fried” By Stephanie Keith, Bloomberg News

Merit: “Rainbow Blaze” By James Carbone, Newsday

FEATURE PHOTOGRAPHY
Medallion: "Dawn to Dusk on the Corner Where Bangladesh Brooklyn Gatherers” By Jonah Markowitz, The New York Times

Merit: “It’s not the place, it’s where it’s located” By Adi Talwar, City Limits

SPORTS PHOTOGRAPHY
Medallion: “The Manhattan District Attorney’s Indictment of Donald Trump” WABC TV Eyewitness News Team At 11

TV FEATURE NEWS
Medallion: “ Victims of the System” By Walt Kane and Susan Ottovino, News 12 New Jersey

DIGITAL ONLINE VIDEO REPORTING
Medallion: “NYPD’s Abuse of Authority and Interference Unearthed in a Brooklyn Gun Incident” By Yoav Gonen, THE CITY

RADIO/AUDIO FEATURE REPORTING
Medallion: "When Everything Goes Digital, Older Adults Can Be Left Out" By Ashley Milne-Tyte, Marketplace Tech

AWARDS JUDGES: Joe Berger, Fran Carpentier, Jack Deacy, Allan Dodds Frank, David Andelman, Betsy Ashton, Clyde Haberman, Michael Serrill, Bill Diehl, Scotti Williston, Allison Jacobson, Linda Amster, Tony Guida, Carol Lawson, Fred Herzog, Kevin Nobleit, Ben Patrusky, David Margolick and Suzanne Charla

AWARDS DINNER CHAIR: Fran Carpentier

Supporting Role at the Dinner: Myron Rusthultz

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION ON THE EXCELLENCE IN JOURNALISM AWARDS OR THE SILURIANS PRESS CLUB CONTACT: jackdeacy@gmail.com

By Bill Dashi

It was another time. The New York Daily News, at the height of its circulation, once operated from the Information Bureau.

People could walk into the paper’s famous 42nd Street lobby, ask questions or call in by phone and get answers from a team of researchers.

Dorothy Rogers, now 98, was a graduate of the school in 1948 when she landed a job as one of the researchers at the bureau.

She would be the first of several other jobs she held at the paper in 1991.

Recently I had a chat with Dorothy and she reminisced. Dorothy said questions range from serious to ridiculous.

BD: Serious?

DR: Once, a well spoken man who gave his name and badge number as a New York City police officer said, “I’m embarrassed as hell to ask, but could you tell me where the women’s prison is located?”

Another caller, who asked how they could join the FBI. There was this: “My husband has died and I found a lottery ticket in his pocket. What’s the winning number?”

A secretary called at lunchtime and asked, “Quick! How many calories in a Martini?”

BD: Ridiculous?

DR: There was an eclipse. We were inundated with calls from hysterical women who thought it would cause their children to die.

One mother asked, “When are they going to start?”

Nixon-McGovern election day and a man said he couldn’t find his polling place and it must be a McGovern tager.

A woman said she was getting married. Did she need a doctor’s prescription? A man wanted to know if Franklin D. Roosevelt was Adolf Hitler’s first cousin. Will Good Friday be on Monday this year? Is the zip code in Maine where he first encountered the barn swi “WALTER HUDSON”?

Another word on E.B. White. He offered the best shorthand description of cool-headed revision. Be very cool about it. "WALTER HUDSON?!

The Internet has convulsed print journalism, but perhaps these constitute my "repurposing" as it's called in the world of social media. A curator writes an intense scientific paper, our science publicist translates it into plain English for a web release, and I condense it into a breezy blogpost for the museum’s social media. A writer does that. It is so hard to fill the void you might have and your children in writing. White had a farm in Maine — where he first encountered the barn swallow that inspired Charlotte — so, of course, Mother’s explanation was just right.

When Mother died in 2022 at age 99, I wrote her obituary and quoted her saying when her own mother died at age 90, “The longer you have them, the more there is to miss.” Months earlier, when a much-beloved brother-in-law died suddenly, I helped write and edit his obituary too. I believed that, as with Mother, I could offer our family something: writing skills I’d acquired over a lifetime.

In 2016, I wrote another obituary, this one for the Silurian News, headlined “Martin Hollander: Newsday’s Serious Man.” To steal from Charlotte now, perhaps these constitute my magnum opus.

By Joan Kelly Bernard

Last September, when my publisher asked me to speak to her book club about writing, I was flatly told that I was a writer — over 50-plus years — has been a journalist and, more recently, public relations for the American Museum of Natural History. JUNE 2024

BD: Donald Trump wants to be President again.

DR: That scares the hell out of me. I feel I think I’ll leave the planet.

BD: Do you care about being remembered?

DR: No. I’m just grateful for having lived a good life. I’ve had a great run.

A Journey Through Writing with E.B. White and Charlotte’s Web as Guides

By JOAN KELLY BERNARD

It was around that same age I read “Charlotte’s Web” by E.B. White.

On the 60th anniversary of its publication in 2012, I was asked to write a piece for the museum’s member magazine about how White wrote the novel. Illustrator Garth Williams, who was helped by many readers including Garth Williams, were helped by the same editor. The editor with both of the name of their central character — Charlotte, the spider, Araneus cavaticus. Working on that stop

You may remember Charlotte crowing about her “magnum opus,” which was the egg sac she produced near the end. For all the decades since I’d read the book, I thought her reading "Charlotte’s Web" by E.B. White.

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dating with calls from hysterical women who thought it would cause their children to die.

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Learning Chinese, Exposing More Voters to the Information They Need: The New York Times’ Joe Kahn Faces Challenges

By David A. Andelman

From his earliest days, Joe Kahn “actually never imagined doing anything else, to be honest, so it wasn’t a choice between journalism or some other thing.” And now, he’s the executive editor of The New York Times, traveling to the National Arts Club to regale a crowd of Silurians at an April’s Sulranian Luncheon with tales from Eighth Avenue and far beyond.

For more than an hour, Kahn detailed his vision of today’s Times as “something really worth reading and remembering ... something that captures a moment for the history books.” How he got to this moment in his own career was somewhat less direct.

It all began with his high school newspaper where he realized “if you actually want to get ahead in the business, you must [not only] just put the articles on the page, but write them.” Onward from there at The Harvard Crimson as an undergraduate, he quickly discovered “it can easily take over your life.” Then it was out into the real world, where the Dallas Morning News took him on as an intern and eventually made him a bureau chief in Plano, Texas.

At that moment, his most easily imagined career path suggested “if I played all my cards right, five years later on I might be able to cover the Dallas City Hall or, if that went well, the Austin bureau — a State House bureau — if I did it right.” Instead, China loomed large. “In those days, the late 80s, China was just emerging,” Kahn recalled. “It looked like it was about to be a big story in the future and there were very few people there, including The New York Times, who had any experience in the language.” So, Kahn went back to school to learn Mandarin, and then to Beijing.

He arrived just in time for Tiananmen Square and the flourishing democracy movement. Kahn had gone to report on the massacre on the mainland, and then had a second story in the future about the Hong Kong airport.” At that peak, Kahn pointed out, The Times had “19 correspondents in China, but we also invested at that time in a Chinese language journalism website that had another 30 people working for it, doing original journalism in Chinese to serve a Chinese audience. Almost all of that is gone. We were banned as a website. The Chinese website we have it also banned.”

At the peak, Kahn pointed out, The Times had “10 correspondents in China, but we also invested at that time in a Chinese language journalism website that had another 30 people working for it, doing original journalism in Chinese to serve a Chinese audience. Almost all of that is gone. We were banned as a website. The Chinese website we have it also banned.”

To Kahn, the most unexpected challenge was the “struggle we invested in China. We recently got one more. We would like to go back to having many more than that. But at the moment, there’s no opportunity. So, we have five people in Taiwan. We have people in Hong Kong. It’s a little bit Back to the Future. The people on the periphery of mainland China have, as part of their responsibilities, coverage of the mainland. It’s back to the cultural reversion. We are still determined to get good coverage of China in our report.”

But for Kahn today, there are broader challenges as his horizon has widened — greatly.

“We have 10 million subscribers and a lot more than that come to us occasionally,” he explained. “As executive editor, it doesn’t mean that I have a critical need to expand this number geometrically, especially in this election year. There are tens or hundreds of millions of people who are not on the major websites to get their news,” Kahn said. “They’re getting it passively, usually in vertical video, in their feed, and unless we’re investing to repackaging our coverage and help make it available to them, they’re not going to see it.”

But especially before November, “I want to make sure that not only every reader of The New York Times, but every curious voter in the country has the information they need to understand the stakes in this election,” he said.

“We can’t control the election result. We can do everything in our power to make sure that the largest number of people possible are armed with the information they need to make those decisions before November 5th.”

David A. Andelman is a past president of The Silurians and creator of Substack’s Unleashed.

Brooke Kroeger Chronicles Strides Forward and Setbacks for Women in Journalism

By David A. Andelman

It took the incomparable Anne O’Hare McCormick 14 years and a change of publishers to catapult from New York Times stringer to staff reporter. A year later, she became the first woman to win a Pulitzer Prize in a major journalism category. She interviewed Mussolini, Hitler, Stalin and numerous other men by the name of Walter Lippmann. Anne Ochs, who never hired a woman, died in 1993 and Arthur Hayes Sulzberger took over and made her the first female Times editorial board member.

It took another 14 years for a woman to win a Pulitzer Prize in the category of national reporting. That was 2005. So, we really did have permanent women power. That certainly happened, but now we’re really going to miss Ida Tarbell, Ida B. Wells, and Nellie Bly — the women muckrakers in the 1890s, really the doyennes of journalism on the women’s side. Ida Tarbell, Ida B. Wells, and Nellie Bly — the women muckrakers in the 1890s, really the doyennes of journalism on the women’s side.

“It was going to be a big story in the future and there were very few people there, including The New York Times, who had any experience in the language.” So, Kahn went back to school to learn Mandarin, and then to Beijing. Then he realized “if you actually want to get ahead in the business, you must [not only] just put the articles on the page, but write them.” Onward from there at The Harvard Crimson as an undergraduate, he quickly discovered “it can easily take over your life.” Then it was out into the real world, where the Dallas Morning News took him on as an intern and eventually made him a bureau chief in Plano, Texas.

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Thelma Kandel, Author, Artist and Silurian Supporter, 91

By Myron Kandel

Thelma Kandel was more a Silurian than most of us, although she never paid any cash dues. As it turns out, my membership for 57 years, and was first lady during the next several years for liability insurance for the fund. Currently there are 150 New York City newspeople who have met with financial hardship. There are indications that the certification was re- stored and, based on my incomplete records, there are indications that the certification was re-stored by 2008.

Unfortunately, due to a series of mishaps and miscommunications, the fund subsequently fell out of compliance again.

In 2017, when I took over as president of the fund, my first order of business was to get the fund back in the good graces of the IRS and the New York State Charities Bureau. It took nearly two years and the expenditure of 40 hours of directors.

An effort was made to get the designation re-established and, based on information provided, the fund was reinstated again as a charitable organization.

Steps were taken to also set up a closer relationship between the fund and the Board of Governors of the Silurians. The Board of the fund serves an ex officio member of the Board of Governors of the Silurians. The president of the fund is also a member of the Board of Governors of the Silurians.

The fund was reinstated again as a charitable organization.

In addition to material pursuits, she was a compassionate wife, mother, grandmother and friend. When Covid hit, she opened our address book and phoned more than 100 relatives and friends to offer solace, encouragement and good wishes. She hadn’t spoken to some of them in years, and sometimes there were tears at both ends.

So living with my wife, Thelma Kandel was always an adventure, and I was blessed to have her as my wife.

Obituaries

Thelma Kandel, Author, Artist and Silurian Supporter, 91

By Myron Kandel

Thelma Kandel was a member of the Silurian Contingency Fund. As it was then called, it was created.

The fund’s first chairman was George E. Sokolsky, a long-time radio commentator, newspaper columnist and author who was active in the 1920s through the 1960s. After George Sokolsky’s death, the fund was renamed the George E. Sokolsky Silurian Contingency Fund.

The fund’s objective, according to its mission statement, was to “provide help to newspeople in need of financial assistance to New York City newspaper people who have met with ad\

In addition to the work of the fund, Sokolsky contributed to the education of students in New York area schools who are pursuing careers in journalism.

Sokolsky was created as an independent charitable entity, separate from the Society of the Silurians, with its own board of directors. The fund was given the sole power to select applicants for awards and to determine the amount of the grants. To protect the privacy of the recipients, their names are known only to the fund’s board of directors.

Because the fund is a charity, contributions, which were accepted only from Silurian members, were tax deductible. I could not determine from the contingency fund’s records available to me how much money the fund raised in grants over the years. But a letter I came across reported that the fund provided grants totaling more than $8,000 in its first eight years. Undoubtedly, thousands more dollars have been provided since then. For example, in the early 1990s when The Daily News fired 174 reporters, editors and other employees, the fund launched a fund-raising drive to help those who had been laid off.

Also during that period, when the ownership of The New York Post was in limbo, the paper’s insurance carrier warned that it would cancel the policy unless the monthly premium of $500 was paid immediately. The contingency fund stepped in and paid the premium.

The fund started out on the right foot by obtaining certification as a qualified char-

Over the years, the Fund has helped newspaper people titles including the Daily News and New York Post.

The long-term financial outlook is promising.

Charles Bennett, a longtime New York Times City Hall reporter and Silurian who died in 1982, set up a trust that named the fund as a secondary beneficiary. The primary beneficiary, a niece of Bennett’s, receives 32 percent of the trust’s assets annually. Upon her death, the contingency fund and two other nonprofit organizations will divide the remainder. Currently the trust totals more than $600,000. So the contingency fund could ultimately receive about $200,000, assuming the trust’s assets of the fund to home going.

In the meantime, donations to the fund would be most welcome. Even small do-

A Tradition of Charitable Giving: The Long and Winding History of the Silurian Contingency Fund

By Steven Marcus

More than 50 years ago, several senior members of the Silurians had become increasingly concerned with the continuing loss of newspaper jobs that started during the Great Depression — and the growing number of ex-newspaper people facing financial hardship.

The Silurians had to do something to help address this crisis, the senior members decided.

And so, on July 1, 1953, the Silurian Contingency Fund, as it was then called, was created.

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The fund’s objective, according to its mission statement, was to “provide help to newspeople in need of financial assistance to New York City newspaper people who have met with adversity or illness and need financial assistance.” In 2005, the mission statement was expanded so that the fund could also “award scholarships to outstanding students in New York City schools of journalism.”

In 2009, the fund expanded its mission to include “general charitable giving.”

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boxes and collages filled with nondescript metal and wood-
en objects and vintage newspaper and magazine clippings, which now sell for millions. She began filling the walls and shelves of her West Side apartment with art works of her own made of random pieces from streets, sidewalks, dumpsters, yard sales and thrift shops in New York and around the globe. There are now more than 150 of them and she relished being called “an artist of lost and found.” I’m sure some will end up in a museum some day.

Befitting her skill as a wordsmith, they carry clever titles. One of my favorites shows a tiny metal airplane heading downward on a background of model railway tracks. It’s titled “The Wrong Brothers.” Another — Thelma’s favorite — is modeled after a Cornell piece showing elaborate fishing lures. He named it “Lobster Quadrille.” Thelma’s version consists of colorful fly-fishing hooks on a background of a cracked mirror in an antique box that she called “Calamari Quadrille.” It had been hanging in a hallway for years when one night she passed it in the dark and noticed that the flies were glowing. That gave her an extra kick, and she delighted in showing it off to visitors with the lights out.

She also created a series of dolls. One of her works consists of three doll heads resting on unusual metal bases, which she called her “Salvador Dollies.” She was an anti-smoker and another, consisting of tobacco-related items, was titled “Nicotina: The Evil Temptress.”

As an avid reader, she had books thrown in the trash, so she developed a sideline of folding discarded books into artistic shapes. She re-

used to sell any, but those recycled volumes now are valued and displayed in homes around the world.

She was also an avid salvager (with my help) of larger pieces and she liked to show off furniture and other items we rescued from the streets of New York and elsewhere.

Contingency Fund acquisitions were a marble-topped oak chest being discarded in a suburb of Bonn, West Germany, when I was the correspondent there for the New York Times. We had noticed piles of discarded old houses on specified days of the month. It seemed that diplomats from newly independent African and Asian countries preferred to furnish their recently-acquired residences with Danish Modern furniture and accessories, so they were getting rid of the old stuff. She made me reclaim that dust-covered oak chest on our way home from a black-tie dinner at the U.S. ambassador’s house. I glanced that it was dirty and I was wearing a new tuxedo, but she insisted. Guess who was the first to tell with great relief how, on another occasion, she just edged out an antiques dealer for a valuable piece of old pottery, only to be greeted by some German words she had never heard before.

Back home, we found a bamboo bookcase in a snow-

on Madison Avenue bearing a sign that said “Take Me.” She took it, bailed it, and it’s now in a place of honor in our living room, along with the bookcase and other found items.

In addition to material pursuits, she was a compassionate wife, mother, grandmother and friend. When Covid hit, she opened our address book and phoned more than 100 relatives and friends to offer solace, encouragement and good wishes. She hadn’t spoken to some of them in years, and sometimes there were tears at both ends.

So living with my wife, Thelma Kandel was always an adventure, and I was blessed to have her as my wife.
Malachy McCourt, Author, Actor, Politician, All with Irish Flair, 92

Malachy McCourt was a man of many facets, a writer who captured the spirit of his Irish heritage, an actor whose performances were both intimate and grand, and a politician who sought to bring hope and change to the political landscape of America.

**By Clyde Haberman**

Malachy Gerald McCourt, who was at various points – and in no special order – an actor, a saloonkeeper, an author, a dishwasher, a dock worker, a radio host, a smuggler and a Bible salesman – chose in 2006 to add political candidate to his résumé. He ran for New York governor that year.

Actually, showing his Irish roots, he said that he was “standing for office.” Why American pols run for office and those on the other side of the Atlantic stand is not clear. Could it be that our politicians need a head start? In any event, Malachy ended up quite admirably in third place as the Green Party nominee. If only he had managed to pick up another 3,044,544 votes, he would have edged out the fellow who did win, Eliot Spitzer.

The sad part of it, he decided when I interviewed him before the election, is that American politics can be hopelessly grim. Their essence is “the inculcation of fear – fear and the evil of your opponents, what awful, dreadful, less-than-human beings they are,” he said. “Until elected. Then they say ‘We have to get behind them.’ “

Not much has changed on that score except perhaps the get-behind-them part.

Malachy died in March at age 92, waded down with more ailments than need be listed here. Inevitably, he was at times paired and compared with his older brother, Frank McCourt, who died in 2009 and whose runaway best seller, “Angela’s Ashes,” affirmed that being wretchedly poor is not an ideal way to grow up. “I was there amongst women.”

Along with Dan Wolf and Norman Mailer, he had been a founder of The Village Voice in 1955 and then had served as its paper’s publisher for the next 20 years. He was also, during his years at the Voice as well as for decades afterwards, a practicing psychologist. Perhaps it was his training as psychologist that helped make him to speak with a profound, elegant, handsome man; he cut quite a figure in his bachelor days in the Village before his marriage to Vivian (who died in 2020) and his becoming a father to Emily and Bruce.

But for me, it was his courage that always filled me with respect and a large measure of awe.

Ed’s courage was, in one very large part, nothing less than foreboding. Raised in upstate New York, he had attended the University of Alaska largely because he liked to ski. But when World War II broke out, he joined the Army, mainly because of his skill as a skier, found his way to the elite 10th Mountain Division. The unit was thrown into combat in the snow-covered mountains of Northern Italy.

“Many of the fights we were involved in were hand-to-hand,” said Ed, “and it was their way through it all, he told me, that he would never come out of it alive.

He didn’t like to talk about the war, but there was a photograph in his study in his penthouse apartment on 11th Street that caught my attention and, when I pressed him, he shared a story. It was a photo of a rifle-carrying Ed in combat fatalities standing alongside two partisans. As Ed cuturally it deeply explained, the photo captured the young man who had made their way up the seemingly insurmountable rocky cliffs of Riva Ridge in the dead of night. And it was their daring reconnaissance that provided the intelligence which enabled the 10th Mountain Division to launch a successful surprise attack against the Germans encamped in the Po Valley. And Ed, despite the risk, had led the way — once in the recon mission, and then again in the attack.

But Ed also had a moral courage, too. In the Sheridan Square office of the Voice (where I had first met him) he shared an office with Dan Wolf, and together the two men formulated the paper’s guiding philosophy. It would be a writer’s paper, a paper that would speak the truth to power, and also let its writers share their thoughts and ideas, no matter how divergent, from the mainstream. It took a great deal of courage to do this back then, just as this sort of no-holds-barred journalism requires a great deal of courage now, too.

But Ed never backed down. Not in war. And not in peace.

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Howard Blum is a former staff writer for the Village Voice who, after working as an investigative reporter at the New York Times, went on to write several bestselling books. “When The Night Comes Falling: A Requiem for the Idaho Student Murders,” will be published in June by HarperCollins.