

MPA 2015 Hall of Fame Inductee:

George A. Killenberg



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George A. Killenberg served as a reporter, city editor, managing editor and finally executive editor of the old St. Louis Globe-Democrat during his 43-year career with the newspaper. A native of St. Louis, he attended St. Louis University, working as a sports information director. The Globe-Democrat hired him in 1941 as a reporter. After serving in the Army medical corps during World War II, Killenberg returned to the Globe-Democrat and to SLU where he earned a master's degree in American history. As a reporter, he covered the coal mine disaster in Centralia, IL, in 1947 that killed 111 miners.

In 1956, Killenberg was promoted to city editor, then to managing editor 10 years later, and to executive editor in 1979. He retired when the Newhouse family sold the newspaper in 1984. He served as president of the St. Louis Press Club and the Mid-America Press Institute.

Killenberg was known as a strong advocate of local news. He championed diversity in the newsroom, assigning female reporters to hard-news beats, hiring the city's first female sportswriter, recruiting minorities from area journalism schools, and he promoted a woman, Sue Ann Wood, to Globe-Democrat editorial posts never before held by a woman: city editor and later managing editor. Under his leadership, the newspaper won a Pulitzer Prize and reporting awards from Sigma Delta Chi, the University of Missouri School of Journalism and the Alfred Sloan Foundation.

He believed journalism stood FOR the people. As he directed news coverage, he used the considerable influence of the Globe-Democrat to sound alarms, expose injustices and hold public officials and public figures accountable for their actions. To Killenberg, journalists were the ultimate public servants. Born in 1917, Killenberg died in 2008 at the age of 91.