



Century's Witness: The Extraordinary Life of Journalist Wallace Carroll

Mary Llewellyn McNeil

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Century's Witness is Mary Llewellyn McNeil's behind-the-scenes biography of a respected newsman.

One of Wallace Carroll's greatest gifts as a journalist was his timing. Fresh from journalism school in Milwaukee, he was the first person to pick up the newsroom phone after the St. Valentine's Day Massacre. He continued to find himself where the news was happening later on, too, working in Europe during WWII as a foreign correspondent. Snippets from his wife Peggy's letters from London are a source of charm and characterization, thanks to her affable, plucky tone. Both she and Carroll exhibited courage and commitment to their work.

During the war, Carroll spent time among a US propaganda unit, using psychological warfare to advance Allied causes. The book's coverage of that period is fascinating, and contains conscientious reminders of the need for good information from newspeople like Wallace, who died in 2002. His commitment to ethical news and truth-telling is observed in a harsh contrast to the book's fascinating, frightening discussion of Nazi propagandist Josef Goebbels's strategy of repeating lies until they were accepted.

In covering the post-war period, the book contains a thorough record of Wallace's bosses and office politics. He had a long career in newsrooms, and later worked as an editor; he had secondary careers as a civic leader, a professor, and as the writer of gutsy, influential op-eds, some of which made it from his home in Winston-Salem all the way to the Oval Office desk.

Century's Witness recalls how newsman Wallace Carroll built a sterling reputation in the golden age of newspapers. He was present at a handful of the twentieth century's most notorious scenes, and distinguished himself as adventurous, ambitious, and ethical.

MEREDITH GRAHL COUNTS (September / October 2022)

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