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SPRINGFIELD

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Papes: Farewell and thank you

Photojournalist sums up his nearly 16-year career

Nathan Papes
Springfield News-Leader | USA TODAY NETWORK

How do I sum up my career at the News-Leader? That’s the question I kept asking myself as I’ve stared at a blank document on my screen.

I didn’t get into photojournalism to write, or to talk about myself. But here I am, trying to put nearly 16 years of stories and memories into words, to say good-

bye to a community and a job that has shaped my life more than I ever could have imagined.

I’ve had the privilege of being allowed into your homes, photographing celebrations, heartbreaks, and ordinary Thursdays. I’ve stood on the sidelines in the pouring rain on Friday nights, behind police tape in the snow, and amid the devastation after the Joplin tornado. Some assignments I’ll never forget. Some I wish I could.

I’ve put more miles on my car than I care to think about, but they will always be a reminder of the places this job has taken me.

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News-Leader photojournalist Nathan Papes piloting a plane in 2024. NATHAN PAPES/SPRINGFIELD NEWS-LEADER



The former Kentwood Arms Hotel, now a residence hall on the Missouri State University, played a pivotal role in the effort to desegregate public accommodations in Springfield. NATHAN PAPES/SPRINGFIELD NEWS-LEADER

Ultimatum sparked a change in Springfield

Nixon’s 1960 visit prompted hotel to end segregation

Claudette Riley
Springfield News-Leader | USA TODAY NETWORK

It was September 1960 and Vice President Richard Nixon, making a bid for the U.S. presidency against John F. Kennedy, scheduled a stop in Springfield.

Nixon planned to stay at the Kentwood Arms Hotel but there was an issue: Two reporters traveling with Nixon were Black and the Kentwood, like many hotels and restaurants in southwest Missouri at that time, was still segregated.

The future president — who lost the 1960 bid but won the office in 1968 — made it clear, through a spokesman, that if the Black reporters were not allowed to stay at the hotel, he would bypass Springfield.

The Springfield chapter of the NAACP also applied pressure. Members threatened to demonstrate, which worried city leaders. There were emergency calls and meetings.

As a result of Nixon’s ultimatum, Kentwood owner Earl Moulder agreed to end segregation at the hotel, according to a front-page story in the Sept. 20, 1960, edition of the Springfield Daily News, a precursor to the News-Leader. A slew of other businesses, including Heer’s Department Store, made the same decision.

“Segregation has been a matter of great concern to

“With the acceptance of desegregation in our schools and colleges, we feel it is only natural to join other public places in Springfield in making our facilities open to all.”

Earl Moulder, Kentwood owner

us. We realize that a hardship has existed for a great number of fine people, and many prominent and deeply religious people have approached us on this subject,” said Moulder, according to the story. “We were the first public eating place to open our private dining rooms to all people. We found Springfield citizens in accord with this arrangement.”

Moulder added: “With the acceptance of desegregation in our schools and colleges, we feel it is only natural to join other public places in Springfield in making our facilities open to all.”

The historic turning point — and a partial but temporary return to segregation at the Kentwood in 1962 — will be the subject of the next marker on the

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Bears Share tackles food insecurity

MSU program allows students to access campus event leftovers

Claudette Riley
Springfield News-Leader | USA TODAY NETWORK

Missouri State is piloting a program that will link students who may not have enough to eat with leftover food from campus events.

The university said the effort, called Bears Share, will tackle food insecurity and reduce food waste.

Here is how it works: As soon as a campus event ends, organizers submit a form that will notify students enrolled in the pilot of the type of food available and when the event ends.

Students who are notified will have 20 minutes to arrive and collect a serving. They should bring a container, although in some situations, containers will be provided by the office of the president.

“Working in the dean of students office, I meet many students who face challenges that make college especially difficult,” said Ellen Currie, coordinator of student care and support, in a Sept. 2 news release.

“One of the first students I worked with shared they couldn’t remember the last time they had a hot meal. That really stuck with me. Eating is something many of us take for granted, but it can be a daily struggle for some students.”

Currie, who was not immediately available for an interview, said in the release: “I could not be more excited about Bears Share and the way it supports our students, builds community and helps reduce food waste across campus.”

The release cited a 2020 U.S. Department of Education National Postsecondary Student Aid study, which stated 23% of undergraduate and 12% of graduate students in the nation experience food

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The Bear Pantry, which provides nutritional food to students facing food insecurity, is located inside the Plaster Student Union. NATHAN PAPES/SPRINGFIELD NEWS-LEADER

