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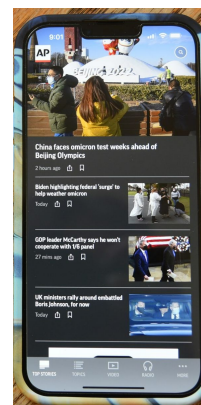
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# Connecting

May 19, 2023

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Colleagues,

Good Friday morning on this May 19, 2023,

AP headlines in text and digital formats are getting longer. This tweet from **Saeed Ahmed**, AP's vice president of news for digital news:

*The headlines on your @AP stories will look a bit different. That's because we have increased the character count. While heads were limited to 60 characters before, now writers have the option to go up to 100. As you know, I'm a headline evangelist and this gives me great joy.*

Shared by colleague **Jon Gambrell**, AP news director for the Gulf and Iran based in Dubai, who notes: "I'm old enough to remember going from 50 characters to 60."

And I hate showing my age when I say this, Jon, but I recall when AP first instituted headlines on wire stories - no Internet at the time. We first put headlines on news

stories only, not sports, but that changed. I recall one small newspaper member pleading on behalf of its back shop for sports headlines, to save them time.

Got a headline experience to share? Come ahead.

We lead today's issue with an interesting account by colleague **Karen Ball** on employing her AP digging skills to help her husband **David Von Drehle** fashion his new book on a delightful neighbor who lived to 109.

And we bring you a fun piece by colleague **Marty McCarty** on how you're never too old to play tennis. My Connecting colleague **George Varghese** and I are included. Both of us prefer being called seniors, never old.

Have a great weekend – be safe, stay healthy, live each day to your fullest.

Paul

## Her AP reporter's digging skills uncover details for husband's book

**Karen Ball** - When trying to dig up someone's family history from 100 years ago, having a reporter's background will carry you past one dead end after another.

Especially an AP background. Let's face it —AP reporters learn how to break stories, and not get beaten by our rivals. Failure is not an option! I told myself on those mornings in D.C. as I scrambled to get out the lede on an embargoed unemployment report. What if Bloomberg or UPI hit the button before me?

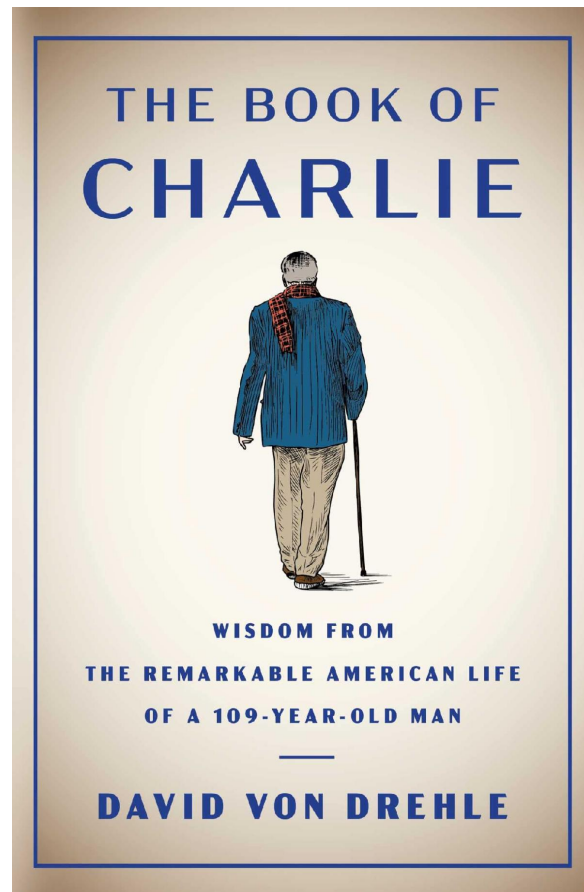
Similarly, I think we learned to ignore the word “no,” and just keep digging. If the first source we called was out of the loop or uncooperative, find someone else to call. Sometimes, we dialed several someones until we got what we needed. Of course, I got beat during my AP career— but I like to think I broke more stories than I botched.

These tricks of the trade helped immeasurably when my husband, David Von Drehle of The Washington Post, set out to write a book about our neighbor. Dr. Charlie White. Charlie was born in 1905 and lived an adventurous and somewhat eccentric life, marked by both great joy and tragedy, He had a certain panache, and a stoic way of looking at the world. We met Charlie when he was 102. Von Drehle became good friends with him until Charlie's death at age 109. He loved hearing Charlie's bottomless well of stories that spanned the turbulent 20th Century.

I volunteered to go after some of the lost details of Charlie's biography—especially the facts of his first two marriages. His children, born during his third and final marriage, knew only the same scraps of information that David had learned from Charlie. (The Wall Street Journal just reviewed the book and called my reporting an “impressive feat of detective work.”

His first wife, Mildred—just out of high school when they married in 1930—was tormented by demons. She was likely an alcoholic and spent years in and out of mental hospitals. Beyond that, we didn't know much. So I started with newspapers.com and tried to find a marriage notice, a birth announcement or an obituary. I eventually found a one-line marriage notice in the St. Louis Post-Dispatch; Charlie's mother lived there at the time.

Having her maiden name allowed me to find other pieces of the puzzle, including a mention of her as a teenager in a Joplin, Mo., paper. What the book needed most, though, were the details of her death, which Charlie had been reluctant to discuss. We had heard vague stories about an overdose—but no specifics.



The Internet didn't have what I was looking for, so I had to take an old-school approach. Carefully scanning through microfilm at the local library, I found a story about her death in The Kansas City Star—including the address of the place where her body was found. No spoilers, but the address proved to be key as I turned to the task of finding a 70-year-old police report.

You can imagine the initial response when I called the police department. Incomprehension. Buck-passing. "Sorry, it's very unlikely that still exists." "Sorry, those records have been moved." "Sorry, you cannot come to the archives and dig through boxes yourself."

When at last I filed a FOIA request, I included the address of the incident. I was stunned when the police report arrived in my mailbox six weeks later.

Likewise, we knew little about Charlie's brief second marriage on the rebound from the tragedy. I had my doubts about his half-comical description of that romance and how it ended. At least we knew her last name.

I hit the Internet, and discovered that Jean Landis was a late-life celebrity herself, recognized belatedly by Congress for her service in the Women's Air Corps during World War II. From a passing mention in a story about her exploits, I was able to deduce that she was the same Jean Landis who had been married to Charlie.

I kept Googling. I found a phone number—and even though she would've been well into her 90s, I did what AP reporters do. I called the number. The ringing surprised me a bit—in a good way; the number was still connected. I expected maybe a daughter or caretaker to answer.

It was Jean herself, with all her mental faculties intact as she neared 100. We had a long conversation; she had only fond thoughts about Charlie, though her version of their breakup was quite different from his, and easier for me to believe. When my husband got home that day, I said, “You’ll never guess who I talked to this afternoon.”

How fun it was to flex those muscles again, after more than 20 years mostly devoted to raising four kids, with some freelancing intertwined. I’m working on my own book now (or perhaps it will just be a personal history for my daughters), about some of the stranger events of the ’92 presidential campaign, which I proudly covered for the AP. I like digging through my notes, memos and finding photographs of those days—but nothing matches the thrill of a reporting coup.

## The night the tent came down

[Charlie Hanley](#) – Chris Sullivan’s suggestion about latter-day echoes from old stories (*à la* Nancy Shulins’ piece) reminds me of how my “first story” came back to life just as I was retiring in 2011.

We’d invited new neighbors over from across the hall for a welcome drink. When I learned that she grew up in Auburn, N.Y., I told them how my first big story came from Auburn, landing in my AP newbie lap late one summer night in 1968 when I was deskling the Albany buro: the horrific collapse of a Clyde Beatty circus tent in a storm in Auburn.

Her jaw dropped. “I was there! I was 4 years old.” Her mother had taken a group of children to the park to see the clowns and animal acts. They escaped unharmed, but more than 100 people were injured, though none fatally.

My neighbor had lasting memories of the scene, of people’s terror, of panicked elephants. Ah, this jaded old hack thought, the color I could have used when my TTS operator (probably Doris Selig) was breaking into the AAA wire to get out the news.

## How old is too old to play tennis?





Senior tennis players, from left: Paul Dew, Jack Malarky, Paul Stevens and George Varghese. Photo by Rao Surampalli.

**Martha McCarty** - Statistics show United States tennis grew by 5.6 million players in the past three years. Local enthusiasts fill the courts, sharpen their skills and uphold the number of the nation's players. One common question circulates.

How old is too old to play tennis?

Jack Malarky, men's senior tennis coordinator at Genesis Health Club in Overland Park, Kan., has an answer. He himself is 86.

"We don't specify an age for senior tennis, but most are retired at 65 and up—many being way up," Malarky said. Estimated median age is in the 70-year range.

At age 78, retired doctor George Varghese played a wholehearted comeback three months after five-vessel bypass surgery two decades ago. Later, four stents opened narrow arteries, and, during a game, a nitroglycerine patch sticks to his chest.

"I play right now with 82- or 83-year-olds," Varghese said (as if he is the young one!). "And I have played with 90-year-olds. It's a sport you can keep playing and you get good exercise."

He is not alone in the league. Seventy-six-year-old Paul Stevens—sometimes called Tall Paul—formed a lasting friendship with Varghese years ago, like two compadres

playing doubles and sharing a court. "We always play doubles," said Varghese. "We go for the ball, front and back and sideways. We're too old to play it ourselves."

Some Genesis players came late to learning the game. Growing up in India, Varghese competed in sports, but not tennis until settling in America in 1971. Malarky calls himself "a Pittsburgh guy" who learned tennis from his wife when he was half the age he is now. Stevens had a head start. "I started playing when I was eight- or nine-years old in Fort Dodge, Iowa," he said. "My dad had played tennis and he introduced me to it."

If measuring 6-feet, 5-inches tall is an advantage, Stevens said it helps on the serve. "I'm not the fastest on the court, but the serve is probably my strongest stroke." Vigorous exercise and group camaraderie are key motivators, he believes. "A good thing is, we're in a social-type setting. It's an outlet. A lot of these folks are friends."

Even so, all are competitors.

"I like to win. I don't like to lose," Stevens said. "Everyone wants to win, but no one takes a loss personally." The standard practice is etiquette, a code of behavior and respect for others. Rarely is an argument heard on the court, according to the players.

Health is often a troubling deterrent, but it is not always the end of the game. Stevens came back with doctor's approval after two months of rehab for a broken leg from a tumble at home. Physical circumstances happen to many, but the allure of tennis stays strong.

In fact, love is a well-known word in the language of tennis. It is a score. Zero points. Yet, players chant the word repeatedly, as if in a chorus: "I love to play...I love to play... I love the game."

Malarky's personal philosophy is a reminder: "A lot of good can come from a friendly game of tennis," he said. "A strong case can be made for any age—put the phone down and pick up a racket!"

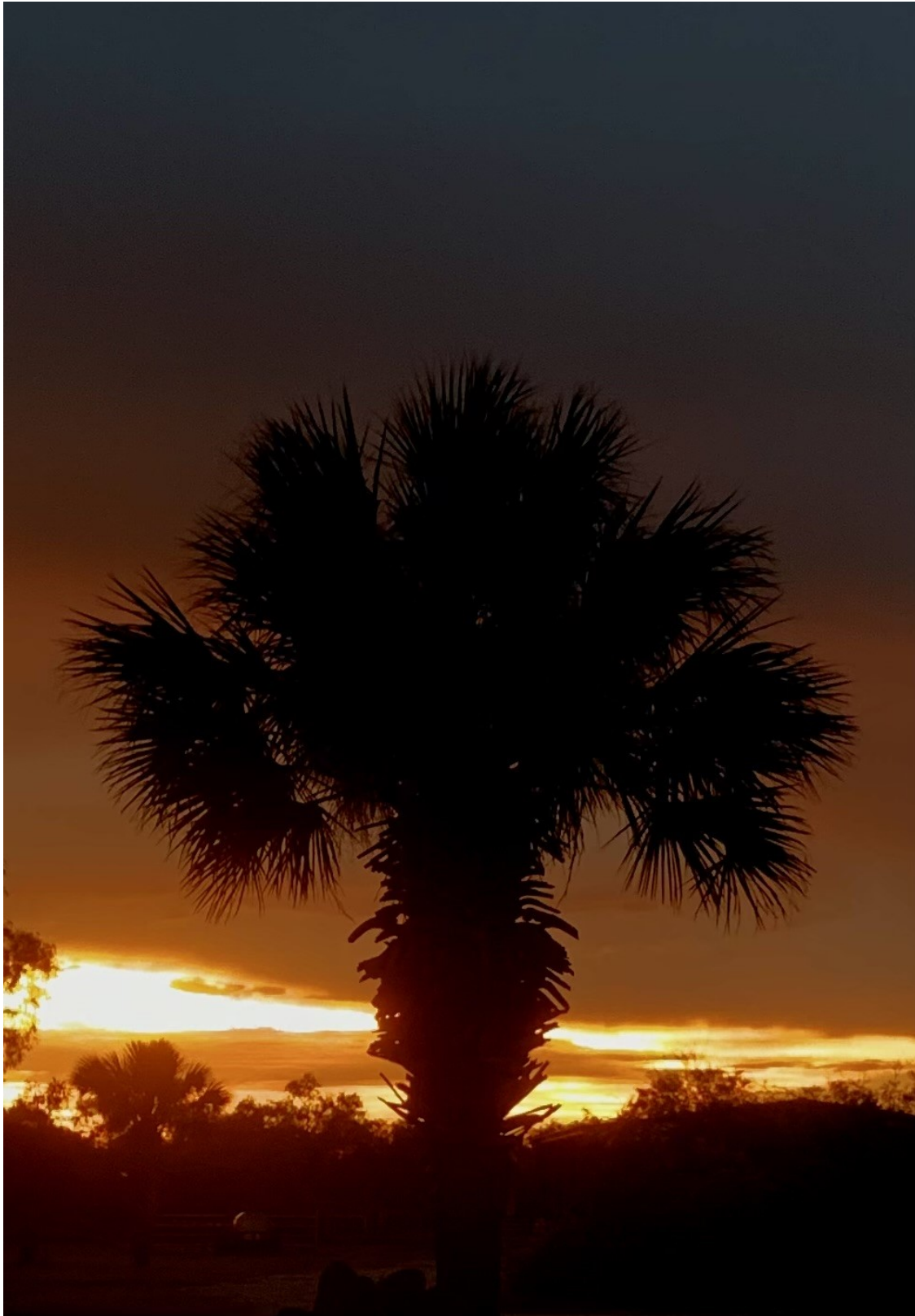
## Sunsets...from Florida



[Ed Tobias](#) - I loved Hank Ackerman's Naples sunset picture (in Thursday's Connecting). Ours, about 65 miles up the coast in Punta Gorda, are every bit as beautiful. We don't have a taps-playing trumpeter but we do, occasionally, have a guy with bagpipes.

## And from South Texas

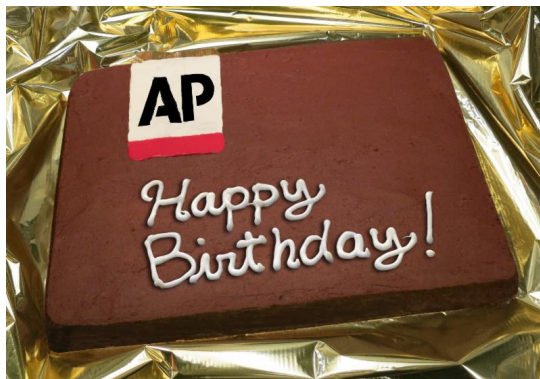




Courtesy of [Harry Cabluck](#).

**Connecting wishes Happy Birthday**





[James Gill](#)

*On Sunday to...*

[Fred Frommer](#)

[Deb Riechmann](#)

## Stories of interest

***The New York Times launches “enhanced bylines,” with more information about how journalists did the reporting*** (Nieman Lab)

By HANAA' TAMEEZ

Starting Thursday, New York Times stories online will no longer include a traditional dateline that tells where a story was reported from. Instead, certain stories will have “enhanced bylines” that tells readers more about how journalists did the reporting.

The Times has made changes to its dateline conventions before, eliminating actual dates in 2007. The dateline will still appear in print, though the Times print hub is working on its own experiments to adapt the new format.

Per the email sent to the newsroom by managing editor Marc Lacey and assistant managing editor Matt Ericson:

*Instead of “WASHINGTON —” in the lead on our next article from the White House or Capitol Hill, we will write “Reporting from Washington” in an enhanced byline, or include a reference to the location in a broader description of the reporting effort.*

*Why the change? This new format is plainspoken and leaves no doubt that we have reporters on the ground, a critical measure of the authority of our journalism. Audience research shows that readers are confused by traditional datelines. Many understand that they signify the location of the news but not that we were there.*

*The old dateline, which dates to the time of the telegraph, does not do justice to reporting from multiple locations. The new form allows us to more fully describe the scope of our news gathering, emphasizing our role as expert eyewitnesses and thus boosting our credibility.*

Read more [here](#).

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## ***Will dashboard AM radio be saved? Bipartisan bill would require automakers to keep it in new cars*** (AP)

By WYATTE GRANTHAM-PHILIPS

NEW YORK (AP) — Lawmakers on Capitol Hill are pushing to keep AM radio in the nation's cars.

A bipartisan group in Congress has introduced the "AM for Every Vehicle Act." The bill calls on the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration to require automakers to keep AM radio in new cars at no additional cost.

The legislation would also require automakers selling cars manufactured before the proposed regulation takes effect to let buyers know if the vehicles don't come with AM radios.

Supporters of preserving AM radio in cars cite public safety concerns. The sponsors of the bill put forth Wednesday note AM radio's historic role in transmitting vital information during emergencies, such as communication during natural disasters, especially to people in rural areas.

"Carmakers shouldn't tune out AM radio in new vehicles or put it behind a costly digital paywall," Sen. Edward Markey, D-Mass., one of the bill's sponsors, said in a statement. He added that the bill aims to "ensure that this resilient and popular communication tool does not become a relic of the past."

Read more [here](#).

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## ***ABC News crew spends year in Uvalde, documents journey of survivors, families of shooting victims*** (AP)

By DAVID BAUDER

NEW YORK (AP) — After most mass shootings that capture the public's attention, national news organizations will send reporters for a few days, a week maybe, before moving on. There's always another community, another tragedy.

ABC News tried something different after 19 elementary school students and two teachers were shot and killed in Uvalde, Texas, last May.

The journalists stayed.

For a year, ABC News kept a team in Uvalde. The result is a nuanced portrait of what happens over time to a suffering community, as seen in the two-hour documentary, "It Happened Here — A Year in Uvalde," that airs Friday on ABC and Saturday on Hulu.

"What we discovered has been profoundly moving and inspiring and, we hope, useful," said ABC News President Kim Godwin.

The story's richness is in the details: There are the children's rooms left undisturbed since May 24, 2022, the brush a parent can't give up because it contains a dead girl's hair, the survivor made upset by the sound of a block of ice being cracked, and the once-carefree boy who worries a lot. And we see a father who sits at his daughter's grave each night to talk to her.

Read more [here](#).

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## ***Supreme Court avoids ruling on law shielding internet companies from being sued for what users post*** (AP)

By MARK SHERMAN

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Supreme Court on Thursday sided with Google, Twitter and Facebook in lawsuits seeking to hold them liable for terrorist attacks. But the justices sidestepped the big issue hovering over the cases, the federal law that shields social media companies from being sued over content posted by others.

The justices unanimously rejected a lawsuit alleging that the companies allowed their platforms to be used to aid and abet an attack at a Turkish nightclub that killed 39 people in 2017.

In the case of an American college student who was killed in an Islamic State terrorist attack in Paris in 2015, a unanimous court returned the case to a lower court, but said there appeared to be little, if anything, left of it.

The high court initially took up the Google case to decide whether the companies' legal shield for the social media posts of others, contained in a 1996 law known as

Section 230, is too broad.

Instead, though, the court said it was not necessary to reach that issue because there is little tying Google to responsibility for the Paris attack.

Read more [here](#).

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## ***The Charlotte Observer's mobile newsroom boosts direct community engagement*** (Editor and Publisher)

**Bob Sillick | for Editor & Publisher**

The days of journalists swooping into a local community or neighborhood to gather the news and then returning to work in isolation in a downtown newsroom have ended for many newspapers. The Charlotte (North Carolina) Observer is the latest to follow that trend with its mobile newsroom.

As executive editor of The Observer, Rana Cash realized some local communities weren't receiving sufficient coverage about issues crucial to them. This is a particular challenge in communities of color, which traditionally have seen news reporting primarily focused on crime and other topics those communities view as being negative.

"To make the mobile-newsroom concept work and to begin to build trust with the people and leaders in all communities of color, we not only engaged in self-examination but also talked to people in those communities about what kind of coverage and topics they want to see and how we could do a better job sharing their positive, inspiring stories," said Cash.

Although its mobile newsroom isn't on wheels, it is mobile in the sense of establishing a remote newsroom temporarily in a local branch of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Public Library. Library branches tend to be a central resource in most communities. The first mobile newsroom was launched in the Sugar Creek Library branch near the Hidden Valley subdivision in January 2023. Surprisingly, desks and computers were moved into the Library's main room. Cash wanted the reporting and publishing process to be more visible and allow the staff to interact with the local population.

Read more [here](#).

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## ***Amna Nawaz of 'PBS NewsHour' Advocates for Journalists' Mental Health*** (NextAvenue)

**By Michele Wojciechowski**



In 2023, Amna Nawaz became the first Asian American and Muslim American to anchor a nationally broadcasted news program when she began co-anchoring "PBS NewsHour" with Geoff Bennett. Before she joined PBS in 2018, Nawaz was already an experienced journalist, serving as an anchor and correspondent at ABC News, and prior to that, as a foreign correspondent and Islamabad Bureau Chief at NBC News.

Nawaz knows firsthand how covering traumatic events can take a toll on journalists. She's covered many major ones during her career including the January 6th attacks on the U.S. Capitol; the mass shooting at Robb Elementary School in Uvalde, Texas; Hurricane Katrina; the 2010 earthquake in Haiti; the U.S. war in Afghanistan and the September 11 attacks.

Read more [here](#). Shared by Richard Chady.

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## ***Sam Zell, billionaire real estate investor, dies*** (AP)

**By The Associated Press**

Sam Zell, a Chicago real estate magnate who earned a multibillion-dollar fortune and a reputation as "the grave dancer" for his ability to revive moribund properties died on Thursday. He was 81.

Zell died at home due to complications from a recent illness, according to Equity Group Investments, a company he founded in 1968.

Bearded and blunt-spoken, Zell reveled in bucking traditional wisdom. He had a golden touch with real estate, and got his start managing apartment buildings as a college student. By the time he reached his 70s, he had amassed a fortune estimated at \$3.8 billion.

Zell sold Equity Office, the office-tower company he spent three decades building, to Blackstone Group for \$39 billion in 2007. It was the largest private equity transaction in history, and Zell personally netted \$1 billion.

A month later, he made another deal that ultimately tarnished his image: the acquisition of the ailing Tribune Co. for \$13 billion. The media giant filed for bankruptcy the following year.

Read more [here](#). Shared by Bill Sikes.

## **Today in History - May 19, 2023**



**Today is Friday, May 19, the 139th day of 2023. There are 226 days left in the year.**

**Today's Highlight in History:**

On May 19, 1536, Anne Boleyn, the second wife of England's King Henry VIII, was beheaded after being convicted of adultery.

**On this date:**

In 1780, a mysterious darkness enveloped much of New England and part of Canada in the early afternoon.

In 1913, California Gov. Hiram Johnson signed the Webb-Hartley Law prohibiting "aliens ineligible to citizenship" from owning farm land, a measure targeting Asian immigrants, particularly Japanese.

In 1920, ten people were killed in a gun battle between coal miners, who were led by a local police chief, and a group of private security guards hired to evict them for joining a union in Matewan, a small "company town" in West Virginia.

In 1921, Congress passed, and President Warren G. Harding signed, the Emergency Quota Act, which established national quotas for immigrants.

In 1943, in his second wartime address to the U.S. Congress, British Prime Minister Winston Churchill pledged his country's full support in the fight against Japan; that evening, Churchill met with President Franklin D. Roosevelt at the White House, where the two leaders agreed on May 1, 1944 as the date for the D-Day invasion of France (the operation ended up being launched more than a month later).

In 1962, film star Marilyn Monroe sang "Happy Birthday to You" to President John F. Kennedy during a Democratic fundraiser at New York's Madison Square Garden.

In 1967, the Soviet Union ratified a treaty with the United States and Britain, banning nuclear and other weapons from outer space as well as celestial bodies such as the

moon. (The treaty entered into force in October 1967.)

In 1993, the Clinton White House set off a political storm by abruptly firing the entire staff of its travel office; five of the seven staffers were later reinstated and assigned to other duties.

In 1994, former first lady Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis died in New York at age 64.

In 2003, WorldCom Inc. agreed to pay investors \$500 million to settle civil fraud charges.

In 2020, a Trump administration policy of quickly expelling most migrants stopped along the border because of the COVID-19 pandemic was indefinitely extended.

Ten years ago: President Barack Obama, in a soaring commencement address on work, sacrifice and opportunity, told graduates of historically black Morehouse College in Atlanta to seize the power of their example as black men graduating from college and use it to improve people's lives. At least one person was killed and dozens were injured as a series of tornadoes hit Kansas, Oklahoma, Iowa and Illinois. Taylor Swift won eight awards, including album and artist of the year, at the Billboard Music Awards.

Five years ago: Britain's Prince Harry wed American actress Meghan Markle in a service that reflected Harry's royal heritage and his bride's biracial roots, as well as their shared commitment to put a more diverse, modern face on the monarchy. Justify won the Preakness in foggy Baltimore, on the way to a Triple Crown sweep. Starbucks announced a new policy allowing anyone to sit in its cafes or use its restrooms, even if they don't buy anything; the policy came five weeks after two black men who hadn't bought anything were arrested at a Philadelphia Starbucks. First lady Melania Trump returned to the white House following a weeklong hospitalization for kidney treatment.

One year ago: President Joe Biden embarks on a six-day trip to South Korea and Japan aiming to build rapport with the two nations' leaders while also sending an unmistakable message to China: Russia's faltering invasion of Ukraine should give Beijing pause about its own saber-rattling in the Pacific. The nation's oldest civil rights organization said it will propose a sweeping plan meant to protect Black Americans from white supremacist violence, in response to a hate-fueled massacre that killed 10 Black people in Buffalo, New York. Vangelis, the Greece-born electronic composer who wrote the Academy Award-winning score for "Chariots of Fire" and music for dozens of other movies, documentaries and TV series, died at age 79.

Today's Birthdays: TV personality David Hartman is 88. Actor James Fox is 84. Actor Nancy Kwan is 84. Rock singer-composer Pete Townshend (The Who) is 78. Concert pianist David Helfgott is 76. College Football Hall of Famer and former NFL player Archie Manning is 74. Singer-actor Grace Jones is 72. Rock musician Phil Rudd is 69. Actor Steven Ford is 67. Actor Toni Lewis is 63. Rock musician Iain Harvie (Del Amitri) is 61. Actor Polly Walker is 57. Actor Jason Gray-Stanford is 53. Gospel singer Israel Houghton is 52. Rock singer Jenny Berggren (Ace of Base) is 51. Former race car driver Dario Franchitti is 50. TV personality Kim Zolciak Biermann (TV: "Real Housewives of Atlanta") is 45. Country/rock singer Shooter Jennings is 44. Actor Drew Fuller is 43.

Actor-comedian Michael Che (chay) (TV: "Saturday Night Live") is 40. Christian rock musician Tim McTague (Underoath) is 40. Actor Eric Lloyd is 37. Pop singer Sam Smith is 31. Actor Nolan Lyons is 22.

## Got a story or photos to share?

Connecting is a daily newsletter published Monday through Friday that reaches more than 1,800 retired and former Associated Press employees, present-day employees, and news industry and journalism school colleagues. It began in 2013. Past issues can be found by clicking Connecting Archive in the masthead. Its author, Paul Stevens, retired from the AP in 2009 after a 36-year career as a newsman in Albany and St. Louis, correspondent in Wichita, chief of bureau in Albuquerque, Indianapolis and Kansas City, and Midwest vice president based in Kansas City.



Got a story to share? A favorite memory of your AP days? Don't keep them to yourself. Share with your colleagues by sending to Ye Olde Connecting Editor. And don't forget to include photos!

Here are some suggestions:

- **Connecting "selfies"** - a word and photo self-profile of you and your career, and what you are doing today. Both for new members and those who have been with us a while.
- **Second chapters** - You finished a great career. Now tell us about your second (and third and fourth?) chapters of life.
- **Spousal support** - How your spouse helped in supporting your work during your AP career.
- **My most unusual story** - tell us about an unusual, off the wall story that you covered.
- **"A silly mistake that you make"** - a chance to 'fess up with a memorable mistake in your journalistic career.
- **Multigenerational AP families** - profiles of families whose service spanned two or more generations.
- **Volunteering** - benefit your colleagues by sharing volunteer stories - with ideas on such work they can do themselves.
- **First job** - How did you get your first job in journalism?

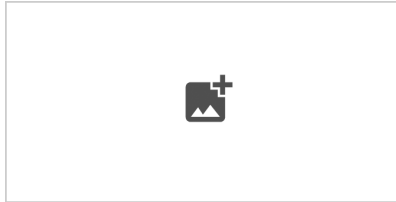


- **Most unusual** place a story assignment took you.

**Paul Stevens**

**Editor, Connecting newsletter**

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