

On Walter McEvilly March 7, 2001

Walter McEvilly and I met as freshmen at Wilmington High School in 1928-1929. It was a large school, with 3000 students, but we became friends rather quickly because we took similar programs. We were both, for instance, in an advanced Latin class with a remarkable teacher who enriched our curriculum by devices such as having us produce an original play with a Roman theme.

After school, at least in the senior year we would go to the office of the school's literary magazine, the *Whisp*, of which Walter was the editor, chosen for his literary skill and dependability. When a group of honor students, heavily chaperoned, traveled to Washington, Walter and I were roommates.

These were the years of the Great Depression and our parents suffered serious financial setbacks. We could still afford to go to Delaware College, for the fees were very low, about \$150 a year.

We had to be commuters, of course, but Walter solved that problem by buying a second-hand car with a loan—probably from his sister. Then he signed up five passengers to ride with him daily at 25 cents a day.

We carried our lunch in brown bags and ate together in the men's locker room. It was very companionable to be a part of McEvilly's gang, as we thought of ourselves.

By overloading his schedule and attending some summer courses, Walter finished college in three years, and with honors. But he needed to make money for the high fees of a law school, and work was not available.

Finally, in the spring of 1936, the future suddenly brightened. He was hired to run a neighborhood ice station, and he also was awarded a scholarship to the University of Pennsylvania law school.

Again he was a commuter. To see him I would go at night to the judges' law library in the courthouse, where I would generally find him alone. A lawyer seeing him there was impressed and offered him work when he finished.

He passed his state board examinations in a day when many applicants were rejected at first trial. As he began practice we remained close friends until he enlisted in the Navy. While in the service he married a young woman who lived around the corner from me and was as near to a sister as I ever had. Just a few years ago her funeral took place here.

Looking back over the years I could speak of Walter's intelligence, of his diligence, of his foresight in planning his career. But I prefer to emphasize his loyalty. He was loyal to his family, loyal to his friends, loyal to his church, and loyal to his country. He was a good man and will be missed.