



# **Angus Gibbons McEachran, Jr.**

AUG 24, 1939 - MAR 5, 2018



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# Angus Gibbons McEachran, Jr.

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Family, friends and former newsroom colleagues will celebrate the unparalleled life of Angus Gibbons McEachran Jr. at a private memorial on March 31. Angus, 78, died March 5, 2018, after a brief illness. His life and career personified intense determination. He possessed an unwavering passion for family, the outdoors, and the pursuit of truth and fairness through a 42-year career in newspapering. Hunting and fishing were more than sport, they were a lifestyle. Journalism was more than a job, it was – fiercely, proudly – his calling. So many titles fit him: dad, brother, grandfather, outdoorsman, photographer, artist, reporter and editor. But more than anything, this bear of a man, in size and demeanor, was a character. An oversized personality defined him. He was irascible, famous – okay, sometimes infamous – for a raging temper in the three newsrooms he managed, aided by a gift of piercing, colorful language. But a well-concealed soft heart belied a public persona straight from central casting. The son of Maxine Taylor McEachran and Angus Gibbons McEachran, Sr., he was a graduate of Catholic High School where as a halfback on the football team in 1953 ran for 235 yards on nine carries in one game. He proudly achieved professional success as Editor of three metro newspapers, leading two of them to three Pulitzer Prizes, without the benefit of a college degree (he attended the Memphis State and George Washington.) He forged his own path. After a brief stint with the FBI, Angus began his storied journalism career at the bottom, as a copy clerk in 1960 at The Commercial Appeal. In a role long since gone from newsrooms, he was courier and errand boy, serving the whims of editors and reporters. Later, as a beat reporter, he wrote about everything from crime to medicine. But by 1968 when Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was killed in Memphis, Angus had moved into management, serving as assistant city editor, coordinating the coverage of one of the nation's most infamous moments as the world looked on. He subsequently traveled to London to cover the arrest and extradition of James Earl Ray. He played a similar,



## Obituary

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pivotal role in 1977 when Elvis Presley died, then as assistant managing editor. Soon after, Angus was named Executive Editor of the Birmingham Post-Herald, a sister publication owned by the Scripps Howard newspaper chain, his only employer during more than four decades in journalism. In 1982, he became Editor of the Pittsburgh Press where he oversaw investigative projects that won the Pulitzer Prize in 1986 and 1987. He proudly returned to Memphis in 1993 as Editor of his hometown newspaper, eventually becoming President and Editor before retiring in 2002. His leadership and guidance were central to The Commercial Appeal winning the Pulitzer Prize for editorial cartoons in 1994. Angus was among a short list of Editors whose newspapers won journalism's highest honor multiple times. Even fewer have earned the award at two newspapers. He is survived by his son, Angus Gibbons McEachran III ("Gib"), and his children Mary Parke Chamberlayne and Angus Gibbons McEachran IV ("Gibbs"); and his daughter, Amanda McEachran LaMountain (Michael), and their children Anna Rose and Charlotte ("Charlie"). He is also survived by his partner and companion of 15 years, Pam Howell, as well as the mother of his children, Ann McEachran; and by a brother, Michael Thomas McEachran. He is preceded in death by sisters Mary Evelyn Schultz and Elizabeth Ann Papageorgean. Donations can be made in Angus's name to the International Center for Journalists. <https://www.icfj.org/support-our-work/give-online> Finally, it's essential to acknowledge that Angus, ever the editor, would have gleefully removed most of these flowery, flattering adjectives and, preferring brevity, cut this obituary by half.



## Tribute Wall

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**Rebecca Sims** posted:

Rest In Peace my dear brother-in-law. May God be with your family. Always in my heart.

March 8 at 9:39 AM



# Memories only last if you share them

Join us in honoring Angus by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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