

THE MIAMI NEWS

WILLIAM C. BAGGS
EDITOR

May 24, 1960

Mr. Ferris Bryant
State Campaign Headquarters
Ocala, Florida

Dear Mr. Bryant:

By the time you read this, the election returns shall have come in and either you or Mr. Carlton will be the Democratic nominee. I have waited for this moment because I did not want to express myself in the passions and misunderstandings of this campaign. The omnibus and bitter criticisms you made of "the Miami newspapers" were not true and my only hope at this point is that you did not know they were false as you made them.

I can relate only the workings of one newspaper in this city. The Miami News has attempted to report these campaigns as fairly and as accurately as the human frailty permits. I do not feel any political writer in Florida has a better reputation for detached and disinterested reporting than Charles Hesser. Our opinions are reserved for our editorial page. It is a tradition of journalism that opinions are stated on this page.

You sought the endorsement of The Miami News by appearing before its Editorial Board. This board gave you a fair hearing and there was no prejudging of any candidate for governor, including you.

I find your accusations vulgar. The News is one of the most honored papers in this country and this is the result of very fine ladies and gentlemen entering into journalism with what might be referred to as spiritual instinct. These ladies and gentlemen, due to the economics of journalism, are not paid with the material rewards which come

to doctors or lawyers or even press agents. Their hours are long. There is many a night and many an early morning when these ladies and gentlemen do not share the company of their families because they must run out to the scene of a sudden news story and report it so the people may know what happened. These ladies and gentlemen, and their journalistic ancestors, at this newspaper have been at this work since the year of 1896, when both the city and the newspaper were founded. For you to come along and try to sully the character and the purpose of these people and this newspaper is a wretched deed.

One is reminded of Bacon's observation. "Hurl your calumnies boldly; something is sure to stick."

I was tempted to reply to your fiction during the primary. The only reason I did not was I question such an entry by a newspaper in a heated political contest and as I put down this comment into words I find myself wondering if you understand the tradition which explains such restraint in American journalism.

As I said earlier, the people are voting today and the people will make their choice and at this minute neither you nor I know what this choice will be. But whether you are governor or a disappointed man, I wanted to make known these sentiments. I can understand a candidate, in the roll of a political contest, making a reckless statement. But I cannot understand a man seeking to become the governor of Florida making the warp and woof of his campaign out of air.

Sincerely,

W. H. King