

# NATIONAL PRESS PHOTOGRAPHERS ASSOCIATION, INC.

BOX 2304, BIRMINGHAM 1, ALA.

2604 S. Troy Street  
Arlington, Virginia

February 3, 1950

Senator Hubert H. Humphrey  
Senate Office Building  
Washington, D. C.

Dear Senator Humphrey:

We have at last completed our transcription of the convention and enclosed you will find a copy of the talk you gave the boys. I thought you might like to see this. Portions of this will appear in the "National Press Photographer" which goes to press photographers all over the country and also in our regional publication, "The Bootstrap."

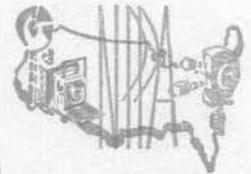
As these publications come out I shall send you copies.

Thanks again for the swell talk. It was a pleasure to have you with us.

Sincerely yours,

*Ollie*  
OLLIE ATKINS,  
Vice President  
Region 3

Enc.



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SENATOR HUMPHREY'S SPEECH

Introduction by OLLIE ATKINS: Gentlemen, at this time I would like to introduce to you one of our best friends on Capitol Hill, Senator Humphrey.

"Thank you very much my good friend, Ollie Atkins, and members of the National Press Photographers Association.

"You surely are not expecting any address and you are expecting some very informal remarks. I might tell you that when I was invited to this meeting by Mr. Atkins I was somewhat dubious as to whether or not I would be able to attend as I am supposed to be boarding a plane to go to Columbus, Ohio, to meet with some of my political friends down there. However, I thought this would be a good send off to give me the right spirit to meet the press once that I arrived in that fine city.

"Also the letter from Mr. Atkins carried a very fine friendly invitation to Mrs. Humphrey and myself to attend the cocktail party and entertainment at the hotel. I must confess that I will be unable to attend it and since I will be unable to attend, I would never let my wife up here with you fellows so we have just more or less canceled out this moment of entertainment and refreshment. So I'll just do that first part and paragraph where I was invited to say a few words to you.

"This is a real pleasure for me. First of all I have never had, as freshman Senator, the chance to see so many photographers at one time. I might say I hope the number of pictures taken here this morning will average up better in being printed than the average number of pictures that are generally taken and not printed. And, of course, since you gentlemen do have complete control over the use of photography in the press, I can well imagine we will have full-page spreads on these pictures. None of these one-column, one-inch outfits, but at least four wide. So I want to express my gratitude and appreciation long before they go through the processing and onto the press and out on the streets of America where the anxious and awaiting multitude will be grasping those papers regardless of what the publishers viewpoint may be.

"This I think can be very well stated that the American newspaper would be very much a dead issue, if you know what I mean, without the photographer, and without the photography that makes so much of the life of the press. I think any man in politics would much prefer to have one good picture to a half a dozen good stories and may I say with equal candor that any man in politics would much prefer to have six bad stories than one bad picture so just be cooperative, gentlemen, and remember that we all have to make a living and that we ought to have this spirit of good fellowship at all times.

"I am so pleased that there are several gentlemen here from Pittsburgh because I might tell you now that every man needs to think of the future. I intend to be in Pittsburgh on June 24th and I shall look forward to seeing each and everyone of you. I didn't recall that there was anything in my schedule about Scranton or about Princeton. I am sure I will be in New York but my friends on The New York Post up there have been always very gracious and I have always enjoyed the photography of that paper.

Now this is the serious part that I want to get down to. As one rather new comer in public life I am deeply concerned about what we call American press or journalistic public relations. I think you realize that the American newspaper is supposed to be the standard-bearer of what we call in political terms "free speech" and "free press". There have been times when people have been very critical of the objectivity or lack of objectivity of those who are in charge of or custodian of free speech and free press.

I don't believe that things are half as bad as some people portray them and possibly they aren't as good as some people would have us believe also. In other words your job as photographer is to report the news by your artistry, by your photography, as objectively as you can see it. Likewise, it is your job to make it interesting. The American people have many things to attract their attention. When you listen to the radio, when you read the newspaper, when you pick up the magazine, there are so many things that are competing for the attention of the mind of the average man or average woman that unless you do a good job, your job isn't going to be acknowledged or rewarded or even, let me say, as much as accepted.

I am sure, however, that the difference between the American press, one of the major differences between the American press and the press of Western Europe, and I am not speaking of the press behind the iron curtain, but the press of Western Europe which is the human interest that comes into the American newspaper, and that human interest is pretty well characterized by the photography and also by the cartoons.

I am confident that the average reader in America is more interested in the message of a cartoon or a good picture than he is of the editorial. Now that is not to cheapen the American newspaper reader or the American citizen because there is a real moral lesson at times, there is a real human interest story, there is a whole drama in one picture. Just as there is a great editorial and a great powerful, political or social message in one good cartoon. I think everyone of us realize that the printed word with the picture, photography or cartoon is the most powerful means of communication that man has ever known.

Now you have a very difficult assignment, I can't imagine anyone not being cooperative with you. Frankly, I

"think the cooperation that one gets from the press, from a reporter or a photographer is pretty much the kind of cooperation that the participant offers himself. That is the one that is on the other end of the camera; not this end but the one out in front. I have always been very honored when someone would come to me and say, "May we have your picture?" I realize that there must be dearth of talent if you are so hungry for that but every man and woman, I am sure, realizes that that is somewhat of an honor. When I say that you ought to have cooperation, I mean that that means that you ought to deserve it as well as you ought to receive it and I think you deserve cooperation when you act as a responsible cooperative person.

Now my friend, Ollie, tells me that there are times when photographers find it a bit difficult to fulfil their assignments when they are sent out on some very important dramatic incident or case. There are times even when you are victims of assault and battery. I can't imagine that but I suppose there are times when that actually happens. I have seen it happen. In fact in my own home city, I know that when I was mayor of my city of Minneapolis that we provided police protection for every photographer that went onto a scene of crime, for example, or a fire or a major disaster.

I provided, as mayor, a special card which was openly acknowledged by the police department, and not only acknowledged to permit photographers through the lines in case there was a line up of police officers but also that when the photographer was through the line by just using that card he was entitled to the kind of police protection that he, as an individual, deserved if he was going to fulfill his assignment. I understand that in some states that is possible and I understand that in others it is not.

Now obviously as an Association you have a purpose for some other than just getting together for social purposes, and I gather that one of the purposes would be to improve your work, to also be able to exchange ideas and to, I trust, improve your economic situation and then to provide a means of getting legislation that would make your assignments just a little bit easier. If not easier, just a little bit more safe; and I am encouraging that.

I don't believe there is anything that can be done in the Federal level except in the District of Columbia. There is a possibility, however, with the broad interpretation of the Commerce Clause that when papers are transmitted through the mails and do flow in the channels of commerce - interstate commerce - and that you as a part of that processing or preparation of that paper possibly could be protected. I am not an attorney. I do not claim any great knowledge of the legal aspects of this problem but it appears to me of a possibility of that. However, in the several states there is no doubt

"but that through the legislators that public law could be written that would guaranty to you as it does to other people who serve the public, the protection of the law when you are out on a particular assignment for a particularly worthy purpose and I hope you will be successful in obtaining that objective and any of us that can be helpful to you would be more than delighted to be of help. I am confident that if you would go to your congressman, to your senator or to your state legislator that most of them would feel honored that you have brought the problem to their attention. And I hope that you will do just that.

Before I close let me personally say that it is a great thrill for me to be down here in Washington. Somebody once asked me what I got into politics and I said because I liked it and believe me if I didn't like it I would get out of it in fifteen minutes. There are times that I wonder whether or not a man is in his right senses to like it. One doesn't have to be in his right senses you know to like to be in politics. So I was of the opinion that this was the kind of life that I would like to live and I have had a very friendly relationship in those few years that I served as the mayor of the good city of Minneapolis, and this year I have served as Senator, I have had a wholesome and most happy experience with members of the radio field, the press and photographers and those who are in charge of the means of communications.

Now that doesn't mean that everything that has been printed that I thought was exactly objective or that I thought was the most desirable type of publicity but as long, gentlemen, as you spell the name right that is very, very helpful. And I think that all people feel very much the same way. As far as the photography is concerned you gentlemen here in Washington that are with the syndicated services and those who are here on special assignments, whenever it has been my privilege to work with you and be a part of your work, it has always been great fun.

I want to personally thank my friend, Ollie Atkins, for a very wonderful job he did for me. He took some pictures for The Saturday Evening Post. He was kind enough to give us a whole brochure of those pictures for our family and, Ollie, we shall cherish them for as long as we live.

I see my friend back here from Pathfinder that took a large order of pictures when we came down here to Washington. I want to thank him and I want to thank his magazine. I want to thank each and everyone of you.

I know I have missed some here and you will have to forgive me because there are many of you here that have been in my office or have been out to our home and it has been wonderful the way that you have treated us and I only hope that we have been worthy of it; and if you will just bear with us for

"awhile maybe several years from now I can return to you and you will say, "Well, you know, age does improve a guy a little bit," and maybe just like photographers, senators can learn something too. So thanks so much. Have a good day. I regret that we can't be with you tonight."

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