CLASS OF 1932

MEL RUDER

When Mel Ruder (1915 – 2000), owner/editor of the *Hungry Horse News*, won the Pulitzer Prize in 1965, he said, "Now I can die." Far from dying, however, Ruder continued to publish his award-winning paper until 1978 when he sold, believing that "no newsman should rest on past achievements."

A 1932 graduate of Bismarck High School, he was a top student and was named the outstanding history student. He valued the Eagle Scout award he received. Always searching for more knowledge, he read encyclopedias from cover to cover.

After working for a year to save money, he enrolled at the University of North Dakota. He worked part time at the University Commons sweeping floors to cover his room and board. In 1937, he graduated with a BA in journalism and a minor in European history.

During the summers of 1936 and 1937, he worked in Yellowstone National Park. His journalism professor recommended him to the late Jack Haynes, Yellowstone's official photographer, who wanted "someone with a nose for news and willing to learn, and he'd make a photographer out of him." Short of funds, Ruder hitch-hiked to Yellowstone wearing his Boy Scout uniform.

Ruder was an assistant professor of journalism and in charge of the university news service while continuing with graduate work. He earned a MA in sociology at UND in 1942.

He enlisted in the Navy during World War II and served as a gunnery officer on ships in the European and Pacific theaters. He was proud of his service and was discharged as a full lieutenant. He thought he'd like working in the east but after a brief time in public relations in New York City, he knew he wanted to live in the west near a national park.

In 1946 he settled in Columbia Falls, Montana, near Glacier National Park and the locale where the Hungry Horse Dam was planned for construction. A few weeks later, he started his weekly paper with a circulation of zero, limited savings and a determination to be successful. In those early years, he met Ruth Morris, a widowed high school English teacher. They married in 1950 and Ruder adopted her five-year-old daughter, Patsi.