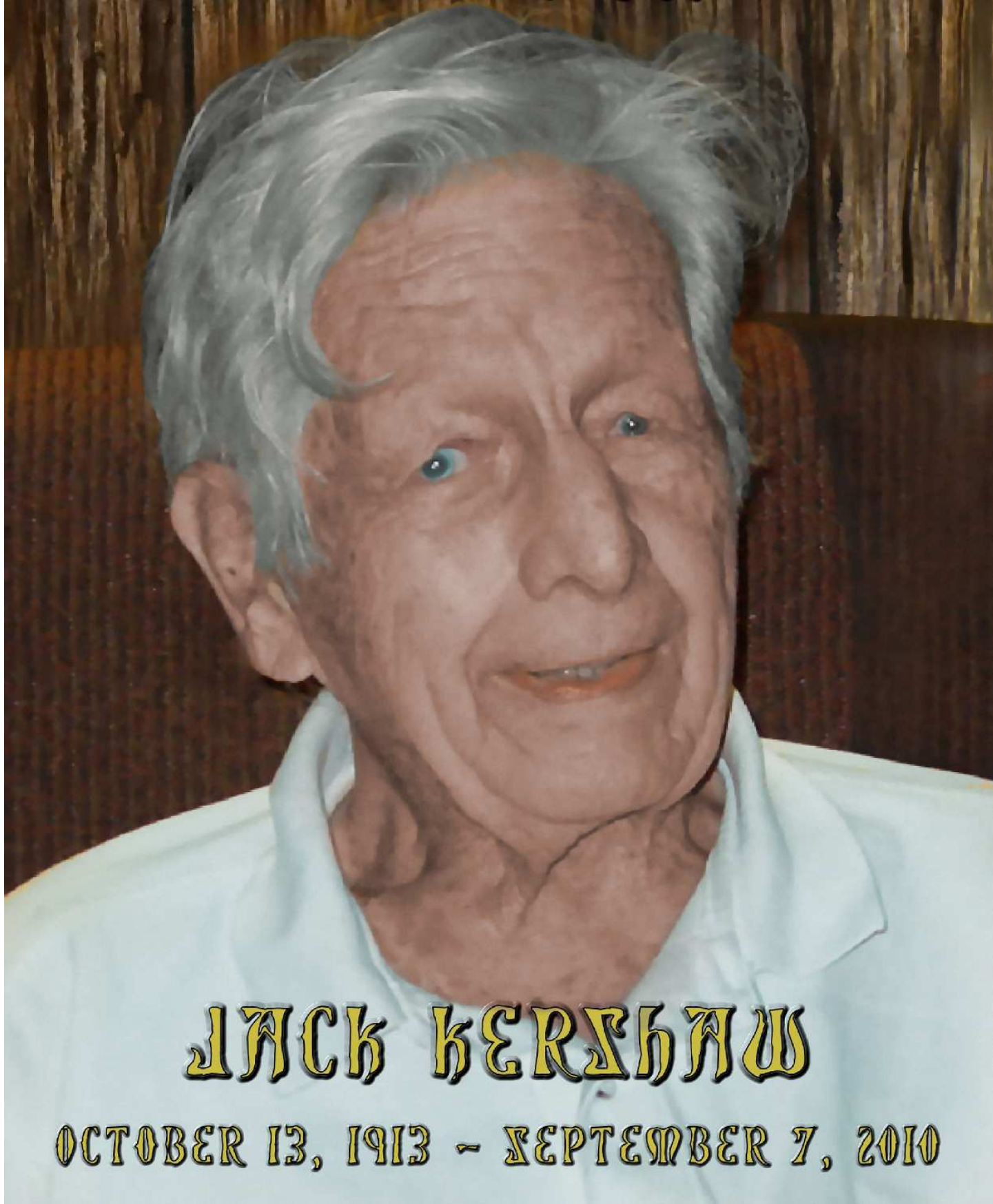


IN MEMORIAM



JACK KERSHAW

OCTOBER 13, 1913 - SEPTEMBER 7, 2010

AUTOBIOGRAPHY

by Jack Kershaw



At the age of two I remember being spanked for biting my wet nurse in what was really a self-defeating attack on my source of sustenance.

I have no distinct memory of whether I learned a lesson or not. I do remember that this, for better or worse, was not my last experience with corporal punishment: all undeserved, of course.

Come high school I majored in sports -- five years of football, basketball and baseball, and for recreation in off-season, tennis, horses and golf. Somehow I was also an avid reader -- some of my books had to do with my studies and some did not -- and I had an odd fascination for drawing people and things -- a busy kid.

I ran through three schools -- Peabody, MBA and Riverside Military Academy -- in five years, and then to Vanderbilt on an athletic scholarship. In those days, athletic scholarships were not given as such; you were given some kind of job. Mine was selling ads for the football game programs, which got me out into the world somewhat. In my senior year, I got a small salary for being a lab instructor

in my other major, geology.

All salaries were small in those days. Throughout the heights and depths of the Great Depression, I never missed a meal. I postponed a few, but never really missed any. Everybody seemed to have a good time and it didn't cost much money. It was the roaring twenties, nonstop into the rolling thirties at bargain rates. Bank clerks walked up and down Union Street in coat and tie, on \$12.50 a week.

After I graduated in 1936, I played pro football for the Nashville Rebels. We played St. Louis, Cincinnati, Chicago -- a "B" league, but I was steppin' in high cotton. As quarterback, I drew down \$50.00 a game -- linemen only got \$25.00. We had a good team. And by the way, in those days, Vanderbilt won games.

My graduation from college was noteworthy, but not commendable. A front-page story on the rigors of scholarship and graduation ceremonies featured a picture of an overzealous student in cap and gown sitting on the street curb, nursing his board-and-tassel-decorated and aching head, having suffered from overstudy the night before. I think they spelled my name right.

Then the actual ceremony -- covered on the back pages. Marching up onto the stage like all the rest of the proud graduates, I received from the chancellor my diploma all nicely rolled into a tube with a ribbon around it, and then -- unlike the other proud graduates -- I twirled it like a baton. The press caught that too. I think they spelled my name right -- again. Recognition is all right, if you can just live it down.

Traveling salesman, oil and exploration geologist, art sales department manager, farmer, general contractor, developer, artist -- they call it "diversity" these days. Then they called it "harem-scarem." Then my dear wife Mary Noel -- without whom I would be a zero -- enrolled us in the YMCA Night Law School. I graduated and passed the bar, and so did Mary. No baton-twirling this time, but

I was plenty pleased.

My law practice was general, and generally it was not worth mentioning, except that I did handle almost all the school desegregation cases in Tennessee, and established a 100% record of loss therein.

Our position was: if compulsory segregation by race is unconstitutional, then so is compulsory integration by race -- which latter we have today amidst a generally troubled school system nationwide.

I could never understand why if separation of church and state is justly one of our basic principles, why is not separation of school and state? Our "hearts and minds" are equally involved in each, and in a free society, should not be subject to the whims and ploys of government control or intervention.

Maybe I'll do a book on the subject, then I'll twirl my last baton -- if I have one.

James Earl Ray? Yeah, I represented him in tandem, along with about six or seven other lawyers. No, he didn't kill Martin Luther King. No bullet recovered from King's body was ever matched to Ray's rifle, or to any other rifle. Nor did Ray "confess." See the record. Also the unseen record, which I may have; it might make yet another book -- the Book of Revelations.



In this article, published in a Nashville newspaper in 1938, Jack Kershaw has a little fun with a credulous reporter, as he attributes his artistic training to a spurious apprenticeship under exotic artistes in Cuba and France.

Athlete Turns Talents To Surreal Painting

By Red O'Donnell



Jack Kershaw, Former M.B.A., Vanderbilt Player, Artist

Remember Jack Kershaw?

He was the well-proportioned all around athlete at Peabody, M.B.A., Riverside and Vanderbilt a few years ago.

Well he turns up now as an embryonic painter of no small ability and during the past month has turned out some better than mediocre jobs, several of which have been on exhibition in downtown windows and drew the plaudits of lovers of art.

Kershaw, who lives on Meadowbrook Avenue here, and who works at a downtown office during the day spends most of his spare time dabbling around in his improvised studio --Greenwich Village style -- situated in the spacious attic of his home.

There Kershaw has decorated the walls with paintings, which, when one considers that they are painted on brown wrapping paper, show rare skill.

Not Like Zuppke

Jack, who starred in football, baseball and basketball, and now is a pretty good golfer, differs from another grid addict, Bob Zuppke, coach of Illinois, in that he is a devotee of Surrealism, whereas Zup goes in for landscape drawings exclusively.

This gifted young artist painted his first murals on refrigerator tops with enamel paint. His initial studies were in Cuba under Marta, native muralist. But here Kershaw participated in one of the periodical revolutions instead of Aesthetica. And so adios to the senors and senioritas of the Latin country.

He has also studied with Madame La Fevre in Paris and at Peabody and Watkins in Nashville.

He admits that during his younger days -- he's not yet 25 -- he had difficulty in getting along with his teachers, but on the whole, he seems to have met with unusual success and according to experienced connoisseurs has great potentialities.

It was only recently that this writer learned that Jack was a muralist. He always will remember him for one afternoon's display of Saxon courage.

Jack was in the backfield of the Bee team which was scrimmaging the Vanderbilt varsity on McGugin practice field.

Display of Courage

Because the varsity had acted poorly on the defense the previous Saturday, Jack and his cohorts were on the offense that particular afternoon.

Jack is unusually fast, so Josh Cody, who had charge of the Bees, was running him quite frequently. The varsity, goaded on by taunts of railbirds, were tackling viciously.

Kershaw had run the ball about eight times in succession. He had been hit hard by three and four tacklers on each occasion. Exhausted by the terrible pounding, he soon was knocked out and hauled away to the sidelines where a merciful assistant manager ministered to his hurts.

Upon reviving a few minutes later, Kershaw opened his eyes, peered about and discovered that he wasn't still in the scrimmage.

He jumped to his feet and ran to Coach Cody. Grabbing the big man by his arm, he spun him around and demanded in no mild terms the reason for his removal.

Cody was too spellbound by such a display of courage to offer a plausible explanation.

Now that same courageous young fellow is a Surrealist.

And Surrealism -- in case you don't know, is "to reduce and finally to dispose altogether the flagrant contradictions that exist between drama and waking life, the real and unreal, the conscious and unconscious, and thus make of what has hitherto been regarded as the special domain of poets, the acknowledged common property of all."

That, my friends and Romans, is Surrealism, so 'elp me.

