



## Dumas Newspaperwoman Retires after 53 Years

April 1998

DUMAS, Ark. – Charlotte Schexnayder retired in April 1998, ending a 53-year long career in the newspaper business – 45 of those years as publisher of the *Dumas Clarion*.

A native of Tillar, Schexnayder developed an early fascination for newspapers, putting together a four-page newsletter as a child. She went on to become editor of the *Tillar High School Eagle*, then worked on the *Weevil Outlet* as a student at Arkansas A&M College.

She began stringing, or working part-time, for statewide weeklies during her college years and was named editor of the Louisiana State University *Reveille* after transferring there.

Her first job after college was as assistant editor of the *McGehee Times*. She returned to LSU to attend graduate school during her husband's military service. They settled in McGehee when he was discharged from service, working as editor and advertising manager of the *Times*.

The couple bought the *Clarion* in March of 1954. Schexnayder remained as publisher and editor until this April when the paper was sold to Emmerich Newspapers of Mississippi.

Schexnayder received many honors in her newspaper career, including being the first woman president of the National Newspaper Association in 1991-92. She is the only woman to have held this position in the group's 112-year history.

The progressive Schexnayder was also the first woman president of the Arkansas Press Association and of a chapter of the Society of Professional Journalists. She was president of Arkansas Press Women in 1955 and held the top position in the National Federation of Press Women in 1977-79.

This spring, Schexnayder was inducted into the Hall of Fame at LSU'sanship School of Mass Communication. The day before, she had received a Horizon Award from the League of Women Voters of Arkansas.

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Throughout the years, Schexnayder was a tireless champion of Dumas and worked to attract industry to her town. Despite her busy schedule, she found time to serve seven terms as a member of the Arkansas House of Representatives. She also served as Dumas Chamber of Commerce president and was the first woman member of the Arkansas Board of Pardons and Parole.

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