

NO SATURDAY MORNING CARTOONS

'JFK REMEMBERED'

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The day Kennedy was shot I was on the playground of Bloomington Springs Elementary School. Mrs. Opal rang the bell early, ending recess. Everyone was called in to their seats and the divider between the two classrooms was opened so the announcement could be made.



She stated, "President Kennedy has been shot!" and went on to tell how this was dark day in American history.

At the time I was just 8 years old and didn't realize the greatest president of my lifetime had just been taken from us. That opinion would come later when I got older and could see things through a different eye rather than just reflect opinion from my upbringing.

My dad was a hardcore Republican and believed that if Kennedy had lived he would have dragged the nation into nuclear war. My grandmother was a hardcore Democrat and saw Kennedy as a leader bringing a false religion into the White House. She still held that opinion when I married a Catholic 16 years later. So my bigoted upbringing gave me a bad opinion of a man I now respect on that day.

Mrs. Opal cancelled normal activities and kids watched the funeral procession and listened to commentary on the event. She said we may not like doing this now, but when we got older we would remember and realize we had been a part of history.

As a child, all I knew was that horse pulling the wagon with the coffin replaced my Saturday morning cartoons. Frantically, I turned from station to station, and nothing was there. We had three and ABC didn't always come in down in the hollow. In frustration, I did my art project. We were required to draw a picture before each report card came out. I did the image of President Kennedy looking up at the American flag. Underneath I placed a special heartfelt caption that got me sent to Mrs. Opal's office when I turned it in. I just knew I was going to get my first paddling from her when she bellowed, "Why did you write 'A bad president' under that picture?"

Meekly, I looked at her and told her all the things I had heard at home and at Church about that president to form that opinion. She just smiled and marked through the word "bad" and said, "I hope you reflect upon this some day."

Ironically, I didn't get the paddling I expected and a good grade for the artwork that I still consider good but should have had a different title, as Tony the Tiger would have said, "A GREAT PRESIDENT?"

*Read more stories by G. W. Brown at 'Writer's Corner' at: <http://www.ajlambert.com>