

BACK YARD

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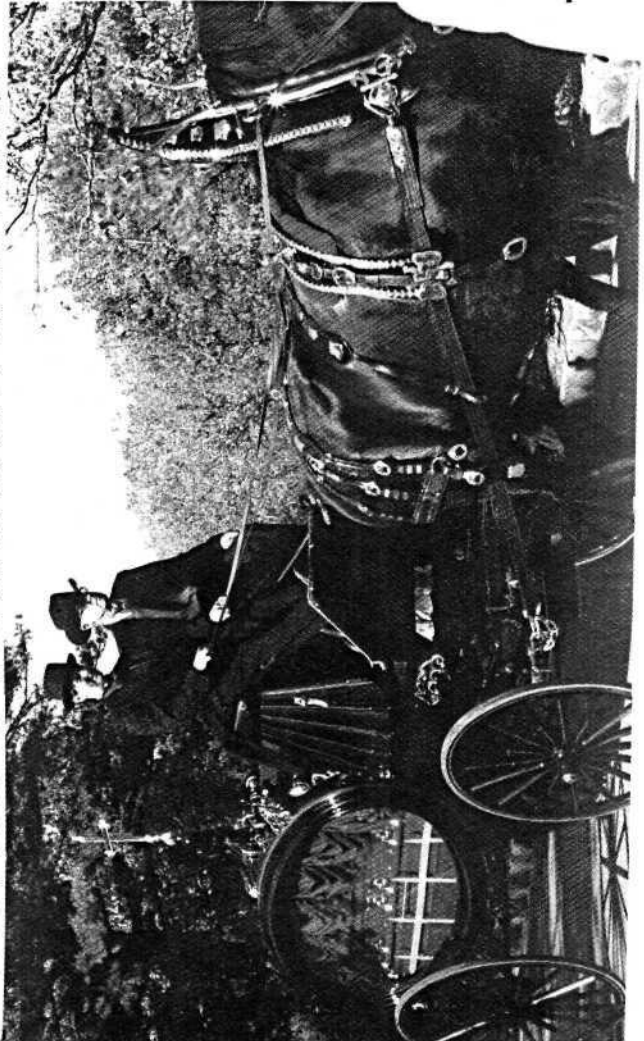
November 30, 1999

A CELEBRATION OF LIFE

Hugo Bids "Mr. Circus" Farewell

Before I give my memories of the beautiful service and procession to the cemetery, I would like to combine some of the wide coverage Mr. D.R. Miller received in the press. From the Hugo paper, Bill Roller wrote: "He came quietly to Hugo in 1941. He left Hugo in a rousing celebration, Nov. 17. Friends, co-workers, performers and fellow circus people came from all over the country to pay their last respects to Mr. Circus, USA, Dores Richard Miller. D.R. was circus. He breathed it, he lived it and he loved it. It began when at 6 years of age, he saw his first one (the John Robinson Circus) in McCook, Nebr., August 2, 1924. And that's the way it was until he saw his last circus (his own Carson & Barnes) in McCook, Sept. 8, 1999. Showman to the last, D.R.'s funeral was held in a circus tent. His red & gold casket rested on bull tubs inside the center ring decked with floral arrangements with circus themes from circus people. And, it was a "straw house." The music was circus music furnished by a live band of circus musicians playing the tunes associated with aerialists, acrobats and especially the elephants, D.R.'s trademark. The hundreds who came to pay homage to a man who had contributed so much to so many sat not in pews but on circus bleachers. And why not? They came to see a show-D.R.'s last performance. They were former performers for D.R.'s show. They were business associates and providers, they were circus fans, some of whom had never met D.R. in person.

One of the floral arrangements depicted an elephant sitting as D.R. usually sat to watch his show, in a folding chair with a package of Red Man tobacco beside him. Kevin Murray, a great nephew of D.R., delivered an eulogy for the family in which he drew chuckles from circus-savvy people when he said, "A lot of you have traveled a great distance and we are thankful that you arrived safely. We hope that we have met your expectations as this is a true D.R. Miller production. First, it is guaranteed to be a least one hour, 45 minutes long, and second, there will be no intermission." Kevin referred to D.R.'s family ties and how the kids always received circus trucks or wagons or trains for Christmas and how it was impossible to separate his private life from his business life because his entire life was in the circus. "There is not a person here or affiliated with the circus business who doesn't admire and respect D.R. for what he has done and accomplished for the circus



community. There is not a person here in the circus business who hasn't butted heads with D.R. at one time or another."

(Continued on Page 4)



ROSAIRE SISTERS



FAREWELL TO THE KING

By Bobby Gibbs

Wed. Nov. 17, 1999-Hugo, Okla.: The entire circus world joined together with the Miller family to say good-bye to the King of the Circus Big Tops, D.R. Miller. I know many of you readers would have loved to have been there with the greats of circus fame, out of respect for D.R. but time, distance, family and jobs could not permit you to make it. I was lucky to be there and I will do my best to let you know what a lovely service and celebration it was of a man's life.

First, the weather was too good to be true for a tent show man. It was in the 70s-80s, so a dry lot. The Kelly Miller Big Top was set up at the fairgrounds, complete with ring, lights & sound system, seat wagon, etc.-over 2500 people signed the guest book but there were many, many more there-standing room up to the ring curb and out the front door. Mr. Miller was in center ring, surrounded by the most flowers I ever saw outside the Rose Bowl parade.

Circus trucks, elephants, horses, camels and wagons were all around the tent. Crowds were so big that the local police could not handle it so State troupers and sheriffs were there from all over Southern Oklahoma. The funeral home had to bring in people from Texas to help.

Charles Schlarbaum had a 10 piece circus band on hand and the service was held under the Big Top. Kevin Murray spoke for the Miller family; the family minister spoke for the church and also there were the Little Sisters and members of the Catholic church; the circus priest, etc. Mr. Baggett spoke for the community of Hugo and David Rawls spoke for the circus industry. He read Pat White's poem of D.R. called "Chewing Red Man in his Chair."

Pallbearers were Red Johnson, John Davenport, Dick Garden, John Walker, Gary Johnson and George Carden-all show owners. After the closing song of "When White Lilacs Bloom Again," the D.R. and Isla favorite song, everyone went outside.

D.R. was pulled to Mt. Olivet Cemetery by draft horses, black Percherons. A band wagon led the way playing circus tunes. Elephant with flowers, liberty horses, high school horses and camels & llamas, clowns-a really terrific sight as thousands lined the parade route. Hugo schools were let out and many businesses closed in D.R.'s honor-about 20 large businesses took everyone out to the grave site. There the Circus marquee was set up over the grave. A military color guard led off as D.R. was

a veteran of WW II-a fly-over was made with the plane dipping it's wings. The Masonic lodge held a service; the band played and the family received his military flag and Masonic sheepskin. D.R. was laid to rest in a bright, red casket with gold trim-a real showman who's presence will be felt in the circus world for a long, long time to come. Everyone was then invited to the Indian Heritage Center where a meal was served to one and all. I can not list off the names of show people there-it would take a whole special edition of this publication to list them.

D.R. would have loved all the jackpots and stories; all the hugs and tears as our circus family came together for a common thought. The Byrd family, assisted by David Rawls and many, many others, gave D.R. a fine send-off and even the Lord helped with the fine weather.

There won't be another like him for awhile and never again a man like him with tents and elephants. Our prayers for the Miller family and to D.R. See you down the road.

RED CROWN CAGE OF FURY

By Mike Cecere

Slashing claws, gnarling fangs-The Red Crown Cage of Fury. Sounds like a promo for a wild animal act, doesn't it? Well, you'd be wrong! It's what Back Yard editor, Cherie Valentine, had to face at home from Mozart and the rest of the Valentine Pride of ferocious domestic cats, after her trip to Hugo, OK. to cover the funeral of Master Showman, D.R. Miller.

Yet, Cherie faces these "savage" cats gladly in her unending effort to bring readers of Back Yard, America's top Circus/Animal Industry publication cutting-edge news and reviews found no where else. Following in the large footsteps of Back Yard founder, Frank Thompson, Cherie relentlessly uses the sharp edge of her word processor to keep up the tradition! So, if you have News, Reviews, Opinions, Photos or Ideas to share, this is the Place. Contact Cherie Today! (And keep those get-well cards coming for Mozart!)

Charlie Simpson, President of the **Valentine Tent**, sent a copy of the Sun City Center newspaper of Oct 27. A large color photo appears on the page-of a Western-type cowboy and it is non-other than **Benny Williams!** He was appearing in "How The West Was Fun" at Kings Point Auditorium. "Ben Williams, of Ruskin, plays Curly, a moonstruck cowboy willing to sacrifice all to win his reluctant lady love."

"Hundreds Pay Respects to Mr. Circus".....

Kevin Murray continued, "D.R. would say, 'Now, I may be wrong but I think this is what we should do.' And guess what. That is the way it would be done. If things were going smoothly on the lot, that is when D.R. was most uneasy. I think it is fair to say that D.R. enjoyed challenges. He enjoyed keeping things stirred up. You always hear about P.T. Barnum, John Ringling North or Kenneth Feld and their respective shows but I truly believe that when it comes to a circus owner who was with the show day in and day out, through thick & thin, there is none other that comes close to D.R. And, you always knew when D.R. was in the tent. The show seemed to run a little smoother and have a little extra flair when the 'Old Man' was around." David Rawls spoke for the circus world when he said, "I want to tell everyone here today that this is a celebration of a man's life, love and passion. That is why it is under the big top. I never met a man anywhere that truly loved it as much as D.R. did." Rawls referred to that first circus D.R. saw in McCook and said, "I wonder what he saw in that circus. What was it that created such a passion for circus and how lucky we are today that he went to that circus when he was 6 years old because he made so many things possible for the circus business. D.R. never knew an impossibility. It was 'why can't we do it?' How could a man become such a giant in this industry and convince people that anything was possible and that you could do anything? He was humble. He was a self-effacing man. But he did have some very unique abilities: He knew how to read people. He knew how to read animals. And he knew how to read weather. All these things are important in any business. He believed immensely in family and circus as a family. He was a man of integrity and he was certainly a man of charity because there are so many of us today that D.R. has given a helping hand to. He never asked anything in return. He never asked to be honored. I never went to a circus with him that he wasn't enthused. It didn't have to be his circus, it was any circus, especially under the big top." Rawls said it would be impossible to list all the great things Miller has done for the industry and he hopes that those things will be remembered in the days to come. Charles Baggett spoke of D.R.'s contributions to Hugo and pointed out that the man was the reason Hugo was "Circus City, USA." "He loved this community and the community loved him. Whenever there was a project we presented the plan to D.R. He not only supported it with his heart, but with his pocket book." He told how D.R. purchased that large portion of Mt. Olivet Cemetery to establish Showman's Rest-that section reserved for those who had lived and died in the circus world. Baggett told how Hugo was in competition with a Texas town for Miller's circus winter quarters, but that it would have cost \$50,000 for the Texas location. So, the choice was Hugo. Charles revealed that the Texas town was Arlington and wondered how much several acres would be worth there today. The Rev. Steve Goughour, former pastor of First Christian Church in Hugo, conducted the services and paid tribute with his opening remark: "For a preacher it is a very comforting

thing to share the ring with a man like D.R. We thank him for what he has done, for showing us what the circus is all about-people."

The beautiful program has the poem on the back that Kristin wrote and read during the ceremony:

Dores Richard Miller By Kristin Byrd Parra
We have gathered together to say good-bye
To one of the greatest showmen that was ever alive.

No one could ever tell him, how to run his show
For no matter what you said, it was something
he had already known.

He thrived for challenges and tackling
impossible feats
He may have lost a lot of money, but he always
lived out his dreams.

Whenever he was traveling, he never missed a show
And if something wasn't just right,
you'd better believe he would let you know.

But many of you only knew him from
the business side
But I remember him trying to teach me how to dance,
when I was only about knee high.

I had my first wreck, while driving with him
He just laughed and gave me a big devilish grin.

D.R. Miller has been laid to rest
As far as grandpas go I consider him the best.

As many of you know, he was a very stubborn man
But he could melt your heart with a
single touch of his hand.

The circus world will never be the same
Our hearts will break when they speak his name.

For the greatest circus legend has taken his last bow
The thrill of his life was listening to
the applause of the crowd.

So good-bye, Mr. Circus, until we see you again
For I know in my heart, we will all travel in caravan
together once again!!!

WE LOVE YOU!

CAP LOGAN'S LIONS

By Mike Cecere

When you hear the name, Captain Fred Logan, most folks right away picture the popular Supt. of elephants from 1970, until recently with the Clyde Beatty-Cole Bros. Circus. But, let's open the historical book and go back to the 60s (a fun time for many) and the giant A. G. Kelly-Miller Bros. Circus. Owned by the Miller family, it was the most innovative and successful tent show ever! And it always featured a number of exciting animal acts. One of which was a great act of male lions presented by Cap Logan. AND they were BIG LIONS, great black maned beasts that came from Jungleground in Thousand Oaks, Calif.-long provider of the Clyde Beatty lions. In those days, lions still came from Africa and they would catch adult lions for training, not cubs like today.

They were referred to as "mother raised" and double tough. That type of big cat is actually a better student and some of us training in the 70s made a great effort to obtain cats though born here, were raised by their mothers. Anyway, Cap Logan had broke in the business with legendary trainer Terrell Jacobs when the latter had a full touring circus on the midway of a large carnival touring Canada.

He paid attention so that when the idea of staging a lion act came up, in addition to his duties as elephant supt. on K-M, was not a problem. In fact, if I'm not mistaken, he also presented liberty horses and other featured animal acts in the performance. So you see, Gunther Gebel Williams and the late Wayne Franzen, were not the only ones to work multiple acts in a performance.

In recent years, Cap Logan has tried to spend more time with his family and in addition to serving as a consultant to the Beatty-Cole show, has given a great deal of sage advice to his son-in-law, Jorge Pages, who has developed a fine lion & tiger act in recent years. So, out of the mist of history, that's the story of Cap Logan's Lions!

Fox 74

THE FOX!!!

I went to see the Sterling and Reed Show here in Sarasota. It was a very good show. I did not know to many people there except the staff people like Dodge Crowfoot, Duke and his lovely wife Diana, Tuffy Nicolas. He also had his father there visiting Tosca and Duady Fomasari. Then I saw Dick Garden for a minute, he welcomed me. When I got there first I noticed

there were 4 elephants there and the day before there were just two, so I kidded and said, Oh, they had two babies. Well the day before was "Have Trunk Will Travel" and now there was Johnny Walker the 3rd with the Cuneo elephants performing. Duke came to me to say hi and wanted to hug me but I jumped back and screamed. He had that big snake around his neck and I for one am deadly afraid of snakes. Most of the show were Latin people. I am sure I know thier parents but these were all young ones. I was impressed by Nunios balancing act and I think at one time his father was friends with all of us. The Gaonas, I do not know this branch to well, I know the Gaonas with Tito very much. Oh by the way, when they were setting up Tito was also visiting. Any way, I enjoyed the show. It had a brand new bigtop and I have to say it Dick Garden always puts on a great show.

That night I stopped by for a little while at the Club and was so very pleasantly surprised to see all of the St Leons there. They all look great. I did not stay for the Big Ta Rah as I was tired, because I had to get up that morning to give a speech at a trailer park, at 8:00 AM. I know Showfolks had a full house, as they had the Halloween Party. Mike Ashton was playing.

Tammy Wallenda had to perform at a big celebration doing the lira and also having her two lions with her. Erika went along to help. When she got back the next day she went to wash all the clothes at a laundry mat. Erika stayed in the car for a while then decided to join her mom in side. She brought the purse from her mom with her. There were three guys in there and just as she layed down the purse one of them jumped over and stole the purse and all three were running down the street with Tammy chasing them down the street. She caught one of them but he threw her to the ground and went on running. They jumped into a truck and vanished. Tammy called the police and explained everything to them. They took her statement and then left her. Now the bad thing was, the car keys were in the purse, all he I Ds, credit card, cel phone and the \$700. she just had made. She finely got Shane Johnson to come and pick her and Erika up.

The next day she went to pick up her car and there was the truck and also the guy who stole her purse. She got Erika to make sure this was the right guy and also called the police. They got the guy and he signed a full confession. He told the police that he used the money for drugs and the rest of the stuff he through in the garbage. They told Tammy that they could not pick the guy up because they had no warrant for his arrest. I do not know how that works. but this was in Texas. I do not know the laws there. Delilah daughter of Jenny Wallenda will perform over Thanks Giving here in Sarasota Jungle Garden with husband Terry Troffer and son Nicholas and Nicolas fiance daughter of Venicio and Golda. Tino of the Flying Wallendas will be working again at the Colony Beach Club the Saturday after Thanks Giving. Also there will be Regalito, Maya Zerbini, Mikha & Christina Ktchalov Norbol & Almas Meirmano and Kimbel Keller. Tino is at this time performing in Mexico with his two daughters.

I believe all the shows are home now except Hanneford. They are still out there performing. (Continued on Page 7)

A CIRCUS FAREWELL

"Showman Leaves World In Big Top Grand Finale"

By Jay Grelen-Oklahoma City * Nov. 18, 1999

D.R. Miller turned his funeral into a circus. Which, of course, is exactly how he planned it. "He wanted the publicity for the circus," his daughter Barbara Miller Byrd said after the funeral. During the service under the big top, funeral directors slid the flowers to the foot of his casket and opened the lid. As hundreds filed past for a look at D.R., in his red elephant tie and the Carson & Barnes hat nestled at his elbow, the sun-spotlight moved onto a wreath with the words, "D.R. Miller. King of the Showmen."

As Barbara tucked a red handkerchief in the top pocket of her father's suit coat, the sun lit the yellow flowers and the top of the sign. D.R. was in the spotlight again. As the 7 pallbearers, circus men all, hoisted his coffin and walked out of the big top, the sun moved off the wreath and shined to the ground behind. The spotlight was off. The show was over.

On the last day of his life, D.R. wasn't feeling well and after he fainted, his family took him to the hospital. The doctors said he was OK. Barbara was driving him back to the circus grounds and they lost their way. "You know," he told her, "I saw my first circus here." He had never told her that. After he returned to his trailer, he rested while Barbara checked on the show. When she returned, her father was in his golf cart.

"Dad, what are you doing?" "I want some chicken soup." She found it, he ate it. Then he wanted to see a photograph a fan had given him. The photo showed his wife in the early days. His maid tried to find the picture. He collapsed. Barbara was walking toward the midway when she heard shouts of "Call 911!"

Her father was gone. He saw his last circus in the place where he saw his first one. D.R. and his circus have been in Hugo since 1942 when Vernon Pratt visited their winter home in Mena, Ark. and lured them to Hugo with free rent and utilities. In return, the Millers showed their animals Sundays.

Cindi Cavallini led the procession to Showman's Rest on Chopin, a black Friesian horse. Behind her, Gizmo and Bert, the camels followed. Then the llamas, Lucky and Sam. 3 more Friesians. Then, Susie, a 48-year-old elephant that was one of the first five D.R. bought.

Then the band wagon, on loan from the Circus Hall of Fame in Peru, IN., followed, filled with a brass band and Popcorn, the clown. The 130-year-old funeral coach was

last, its sides of oval glass giving the hundreds who lined 5th Street a view of D.R.'s fancy casket. Back at the big top, the tent lay flat on the ground. A trainer told Nina, one of D.R.'s elephants, "Nina, head down." He wrapped a chain around one of the stakes that had held the tent in place. "Nina, pull up." Stake by stake, Nina took down D.R.'s big top. Tent down. Grave covered. Spotlight dim. Show over. Nina, head down.

News From Our Circus Friends

***Rich Deptula** writes "The Flying Rodgel's (Ramos family) will be returning in December to the U.S. and their home in Las Vegas. They have been appearing with **Circus Knie** for over a year in many countries in Europe."

***Ringling Bros.** reports **Johnathan Lee Iverson** will be showcased on **Barbara Walters'** year-end special Nov. 30 at 10 PM on ABC. **Kenneth Feld** said, "We are thrilled that everyone who has met him or seen him perform has embraced him so warmly."

***Bobby Gibbs** writes "We closed Oct. 31 in Baton Rouge, LA Fair and took all the longhorns, etc. to **Boger Ranch** in Lowell, Ark. for awhile. After D.R.'s funeral, I will help move trucks to Miami that go to Puerto Rico. We open down there Dec. 10 for 10 weeks. **Rosa** misses "**Betty**" who's now at **Murray Hills**. The circus has lost many good people this year, **Isla, Ted Bowman, D.R., Hoxie, Eugene Nock** and now **June Plunkett**. I am happy to be with **Bunky & Connie Boger**. They are really good people, nice to work for and with all these 10 day fairs, it's not too hard. All this plus, a great cookhouse."

***Richard Reynolds** writes "I saw **Mabel Stark** perform with **Al G. Barnes/Sells-Floto** and **Ringling** features here in Atlanta in Nov. 1938-61 years ago! I do remember her-she worked in her white costume. What a show that was: **Mabel, Terrell Jacobs, the Cristianis, the Concellos, the Naittos, Mlle. Rasputin** and zebras, **Felix Adler, Frank Buck, Gargantua and Lotus, the hippo.**

DeLand, Fla.: "The crowd erupts in a flurry of cheers and whistling as "**Jerry Swinefeld**" wins by a snout! These aren't greyhounds at the dog track. They're pigs! And at speeds up to 16 mph, they are enticed around their racing ring by the scent of an Oreo cookie waiting at the finish line.

"We've experimented with all kinds of different things, but pigs have a sweet tooth," said **Randy Ross**, owner of the **Robinson's Racing Pigs Show**. "I suppose we could use a candy bar just as well, but that'd get kind of messy." The racing pigs have been a centerpiece of the **Volusia County Fair** for 15 years. "Paul Robinson wanted to try something a little different, so we came up with this." "**Spamela Sue Hamderson**" was the winner in a race. Between shows, a potbellied pig, **Elwood**, danced to the theme song from the movie, "**Footloose**," starring **Kevin Bacon!**

CIRCUS DAYS By Mary Jane Giberson

I subscribed to Back Yard as I have enjoyed reading it. Raymond "Zip" LaRouche brought a few copies over to me so I could read them and I really enjoyed the stories.

My first trip and circus to see was the Clyde Beatty-Cole Bros. Circus at Abington, MA on June 21. I went along with Raymond "Zip" and his wife Claire LaRouche. When I arrived in the circus tent, I was greeted by my best friend, Ringmaster-Performance Director, Jimmy James, who I've known since 1982. Standing beside me was another person that I didn't expect to see-Brother Frances Dolphin M.M., a Maryknoll Brother from Denver. The circus has a new tent this year-nice bright colors. Inside the tent the top is a blue shade with stars-they also have new seats. The show is very good. The program went like this:

Circus Overture; Welcome to the 115th Edition of the World's Largest Circus Under the Big Top. Producer John & Brigitte Pugh. Ringmaster Jimmy James and the Beatty-Cole Band under the direction of Leigh Ketchum-they guide your family on this evenings' journey through our 1999 World Circus Spectacular!

1. The Amazing Marcan Tigers-Marcan returns after touring European circuses.
2. The Mighty Motor Aerocycle Bulgarian born daredevils-The Grantcharov Duo, a brother and sister team roaring above the audience's heads, performing daring and dangerous stunts on the incline wire.
3. The Casalinos Comedy Car Conk-Out: A carload of motoring merry-makers out for a fun Sunday gets detoured in an uproarious of mechanical misfires.
4. World Circus on Parade-Dazzling procession around the Big Top Arena of international talent.
5. In the Kingdom of Lions: The Tar Chi Acrobats performing the Northern Lion Dance-first time under big top.
6. In the tradition of the nomadic performers whose wooden wagons criss-crossed the small mountain villages of centuries long ago-we present the skills combining juggling with rola bola. This was in 3 rings.
7. Herriott's Performing Animal Fantasy: 4th generation family member Laura Herriott continues the family legacy, hailed as being America's First Family of Animal Trainers & Equestrians. Presenting a unique legion of mixed breed species including camels, llamas and the miniature stallion, "Shiro," Miss Herriott unveils an unusual and one of a kind presentation, her magical ancestral animal handling expertise.
8. Spaced Out Alien Encounter: Meet "Bacca Choo."
9. Space Ballet: 3 ring display of Cloud Swing with overhead ballet.
10. Russian Air Force: From Moscow, combining astonishing strength of casting acrobatics with flying trapeze.
11. Aerial Equilibristic Elan: mother & daughter trapeze team with 2 cradle duos-3 rings.
12. High wire with Werner & Aura Guerrero.
13. Beatty-Cole Performing Pachyderms: Under the command of Brad Jewell, we feature our herd of leading ladies-the biggest stars of the show.
14. Casalinos Clown Cannon Caper: They discover what the "big bang" theory is really all about!
15. End of Century Tour Finale with female human cannonball-Eli Valentino, and final curtain call with entire cast.

I thought it would be nice if I copied from the program so you

could read all about the Beatty-Cole Circus and what makes it the Greatest traveling circus on the road today. Let's give a round of applause for Ringmaster Jimmy James who does a terrific job. He has now been with Beatty-Cole 32 years and Leigh Ketchum and the members of the Clyde Beatty Orchestra. Again, a round of applause for all the performers, also the circus animals. I hope if the circus ever goes to your state, you will go to see this circus-you won't be sorry that you did. I hope you enjoyed the show, if it is only by my writing. God Bless All My Circus Friends.

"THE FOX".....



So you can meet many of them around town and at Showfolks. By the way, if you are not a member of the Club it will cost you \$5 every time you come to the Club, but don't worry, every time you come there you get a receipt and once you were 7 times there and were a member before they will send you your card. They have a guard at all times at the door. You also can not use a card of an relation, as you have to show also your drivers licence. I write this, so there will be no surprises when you come there. June can not wait until her time is up to serve the Club as President, she worked very hard the whole time. OK, please write me now, so I will know who to expect on the Ringling Reunion Jan 19th 2000. It will not cost over \$15 I promise. If you come from far away, I will try to find a reasonable hotel for you to stay in or maybe you have friends here were you can stay with.

June Plunked left us to the circus in the sky to join her husband. I and I am sure all of us wish all of the children and grand children of June strength to go on with out her guidance.

Now to the Showfolks Circus. Dolly Jacobs called Norma and told her that she is sorry but will not be able to work, as she is at this time to busy to get her show put up. Shane Johnson also informed me that he can not get away from Texas as he has lots of parade and festival dates at that time. So far Tito Gaona had no luck in securing a flying act but is still trying. Also Kristo Ivanov is trying to find a flying act. Fay Alexander worked in Robarts Arena the flying act, is there not one other flying act who will try it?? The Cristianis have no one to work in there honor. There are just 2 Cristianis acts still out there and they are working at that time.

Lotti Brunn also informed me that her son came back from Europe and left right away again. But I got already replacement for them. But I still have the whole Rosaire family. Thank God they do not let me down. Also John Herriott. Johnny will also have the camel act he trained in the show. The other act I mentioned before will still performing. Like Gabriela Guzman, Michael Ashton. In addition so far I have Jackie LeClair honor Blinco, Ticolini honor all the other clowns, three Wallenda highacts, highwire I can not have as they are already long time ago booked and could not get out of there engagement. Gisela Contorcian, Almas and Norbol Merimano acrobat and perch for Yong Brothers Ticolinis daughter hoola hoop. Kimbel Keller first announcer. (Continued on Page 11)

RINGLING RED: New Orleans-Superdome-12/2-5; N. Fort Myers, FL-TECO Arena-12/30-1/2. Coming soon to Sunrise, Miami and Jacksonville, FL.

RINGLING BLUE: Tampa, FL-Ice Palace-1/6-9; St. Pete-Bayfront Arena-1/12-16.

BIG APPLE CIRCUS: Lincoln Ctr-NYC-10/31-1/9.

Circus Sarasota: Sarasota-Van Wezel-12/26-1/23.

Barnum's Kaleidoscope: Tempe, AZ-Diablo Stadium thru 12/12; Houston, TX-Brown Convention Ctr-12/28-1/23; Dallas, TX-Valley View Mall-2/5-3/12.

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Comments by writers are their own and do not necessarily

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circus, pro-animal publication, which supports the use of

animals which are legally held and properly cared for, in

the American circus.

Visit www.inficad.com/~circus/backyard.

Elephant Farm Welcomes Big "Betty"

Bobby Gibbs sends in this newspaper clipping from Fordland: A 10,000 pound new addition named Betty arrived Oct. 7 at the Elephant Farm. Betty has been in "at least a half dozen circuses," according to Murray Hill, the owner of the farm and retired circus performer. Her most recent job was with Carson & Barnes Circus. Many factors played a part in her eventual move to the Elephant Farm. Bobby Gibbs, who, along with his wife, Rosa, transported Betty to the farm, said, "Mr. D.R. Miller just died and he was the largest owner of elephants in the free world. Now, his daughter owns it and I think the show wants to lighten up a little. They've got way too many elephants." Physically, Betty is in good condition, except for some arthritis, which may be a bigger deal than it seems, considering the size of her joints.

"She's in perfect condition," said Bobby. "She's got her tail, her eyes, her ears and no blemishes on her. She just has a touch of rheumatism and she's just at the end of

breeding age." Betty's mental condition may be more of a challenge. Described as a "sneak" by Hill since her eyes give little clue to her intentions, she was involved with a man's death. "She had an accident this summer and a man died in Canada. It was accidental. His head hit a truck. It wasn't her doing," said Bobby in her defense. "They don't come here until no one else will take them," said Hill.

Rosa Gibbs, who has cared for Betty for some time, spoke fondly of "her girl" and other elephants she has cared for, while providing the animals for circuses who can't afford their own. "I do trust them, but I respect them," said Rosa. "I baby them. I give them candy and fruit. Betty eats hard candy, like sugar cubes, especially she likes peanut butter cups." Despite her tainted past, Murray was thrilled to get Betty. He hopes she will bond with Shanti, an 8-year-old elephant who lives at his farm. Shanti had her own troubles when she arrived from a zoo. And since her best friend, Hattie, was in her 60s, had a heart attack, she has been alone. "They're lonely. They're herd animals," Bobby said, "Imagine not having somebody to talk to. So, this is great for both of them. Betty's been by herself now since June. They had to take her off the show, you know."

"We'll have to see what Betty's reaction is to Shanti," said Hill. "The way we do that is to put Shanti outside. Then, at night, we'll open the doors between them about 'so far', so they can touch and smell each other. Then, you just take the chance, and stand around in case there's trouble."

With success in this venture, Hill hopes to welcome more rejected elephants into his red & white striped cement barn, which can hold 8 to 12 animals, depending on their size. Just beyond there, they can roam around a wooded area with a pond.

Hill's facility limits their contact with people, but they can be watched from the observation area atop the barn. Children are welcome to visit, but are not allowed inside the barn, for safety reasons.



KEN BENSON

5619 ANTOINETTE ST.
SARASOTA, FLORIDA 34232

1-941-320-9775

Riddle Elephant University

By Mike Cecere

Well folks, this week we are going to have the third installment in BACK YARD'S series on Sanctuaries. First we had MURRAY HILL'S done by my good friend BOBBY GIBBS, in the last issue was CAROL BUCKLEY'S THE ELEPHANT SANCTUARY, Now, we will travel to Greenbrier, Arkansas, home to the RIDDLE ELEPHANT BREEDING FARM and WILDLIFE SANCTUARY. A BIG title you say? Well believe me it's a Big place doing a Big job, for some Big animals, ELEPHANTS. SCOTT and HEIDI RIDDLE founded the place and two more dedicated people you would be hard pressed to find. They are bright people who, like others in the Sanctuary Movement could have reveled in the material things the world would have showered them with. Instead, they have given and given all for the love of the great beasts. They house a large herd of Elephants, both African and Asian, male and female at the sprawling facility that covers hundreds of acres in rural Arkansas. Many Celebrity Elephants reside here also enjoying a wonderful lifestyle. They have been featured in many magazines, in science journals, in fact "BETTY BOOP", former Circus Vargas Star Elephant, was featured in the latest JOURNAL of the ELEPHANT MANAGERS ASSOCIATION as the "Centerfold Elephant"! They also get a lot of Television time. They've been on Paramount's "WILD THINGS" a couple of times, and "MARY", who has been with them from the beginning was recently on the PAX Channel's "WORLD'S GREATEST PETS" showing her artistic side as a painter. Yes, "MARY" is a well regarded in the Artistic Community and Her Paintings are much sought after by serious collectors. Celebrity Elephants aside, The Riddle Organization is very active in the Research Field and works very close with top Scientists in the field of Reproduction AND Elephant health. They also both are very involved with the ELEPHANT MANAGERS ASSN., with Heidi currently serving as the group's President, doing an excellent Job! She recently traveled to Germany to speak to a group of European Zoologists, and is working hard to join all the pro-elephant groups worldwide together for the good of the Elephants. But what really makes these fine folks stand out is their willingness to help educate interested people in how to properly care for and handle Elephants of all kinds. I affectionately call it "Riddle's Elephant University." But in all respect it's called RIDDLE'S ANNUAL ELEPHANT HANDLING SCHOOL, now celebrating it's 6th Year! They have courses for both pros, and non pros giving a comprehensive course of instruction in both spring and fall semesters. Students come from every end of the spectrum and from all over the world! They get the Riddle's considerable body of knowledge and lessons from guest Professors such as the legendary Robert "Smokey" Jones & other famed Elephant authorities. Scott has even traveled to Europe to conduct courses! To sum it all up these fine folks are "ALL ELEPHANTS ALL THE TIME", doing a wonderful job, which Elephants all over benefit from. Thanks to SCOTT and HEIDI!



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"Bertha, Nugget's Star Elephant, Dies"

By Mike Henderson 11/11/99 RENO GAZETTE

Bertha the elephant, who gave joy to countless thousands of children and adults, died quietly Wednesday morning in the Elephant Palace at John Ascuaga's Nugget in Sparks. She was 48. Don Bloomer, her trainer for the past 15 years, was at her side, as were Stephen Ascuaga, senior vice president of the Nugget, and veterinarians. Angel, Bertha's elephant companion for the past decade years, was nearby. "She actually witnessed Bertha's passing," Stephen Ascuaga said. He said Angel was not eating as well Wednesday as she usually does. Her condition will be monitored and she will be medicated if appropriate. "It was a big shock," John Ascuaga said in an interview from Boston, where he was at the time of Bertha's death. "She was such a special animal. There won't be another one. Everybody feels like they had the best dog in the world; I feel like I had the best elephant. "She'll be a big loss to the community and all the school kids. She was a real favorite."

He said he was aware that Bertha suffered from arthritis, and when she became ill during the past few weeks, the Nugget brought in a vet from Portland and consulted another one in Atlanta. A team from the University of California-Davis had been consulted on previous Bertha ailments from time to time and had been contacted again in the past few weeks as her health declined. Stephen Ascuaga, John Ascuaga's son, called Bertha "an elegant lady" and said her health had been deteriorating rapidly since her retirement last month. She was scheduled to go to UC-Davis for examination and observation Wednesday but died before she could make the trip, he said. Her remains will be taken to UC-Davis for limited examination to determine cause of death and for research, he said. "Bertha had a history of systemic arthritis as is common with Asian elephants and developed problems incident to her age that caused her to deteriorate over the past 72 hours," said Dr. Ren Johnson, a Reno vet. John Ascuaga said he has no immediate plans to get another elephant; however, the Nugget has been working for six months to acquire the services of a bull elephant to breed with Angel, now 11. A condition of obtaining Angel from Busch Gardens in Tampa was that she would be bred. John acquired Bertha in 1962 for \$8,000 from a circus museum in Wisc. He brought her here as a symbol of what was then his Circus Showroom, later renamed the Celebrity Showroom. There, she was the opening act for or shared billing with such headliners as Red Skelton, Liberace, Jimmy Durante and Tennessee Ernie Ford, all deceased. "Now another star is gone," John Ascuaga said. "I look back to 1962, & there are not too many entertainers who can say they've performed on the same stage for 37 years." Bertha was a perennial favorite with schoolchildren, who often took field trips to the Elephant Palace. She and Angel frequently appeared in local parades, and the elephants sometimes would go to visit children at schools. Bertha's last school appearance was in Smith Valley. The elephant through the years became an icon symbolizing the Nugget. The gift shop Wednesday was stocked with several

sizes of plush elephants and an elephant adorns T-shirts for adults and children. In a gift shop window Wed., a videocassette called "Tons of Talent-A Day in the Life of Bertha and Angel" was playing continuously. The video showed Bertha spraying water on people gathered outside the Elephant Palace, the 2 elephants cavorting in a pool filled with water, Angel following Bertha with her trunk wrapped around Bertha's tail, Bertha with a paintbrush in her trunk painting a picture, and Bertha's trainer putting oversized tap shoes on her feet. Michonne Ascuaga, 38, who is John Ascuaga's daughter and chief exec. officer at the Nugget, and Stephen Ascuaga, 31, grew up with an elephant in the family. Michonne recalled childhood Halloweens when she was in costume and put on Bertha's back. She said she was amazed at how well-behaved Bertha was at the Nugget's annual rib cook-off and when surrounded with up to 300 children. Stephen Ascuaga said Bertha would sometimes seem to get a mischievous glint in her eye. "She'd kind of lure people up close to her and then she'd spray them with water from her trunk," he said. He recalled that when he first went to school, one of his classmates reported to his mother: "I've got a friend named Steve Ascoggie, and he's got a pet elephant." The Nugget for years has had a fan club for the elephants, and members would receive a birthday card each year from the elephants, who ostensibly "signed" the greeting with a footprint.

*11/12: Angel, the 11-year-old Asian elephant who witnessed the death of her pachyderm pal Bertha, was doing better Thursday "She definitely notices that Bertha is missing," said Stephen Ascuaga. "She's still a bit anxious but on the good side, she is starting to get her appetite back." Angel didn't eat at all Wednesday, ate very little Thurs.morning, then shortly after noon Thurs. started eating normally, he said. Angel was given mild sedatives to help her relax, he said. "With Angel, what we're looking at is not rushing into it," Ascuaga said of a performance schedule. "She's kind of new at performing on her own, even though she has done it for the last month."

*11/17: An international animal protection group called on John Ascuaga's Nugget Tuesday to send Angel, its 11-year-old elephant, to an elephant preserve to be with other elephants. PETA said it is "cruel" to keep an elephant alone. Michonne Ascuaga said the Sparks hotel and casino had not received a formal request from PETA, but she would not rule out moving Angel to an elephant preserve. Many options for Angel's future are under consideration. "We've yet to determine what the course will be," she said. "...the primary concern of the Ascuaga family and elephant training staff, from her first day at the Nugget, has been Angel's emotional and physical well being. "Since Bertha's passing, Angel has experienced loss, but she has continuous supervision from the elephant training staff, and with their help and support her appetite is returning & she has resumed her regular exercise regimen. "Her return to the Celebrity Showroom has been postponed indefinitely. At this time, all options are being considered with her best interest in mind."PETA's Jane Garrison said, "In the best interest of Angel, we kindly ask that you send Angel to either a sanctuary

or an AZA accredited facility where she can enjoy the company of other elephants," she said in her letter. "At a facility that houses several elephants, if a companion elephant dies, at least there are other elephants to share in the grieving process. Several elephant preserves, including one in Tennessee with hundreds of acres including rolling hills and mud baths, exist," she said.

Bertha is being cremated, Michonne said, and Nugget officials are at work to determine an appropriate memorial in the casino and a place for Bertha's ashes. No formal memorial service is currently planned, she said.

****Back Yard Subscription Rate Change****

Frank Thompson started "Back Yard" in 1996. Since then, there has been no change in the subscription price. On the other hand, postage rates have increased, along with printing costs, paper and ink prices and other office supplies.

As of January 1st, the new subscription rate will be \$30 for 24 issues per year. Advertising rates will stay the same. Remember, a gift subscription to Back Yard would make a great Christmas present!

SEND IN YOUR HOLIDAY GREETINGS!!!

"THE FOX".....



We also will have the grand opening various organisation participating. I name some of them. Police, Fire Dept., VFW, Lions and more. All the ones already in the Whole of Fame will be also present. Listen, the people in the Pines Nursing Home are getting more & more. Gaby Wendt & Ray Beaudet are also there.

OK, I am not running for President but I gave in and will run for Showfolks as Second Vice President, Penny is running for First. I hope she knows what she is getting herself in to, as if the President is not there all of it will be up to her. I am just third in line and that will be OK I hope. We do need desperately a good person to run for Secretary and also a good person to run for Treasurer. These are the hard places and we really need one badly. Please come forward who would, could will take that job on. Well I broke down and took time out to write to you all. Please do not let me down and spread the news about our circus. It will be really great and we will all have a great time.

Lots of Love,

Your Hard Working Fox



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Final Curtain Call For June Plunkett

BY BOBBY GIBBS

On Nov. 10, funeral services were held for June Plunkett in Mabank, Texas. Her loving family of four children, 9 grandchildren and 2 great grandchildren, plus many, many of her friends were there to say goodbye to a wonderful lady who had led a very colorful life, one that raised a great family and was the backbone of the Plunkett Family Circus. Many of you will remember June as the funniest thing on a trampoline or as a first class agent and circus manager. Older ones may even recall that June was the daughter of the Brunk Rep. Show era as was her husband, Corky, who found fame as Plunkett Players Rep. Show.

June was a very well known show person and by the attendance at this last party-very well loved. She loved flowers so she was surrounded by hundreds of roses and other fresh flowers.

A real nice lady sang show tunes, all June's favorites and a VCR tape showed her performance in the circus. Her family spoke of her and it was a really nice service. Later, everyone went out to the Plunkett Circus winter quarters where her family had put up tents, had food and everyone had a chance to tell each other our own special June Plunkett stories. I don't have the complete list but there were over 100 circus greats-past & present-to show their respects to the whole Plunkett family.

They have suffered the loss of Corky, then Cleo and now June. We all hope things will now smooth out for these fine friends. A short list of the circus people there were: Bill & Moyola Swain, David Rawls, Hazel Frazier, Lum, Carl, Jackie & Eileen Wong, Gerty & Kandra Craig, the Geraldos, Davenport family, Joe & Peggy Zoppe, Johnny Guitterez, Bobby & Rosa Gibbs, Kathy Hetzer, Carmen & Nathaniel Hall, many of the Jim Plunkett family, Weiner, James' wife, flew back from Sarasota. Many folks drove or flew a long way to be there.

We all, as part of our circus family, send our love and last regards to the entire Plunkett family. June Plunkett, 1927 to 1999, rest in Peace and we will see you down the road.

*Bobby Gibbs also writes that Joe Lempke, famous chimp trainer, passed away Nov. 17. And "Carolina", an old Asian elephant on the Vasquez Circus, died.

NEWS FROM OUR CIRCUS FRIENDS

*Fred Logan visited the Volusia County Fair in

DeLand. They had the Phillips Petting Zoo which was very impressive with baby giraffe, camel, goats, sheep and giant turtle. They also had many machines where you could buy food to feed the animals. Fred visited with Alice & Jerry Walker who had their sausage stand there. Deggler Shows were on the midway with several major rides and a 10-1 Side Show.

Fred also sent along pictures of the Osorio Circus in Nevada. They have a beautiful 2-pole yellow & blue big top, with a red & yellow marquee and a brightly colored office and concession semi. Fred's daughter, Eileen, is married to Pancho Osorio. (Let's hope Fred will write more about their circus.) Fred sent the following article:

Circus Elephant Kills Trainer in Colombia

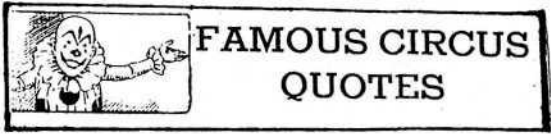
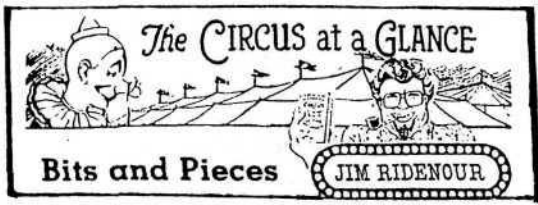
Bogota, 10/24: A circus turned into a horror show for hundreds of spectators when an elephant gored and trampled her trainer to death. Police said the bloody spectacle occurred in Valledupar, where the Mexico-based Modelo Circus was putting on a show before a crowd of about 400 people.

Maggy, one of 3 elephants performing, had just gone thru her nightly routine when she suddenly turned on her whip-wielding trainer, Elias Mitrobich Garcia, and wrapped her trunk around him. After tossing the trainer into the air, Maggy, who weighs 4 tons, impaled him with her tusks and then proceeded to stomp all over him on the ground. Police said circus workers shot Maggy 6 times in a bid to stop her attack against Elias.

But the 50-year-old trainer died with his skull crushed on the circus tent floor. Bogota's newspaper reported Maggy was recovering from her gunshot wounds and had been heavily sedated in the aftermath of the attack. Modelo Circus spokesman, Luis Bustos, said she would probably continue to perform in the near future. "The gunshots she has, in such a large body, are like a few pricks made to a person with a sewing needle."

*Forrest Traylor, Circleville, OH saw me in Hugo and told me to tell you all that the Tony Diano Tent, Columbus, OH-who only has 5 members-just joined the OABA. They challenge all the other tents to do the same!

*Frank Robie called to say Father Jack Toner had a bad fall. I called Father Jack and he was in good spirits. He fell on Ringling Blue, at the last day of the season and the last show, over a curb stone by the performers entrance on Oct. 24 in Boston. He said he never met so many Ringling folks in so many minutes! One of the first to his aid was Tim Holst. He would enjoy your cards and phone calls. Please write him at: 85 New Park Ave., Hartford, CT 06106 or call: 860-586-0740.



"That's why I call it the Circus Capitol of the World!"
-Jim Ridenour



EVERYDAY IS CIRCUS DAY IN SUNNY SARASOTA

Today is Sunday, Oct. 165. I just got back from Crystal River where I caught the Roberts Bros. show. By the time you read this, circus activity will be hot & heavy here in the Circus Capitol of the World. Sterling-Reid Bros. will have been here for 3 days and Walker Bros. will have closed here at the Fairgrounds. I should be in Vegas when you read this. Here's some of the circus events coming up in the next few months: The 32nd Annual Showfolks of Sarasota Circus will show at the Fairgrounds on Sat. Dec. 11th. The Showfolks Flea Market will be the next day at the Club on Lockridge Road. The Showfolks Circus will be produced by Jenny Wallenda. John Herriott is working with her to insure a super show.

Dick Garden will loan his ring curb, etc. Dolly Jacobs and Pedro Reis will present their Circus Sarasota at the Van Wetzel parking lot starting on Sunday, Dec. 26th and running thru Sun. Jan. 23rd. The greatest New Year's Eve Party on the planet will be held at Showfolks on Friday, Dec. 31. The CFA Tent 122 will hold monthly meetings the first Wed. of each month thru May 2000. Call me at 941-927-1546 for details. All circus people and fans are invited. The Ringling Museum of the Circus will honor the Circus Celebrities for the year 2000 on Fri. Jan 14.

The Circus Ring of Fame induction ceremony will be held at St. Armands Circle on Sat. Jan 25. Jenny Wallenda will hold another great Ringling Reunion at Showfolks on Sun. Jan. 9. I will show Ringling videos. The Windjammer's Annual Convention will be at the airport Holiday Inn from Tues. Jan. 25 thru Sat. Jan. 29. The Circus Fans Tent 122 Annual Banquet will be held at the Shrine Temple on Beneva on Sat. Jan 29. Call me if you are in town & would like to attend. The 51st Annual Sarasota Sailor Circus will give performances in March & April. CFA Tent 122 will attend as a group on Wed. April 7. (Our normal April meeting date.)

The Big One is the National Circus Fans of America Annual Convention. It will be held at the airport Holiday Inn from Tues. April 11 thru Sun. April 16. All this plus the Showfolks Club with monthly socials, etc.

I am working night & day on the circus video retrospect of the century. "The Millers of Hugo" will honor the showman of the century-the Miller family of Hugo, Oklahoma. If I ask you for help and you didn't respond, shame on you. I have been locating lots of great material but you may have just the thing to put "the icing on the cake." I have Kelly-Miller footage from the 30s, 40s and all the way up to this year.

I promise you, this will be the greatest tribute conceived by man. It will be a 4 tape set (a full 8 hours) and will sell for \$99.95 with 10% of gross going to the late Dorie Miller's Endangered Ark Foundation. It is not too late to ship me material (film or video.) I start editing the project next week.

Sarasota is the home of: Roberts Bros. Circus, Royal American Circus, The Royal Palace Circus, Sterling-Reid Bros. Circus, The Royal Hanneford Circus, Walker Bros. Circus, Circus Pages, Coronas Circus and hundreds of famous showfolks (both active & retired.) That's why I call it the Circus Capitol of the World. Seems reason enough to me. Take a kid to a circus and help stamp out, "Nobody Asked Me."

.....
Bob Swaney writes: "It was quite a celebration of life in Hugo. The flag on D.R.'s casket that was presented to Barbara Byrd by the honor guard was flown over the Capitol in Washington in D.R.'s memory at the request of Sen. Don Nickles (R-OK). D.R. was extremely proud of his WW II service. The song that the band played following the big top service, "When the White Lilacs Bloom Again," was his favorite song. He hummed it all the time. Ward Hall was there, and also Rev. David Tetrault, Ringling chaplain, who sat with the Little Sisters of Jesus, Jo, Priscilla and Monica. Also, Lorraine Jessen, one of the Kelly-Miller Circus owners, with her son. Pat White came from Cody, Wyoming. Carson & Barnes contracting agents were represented by yours truly, Tom Pollard, Joe Cooper and Gordon & Mary Beth MacKay, along with Doyle Milson, our boss. It was a fitting farewell to a great showman and a great guy.

SEND IN YOUR HOLIDAY GREETINGS! REMEMBER- A GIFT SUBSCRIPTION IS A GREAT PRESENT!!

"SHOW TO END ALL SHOWS"

By Rod Walton * Tulsa, OK. Nov. 18

Every performer wants to go out on top, but circus showman Does Richard Miller always wanted his big finish under the big top. The longtime owner of Carson & Barnes Circus got his final wish. He was eulogized and buried in a funeral ceremony that played out more like a celebration. A circus band played tunes while around his casket swirled a circus world full of fond memories.

"He was the last of the big showmen," said Popcorn, the Clown, who vowed that he was donning makeup for the last time professionally in tribute to his former boss. "He loved to watch the children at the shows." Popcorn performed for Mr. Miller's circuses for 30 years. He wore his clown makeup and suit with a huge sunflower attached.

Just about everything for the funeral was planned in advance by D.R. who wanted his final passing to be a celebration not only of his own life, but also the circus life.

His red & gold casket was hand-picked. He was eulogized in front of a thousand admirers beneath the Kelly-Miller Circus big top, in which D.R. was a partner. "I think D.R. would have been happy," said Trey Key, a circus employee who helped handle the funeral arrangements. Not everyone was happy, though. While Popcorn put on his best happy face, Suzie the elephant made no secret of her grief. While awaiting her walk down the procession route, her eyes seemingly rimmed with sadness. "Undoubtedly, she is," said Joe Frisco, who stood close by Suzie. "She knows, she knows." Frisco called D.R. the "greatest elephant lover in the world."

Others marveled at how he managed to keep the old-time tent circus alive and well, squeezing out an audience in small towns. He kept his operation on the move, pulling the tent up and down in a new town every day.

D.R. always wanted his shows to get bigger and bigger. "It's called 'Hugo style' in the circus business," Trey said. That scope may be hard to maintain in the 'old man's' absence. But D.R. bucked that trend," he said. "He kept that grand old circus tradition alive." Even into death. D.R. was carried home to Mt. Olivet Cemetery in a black 1872 Quebec model hearse, drawn by 2 Percheron horses. In front of the ornate hearse was a 1903 circus wagon. Tom Dunwoody, of the Circus Hall of Fame, came to pay respects to a man he called "the last of the old-time circus owners. D.R. had the longest-running circus under one owner. It was one of the old-

fashioned circuses that set up and moved every day." D.R. is not in the Hall of Fame. Tom said, "He will be inducted next year." An inductee must have died or be retired. Even as the band, led by Charlie Schlarbaum, played "There's No Business Like Show Business" on the grounds of the cemetery, it was apparent that D.R. needed no hall-of-fame credentials to be remembered by circus friends and rivals alike.

Local florists commented that a substantial number of flower orders have been phoned in from out of town well-wishers in honor of Miller. At least one order came from Canada where one circus fan ordered a very special arrangement and others to be placed at every grave in Showman's Rest. He lived for the show and died with a show. "We have gathered together to say good-bye to one of the greatest showmen that was ever alive," his granddaughter, Kristin read earlier. "No one could ever tell him how to run his show." Better yet, it was in front of a full house. D.R. Miller did go out on top.

Paul Holley writes: A turn-of-the-century Ringling Bros. Circus poster has been restored to its full glory by Chicago area historian Ken Harck. The 10-by 7-foot poster was discovered on a covered brick wall about 2 years ago during the renovation of the Above & Beyond Children's Museum in Sheboygan, Wisconsin.

The extremely rare Courier Litho Co. poster, featuring a giraffe and portraits of the 5 Ringling brothers, was "the most expensive restoration of a circus poster to date," according to the Sheboygan Press. Ken declined to reveal the restoration job's price tag but said the poster will hang in a museum he plans to open in Orlando, LA, New York or Las Vegas.

The restored poster is mounted on linen. Potato chip-sized fragments were removed from the wall & mounted on the linen backing where the lost parts were sketched in. A Chicago firm did the restoration work. The "new" poster was temporarily in Sheboygan so a photo could be taken for an exhibit at the Above & Beyond Museum's Siegl Circus display.

The Ringling giraffe bill is the second major circus poster preservation with Sheboygan ties. Volunteers moved a Seils-Sterling Circus bill stand from Michigan's Upper Peninsula to the Sheboygan County Museum. Seils-Sterling was based in Sheboygan in the 1920s and 30s. The 1930s vintage posters were uncovered during a building renovation project. The Museum features an extensive circus memorabilia collection honoring the many circus performers who originated in Sheboygan.



MARY JANE MILLER
RBBB-1952

THE THERON TROUPE



Dores Richard Miller



Suzie entering Showman's Rest

Hugo, Ok

Back Yard
1522 Clinton Blvd.
Bloomington, IL 61701