

A Salute to Larkin Bailey

Larkin Bailey was born July 3, 1898 near Niles, Michigan, In March, 1907, the Bailey family moved to Broken Arrow, Indian Territory via a railroad boxcar. Soon after arriving, Larkin's father purchased the set of abstract records kept at what is now the Arkansas Valley State Bank. Three years later the Baileys moved to Tulsa and bought a second abstract company.

World War I began, and following Central High School graduation, Larkin decided he wanted to join the U.S. Marines. A strapping lad, Larkin had no difficulty convincing the recruits that he was "at least 19 years old", although he was actually under age. This same determination/dedication served him well as Corporal Bailey served and fought with distinction in France – particularly at Belleau Wood where the going was toughest.

Following WWI, Larkin began building his college diploma. First at Kendall College (now Tulsa University), then at Iowa State and finally at the University of California at Berkeley. His family sold their business and moved to California. After graduating in 1923, Larkin attended the University of Michigan and Yale University in search of a law degree. Larkin was able to take the California Bar Exam. He passed easily.

An excellent athlete, Larkin lettered in college baseball (Pitcher) and football (left guard). Baseball was his forte. AS a pitcher he had tryouts with both the Detroit Tigers and the Chicago White Sox. He met and admired Ty Cobb and "shoeless" Joe Jackson and his famous Black Sox Scandal friends.

Then it was back to Tula in July, 1928. Larkin returned with his family to buy Tulsa Abstract, located then at the northwest corner of 6th Street and Boulder. Over the years, due to Larkin's masterful leadership, Tulsa Abstract expanded into two offices and employs over 50 Tulsans. Although Larkin is now the retired owner he still keep in touch.

A man of many talents and interests, for instance, Larkin was also a well-known rancher and cattleman having owned a 2,500 acre Owasso ranch specializing in pure-bred Angus cattle (many of which were obtained from Armand Hammer's herd). Today, the cattle herds are gone and a portion of his ranch is being developed into a golf course. Larkin is well known for his tasty fridge. He was a charter member of the SPEBSQSA – Barber Shop Singing Organization. He promoted "informal" cock fights in Broken Arrow and hunted Iowa muskrats and sold them for 15 cents each.

Since 1937, Larkin scouted for the St. Louis Browns, the Brooklyn Dodgers and the Milwaukee Braves. Having celebrated his Golden Wedding Anniversary in 1989, Larkin has over the year, enjoyed the strong loving support of his wife Elsie, daughter Florence Ann Caraway, countless business associates, friends and fellow Rotarians.

For over 63 years, Larkin Bailey has touted Rotary's ideals. His Rotary Club of Tulsa membership is the oldest and most revered. Because of Larkin's generous contributions to Rotary Foundation, many Sunriser Rotarians have become Paul Harris Fellows (through a plan of matching funds).