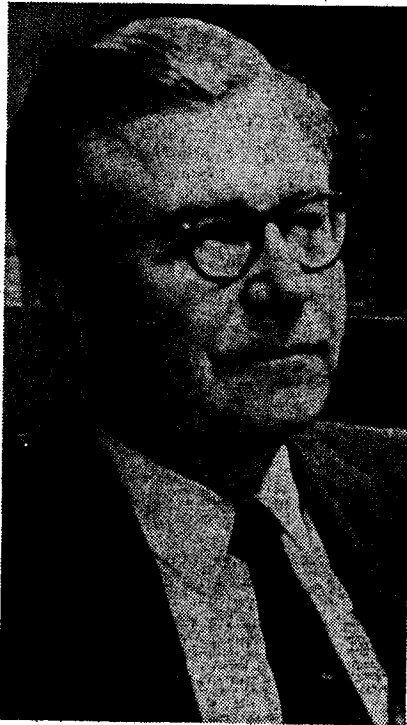
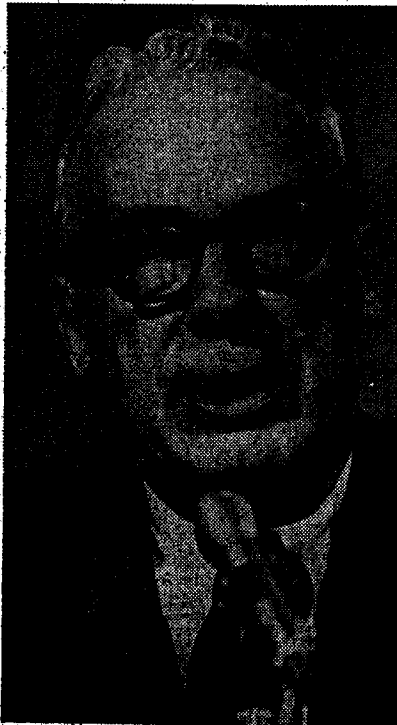


Wiggins to Replace Ball as U.N. Envoy



J. R. WIGGINS



GEORGE W. BALL

The Washington Post and United Press International

'Conscience' of The Post

Wiggins Noted for Integrity

By Chalmers M. Roberts

Washington Post Staff Writer

"The ideal journalist, the ideal newspaperman," James Russell Wiggins said in a speech a few months ago, "is a man who never forgets which side of the footlights he's on, who never forgets that he is a reporter, a recounter, a narrator, and not an actor, who never forgets that he is an observer and not a mover and shaker."

This has been the guiding principle of Wiggins' career

in journalism the last 21 years as managing editor, executive editor and editor of The Washington Post.

It has been this sense of journalistic integrity that set the tone for the paper through two decades. "Nothing could be more alarming or dismaying to me," he added, "or I think to any journalist responsible for a newspaper or any part of it, than to encounter repeatedly the suggestion that the reader knows from the news columns what the views of

the newspaper are on various public issues."

Wiggins is among those who subscribe to Walter Lippmann's dictum that "there always has to be a certain distance between high public officials and newspapermen." Wiggins has never been a recluse from officialdom; yet he has never been a crony. He has known Hubert Humphrey as long ago as the day he served on Humphrey's World War II draft board.

See WIGGINS, A8, Col. 1.

Wiggins Set Tone Of Integrity at Post

WIGGINS, From A1

but he has never called him anything but "Mr. Vice President" since he attained that office.

His wit and wisdom, and doubtless the power of his editorship, appealed to Presidents Kennedy and Johnson. While he has been a White House guest, he has not been a White House intimate.

Yet his integrity, the word that most sprang to the minds of his fellow journalists yesterday, once led Mr. Johnson to say that "I have more regard, respect and reverence for Russ Wiggins than for anybody except my father."

Expert on Jefferson

The post of Ambassador at the United Nations will be his first venture into government, though there have been offers before. Yesterday he remarked that "I had

Presidential commission once before — in the United States Army Air Corps. I'm accepting this one in the same spirit."

James Russell Wiggins (or J. R. Wiggins — he disdains the alternative of J. Russell) came to The Post in 1947. He never had a college education, a fact that doubtless is amazing to the many who know him as a scholar of American history, a Jeffersonian expert, a man of catholic tastes and a master in the use of the English language.

When he came to The Post it was a small and struggling newspaper. He gave its news pages tone and integrity and in his later years as editor he gave passion to the editorial page as well. He has that capacity for indignation that so well serves a newspaper, and that also can serve a diplomat.

The Wiggins library is jammed with books on every conceivable subject; his appetite for reading is enormous. But he has been no stay-at-home editor for he traveled to all continents to broaden his judgment and increase his knowledge of the facts.

He has been, indeed, "the soul and conscience and driving force" at the paper, as Katharine Graham, The Post's president, put it yesterday.

The Wiggins passion for knowledge covers the spectrum from Soviet-American affairs to the District of Columbia ghettos. He has that sense for news that turns a dropped phrase or two into a front page story. The triumphs and tragedies of man he mixed with the humor of life, in words for The Post and in song for The Gridiron Club of which he is past president.

Russ Wiggins, first of all, has been devoted to the career of journalism which, in his case, goes back to a country weekly in Minnesota in 1922 and today includes the ownership of a similar weekly in Maine.

People's Right to Know

His passion, if there is a single one above all others, is the people's right to know. In the pursuit of this objective he often tangled with the government, including a notable battle that he led in which Secretary of State John Foster Dulles was forced to withdraw an embargo on the right of American newsmen to go to China.

As Wiggins wrote in a preface to a second edition of his book, "Freedom or Secrecy," "one of the worst consequences of secrecy is the license it confers upon deceit." Secrecy, he said, of-

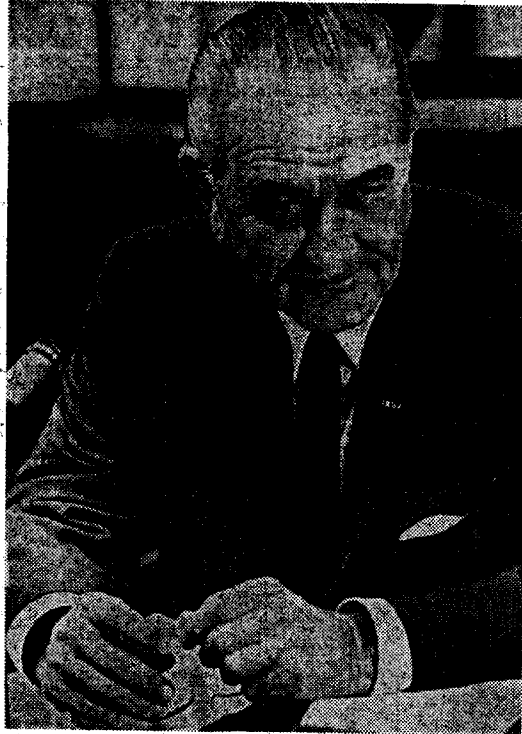
fers "the temptation of sugar-coat every disaster, and gild every triumph." If Government can enforce secrecy, he wrote, it "then can manage the news to its taste. It will speak with one voice and, however much that voice may err, there will be none to say it nay."

Wiggins has been a staunch supporter of the Administration's position on the Vietnam war. And like many other Americans, he has been troubled, of late, both by the problem of dissent and by the tendency to picture the Nation as in a state of decline.

Difference and Tolerance

"While we concede and defend the right of dissent, it is equally important to acknowledge and support the right to conform," he said in a recent speech. "If one is precious to a minority, the other is sacred to a majority. They are not long found singly and separately, but exist in a complementary relationship; the existence of each making more secure the perpetuation of the other. The preservation of both depend upon majorities and minorities extending to each other that decent deference and toleration without which no society or origins as diverse as ours can long survive."

The lilt of the Wiggins prose, a reminder of the writing of the Founding Fathers he so much admires, is perhaps an unconscious



By Jim McNamara—The Washington Post

President Johnson just before announcing a change in U.S. Ambassadors to the United Nations. He appointed J. R. Wiggins as the replacement for George W. Ball.

umbilicus to his deep-seated belief in the future of the Nation those men founded.

Last 4th of July he spoke at the Independence Day celebration of the Sedgwick Historical Society in the town of Sedgwick, Maine.

'Incurably Optimistic'

He pronounced himself "incurably optimistic," declaring that "we are beset as we have often been beset by difficulty." And then he concluded this way:

"The Congress that met in July of 1776, and the Declaration that they framed, promised freedom, but it did

not promise freedom from the toil and anguish and ardor of democratic government in the turbulent world of the 18th century. It did not promise it then and it cannot promise it now. Those who know that our institutions promise us not the freedom from problems but the freedom to work at their solution will go forward in the spirit of optimism that has been an American tradition since 1776."

James Russell Wiggins, now nearing 65, sprang from the backbone of America. He has never lost touch.