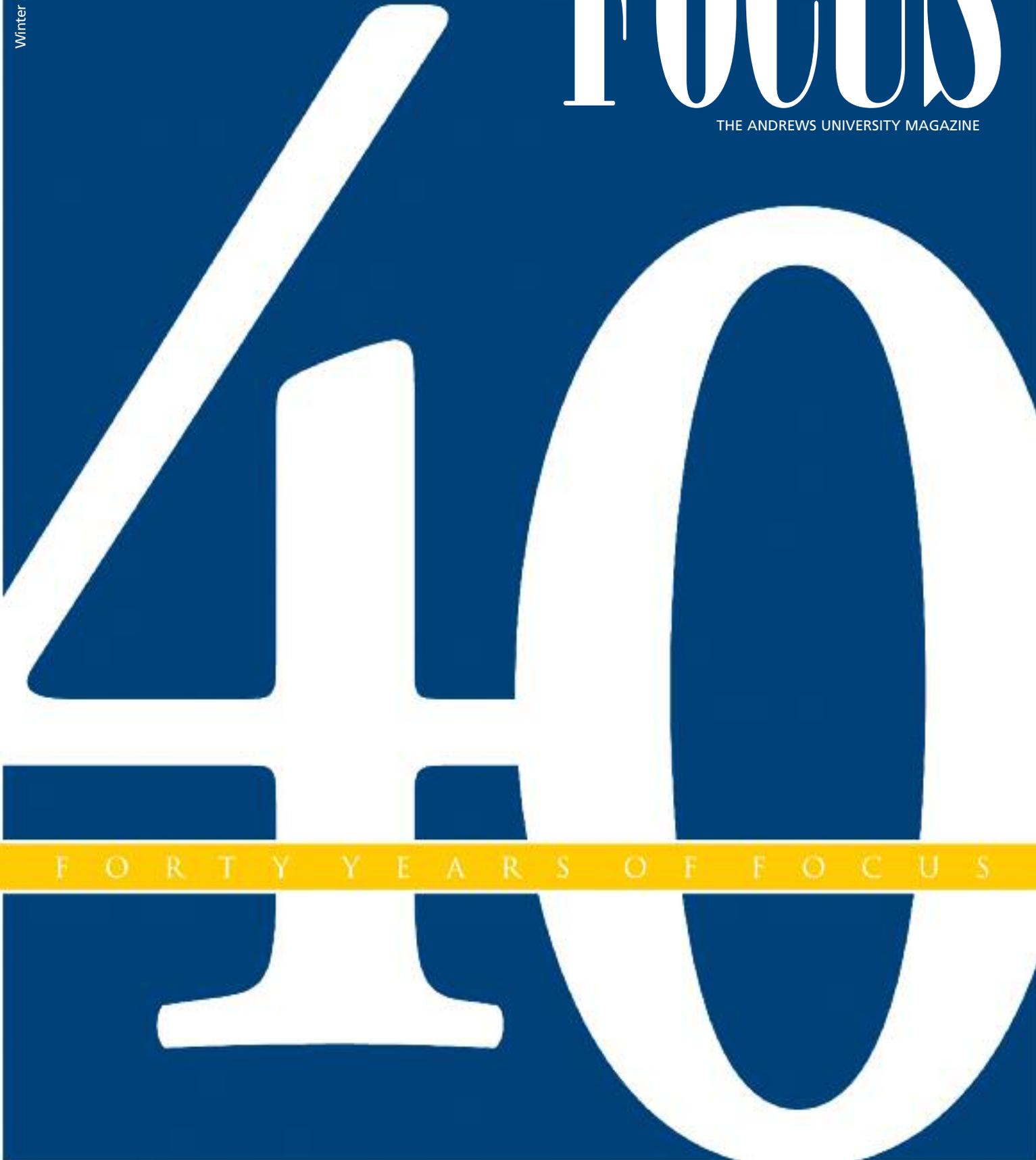


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A Note for Bill

How do you end up liking a guy who, when evaluating the first issue under your editorship, uses the phrase "better keep your day job?" (see "Letters" Spring 2002).

I've asked myself that more than a couple of times over the last three years as our correspondence and ensuing friendship evolved.

Then again, how can some part of you not enjoy an old codger taking the time to fully undress your editorial efforts with sarcasm, wit and tongue-in-cheek earnestness?



William Shadel

Of course, this was not just any old codger, this was former network news anchor Bill Shadel, one of Edward "Murrow's Boys."

And as we wrote back and forth, it became clear that this former reporter, who'd covered the Truman White House, was a World War II correspondent, and moderated the third of the historic Kennedy-Nixon debates, was not just a walking museum of TV news and journalism history, he was a livewire—a thoughtful, funny, and amazingly youthful 96-year-old.

Who else but Bill could have told me about David Brinkley's love of "high stakes cards and the race track," that Nixon chewed him out in a profanity-

laced tirade after the debate, that old friend and colleague Walter Cronkite regrets not throwing off his "most trusted" moniker to offer views on the country's "preemptive strike" policy in the war on terror?

During the last three years, our email conversations wandered from historic moments (Bill covered John Glenn's flight, Kennedy's inauguration, and was the first correspondent into the Buchenwald concentration camp) to more personal observations and reminiscences: his dearly loved wife of 54 years, the dying off of friends and family, and the political dynamics that swirl around an Adventist college.

(As a first year student at EMC in the late 1920s, Bill, who'd been playing professionally in a number of jazz bands, was expelled for dancing at a local party. When confronted about his behavior by the dean, Bill retorted, "Oh yeah, I love to dance. They tell me I'm pretty good at it, and I don't want to lose it.")

Among Bill's more frequent observations were misgivings about the state of our nation in the current war. On such topics, he rarely held his acerbic tongue: "With the war idiots deploying, and dangerously, choosing to make war in the wrong place at the wrong time and breaking the bank, I deeply regret the direction that coterie of Cheney, Rummy, Wolfowitz have persuaded our weak-minded Chief to take."

Bill died on January 29, 2005, at the age of 96. Knowing that he won't be reading any longer is a real loss.

* * *

This special issue of *Focus*, celebrating the 40-year history and legacy of the magazine, is dedicated to Bill Shadel, Andrews University's most renowned alum in the field of journalism.

FEATURES

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