

MAYOR HUMPHREY quickly adjusted to his new office in 1945 after a landslide victory over Marvin L. Kline. Two years earlier Kline had defeated Humphrey.

Hubert Horatio Humphrey

a memoir by Frederick Manfred

I WAS LIVING in Dinkytown near the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis. It was 1938 and I was a reporter for the *Minneapolis Journal*. One evening I walked over to see some friends, Zebe Lumb and Ralph Craft, in a nearby rooming house across the street from Marshall High School. The three of us had roomed together the year before in another house a block farther north. I was curious to see how they were getting along. Both were students at the university.

We were talking about the old days back home, Zebe and Ralph about their Webster, South Dakota, and I about Doon, Iowa, when the door opened and a slim, dark-haired fellow poked his head in and asked, "You guys busy?" Then he spotted me. "Oh, you have company." The fellow had a high forehead and quick, dark blue eyes.

"Come on in, Pinky," Zebe said. "What the heck,

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we're just gabbing here. This long-geared gink is an old roomie of ours. Fred Feikema. Fred, this is Hubert Humphrey." With a little laugh, Zebe added, "Pinky's from Doland, a suburb of Webster."

"What're you talking about," Hubert laughed back. "Doland isn't even in the same county."

Zebe had a big round red face, full of country apology. "Well, actually, Fred, our Pink now hails from Huron where his father has a drugstore. Doland is where he grew up as a boy."

Ralph was a grave, quiet fellow with gray eyes. "For that matter, Zebe, not even Wallace is a suburb."

"What's Wallace?" I asked.

"It's where Hubert was born."

We fell into more easy talk about country towns. It didn't take Hubert long to find out the essentials about me, my home town, where I lived presently, where I worked. I could feel his eyes going over me like an auctioneer's at a farm sale. Within moments the talk got around to the Newspaper Guild, of which I was an active member, and then he knew I was of a liberal cast of mind. That set off a long bull session on politics.

Hubert extolled the virtues of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt and the New Deal. Hubert thought FDR would go down in history as a great man. I said I didn't think so. I had voted for Roosevelt but wasn't a great admirer of his. I didn't think he was a deep man, certainly not a Washington or a Lincoln. Or for that matter a Woodrow Wilson. "Well," Hubert countered, "there's at least this to be said for FDR — he knew how to get the best brains together and tap them for the good of the country. FDR might not be brainy himself but he knew brains when he saw them."

We four talked until late — until Hubert remembered that he had a wife Muriel who would be wondering where he had been all that time.

After Hubert left, Zebe asked, "What do you think of him?"

"He sure can talk," I said.

"Yeh, Pinky always did have a gift of gab." It was obvious that Zebe admired Hubert very much.

Ralph smiled quietly to himself, head held to one side a little. "Yes, Pinky gets a little high-flown once in a while. But he knows what he's talking about. Terribly bright man."

Hubert intrigued me, and shortly after I had met him I made it a point to go visit him. From Zebe and Ralph I learned Hubert was working his way through the university as a pharmacist at the Brown Drug across the campus on Washington Avenue. I would go in and buy a malted milk and then sit joshing with him for a while. He had a curious way of doing two things at the same time — keeping a quick eye out for a customer who might drop by at the same time that he kept up a running argument with me. Sometimes I was taken aback by the way he

could be overly polite with a customer one moment and then the next moment argue intensely with me. As a boy from the country I had always looked askance at store clerks with asslicking manners.

Besides fretting over what the New Deal was doing to our economy, both of us were also quite worried about what Hitler was doing to Germany and to the balance of power in Europe. We spoke gloomily of the possibility of another World War. In any case, no matter how vigorously we might argue with each other, our discussions always ended with a warm handshake, a warm smile, and the promise that we would soon see each other to continue the gabfests.

In 1939 Hubert went down to Baton Rouge to get his master's degree in political science at Louisiana State University, and I didn't get to see him again for four years. During that interval, I lost my job at the *Journal*. Later on, due to lack of regular meals and exposure to two families with miliary tuberculosis, I broke down with tuberculosis, recuperated in Glen Lake Sanatorium for two years, lived in a rest home for several months, and finally took a job with *Modern Medicine* as an abstractor for some six months.

THEN IN April, 1943, the phone rang in our home around 9 P.M. I was already in bed with my wife,

FREDERICK MANFRED, then known as Feikema, is shown below in early 1944 slightly after many of the events he describes in this article. At lower right, he posed in August, 1941, in a rural setting with his wife, the former Maryanna Shorba of Minneapolis, and a dog. Fred was "on leave" from Glen Lake Sanatorium.



Maryanna. Both of us had made it a point to go to bed early to make sure we stayed healthy, since she also had spent two years in Glen Lake Sanatorium. The phone rang and rang, and finally I got up and answered it. Arthur Naftalin was on the phone and wanted to know if I could drop over to a friend's house for a bull session. Art and I had been friends on the campus of the University of Minnesota before I had become ill. I had been a reporter and he had taken journalism, and we had often bumped into each other at parties.

"Who's the friend?" I asked.

"Hubert Humphrey."

"Hey, I know him."

"Sure, and he says he knows you. Could you come over? It's kind of important."

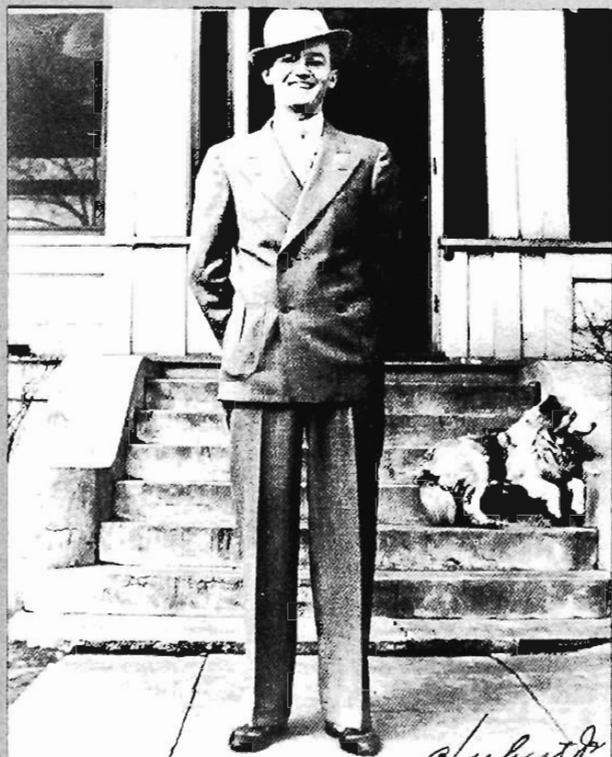
"I'll see what my wife says."

My wife grumbled a little, but she really was too sleepy to protest much. I wondered a little what her real thoughts about me were as I left to visit with "some of the boys." It would be my first time out alone since we had been married.

I drove over to Hubert's house in southeast Minneapolis, not too far from Dinkytown. It was a modest two-story house with a neat yard, and when I entered I found the living room equally neat. The two children were already in bed. An old-fashioned stand-up dark mahogany radio stood in one corner, with a toy dog and cat on it. The furniture was of the dark brown, plush type, big chair and davenport, all neatly arranged, with a dark rug underfoot.

Art greeted me in his usual cheery manner. For a young man he had always had an old wise smile. "You know Hubert, of course."

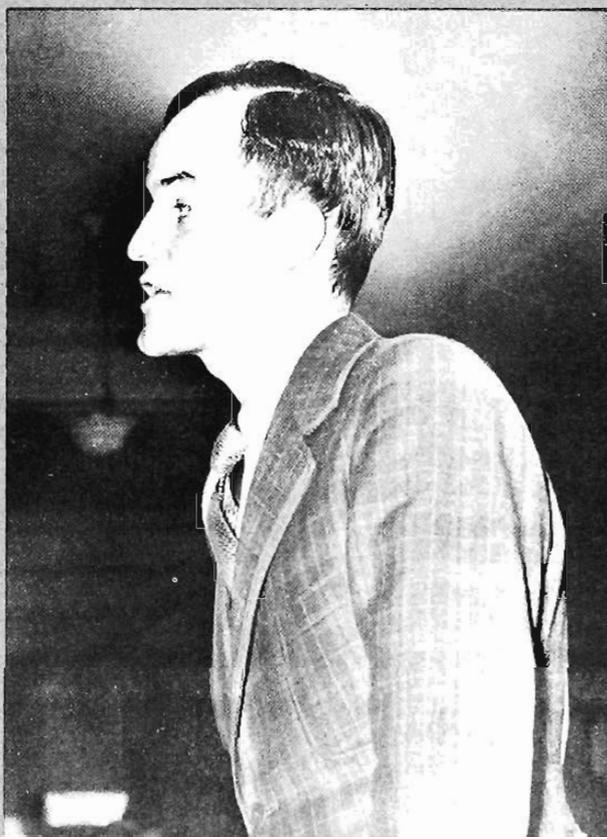


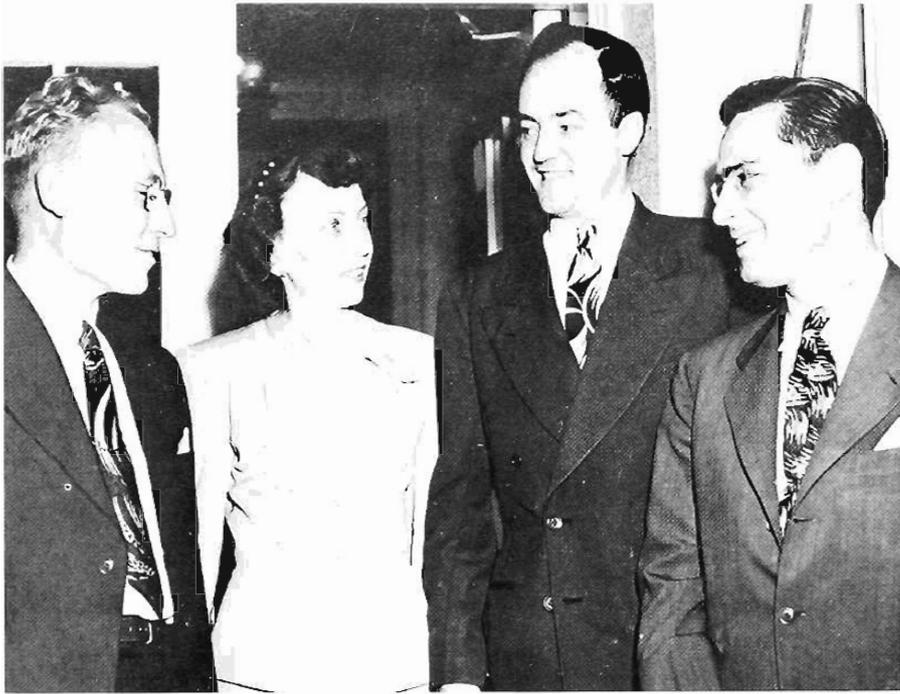


A GRADUATE, magna cum laude, from the University of Minnesota in 1939, Humphrey posed in cap and gown (above) and, earlier, in front of 945 Southeast Fourteenth Avenue, where he was staying.



AS A STUDENT at the university in 1938, Humphrey often read late at his desk. Note the photograph of his hero, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, on the wall. Already an orator while at Minnesota, Humphrey is shown (right) speaking at a university event.





AFTER A VISIT with President Truman at the White House in 1945, Mayor Humphrey was pictured with his wife Muriel and two of the architects of his first mayoralty campaigns — Evron Kirkpatrick (left) and Arthur Naftalin (right), who later served as mayor of Minneapolis himself.

Hubert and I shook hands warmly, exclaiming how good it was to see each other again.

Art said, "And this is Evron Kirkpatrick, of the political science department at the 'U'." Art added that he, too, was now in political science.

I shook hands with a man who had light blond hair, a square face, and penetrating light-blue eyes. I realized right away that Evron was a man who on the outside might appear to be a quiet, modest fellow but who on the inside had a racing, swift, shrewd mind. Evron was not one to wear his emotions on his sleeve.

Hubert broke in at this point. "And this is my wife Muriel, Fred."

Muriel had a soft South Dakota smile, brown hair parted in the middle, done up in waves. One could see that she used curlers.

"Well," Hubert said, "have a chair, Freddie. Take a load off your feet."

We talked at random for a while. There was some catching up to do. Muriel went to get some coffee and doughnuts. Presently Muriel retired.

I picked up a second doughnut and turned to Art. "Well, what was so important that you had to rouse me out of a warm bed and have me leave behind a sweet wife?"

"Hubert is thinking of running for mayor," Art said. "Some labor leaders want him to run. Do you think he can make it?"

"Which labor people?"

"A F of L."

"That won't be enough."

"That's what we think. And that's why we asked you over. You were once a member of the Newspaper Guild, weren't you, and through them got to know some of the CIO people?" Art had often given me a wary eye when talk got around to politics and labor relations. I think Art sometimes thought I was a Communist, because of my liberal leanings. Whenever I saw that look in Art's eye, I made it a point to let that dog sleep. I knew that no matter how I might argue that I wasn't, he would never believe me. He had made up his mind about me, for reasons I never did find out. Art went on, "Do you think Hubert can win them over?"

I had heard how Hubert, as director of the Workers' Education Program, had fired some teachers who weren't pulling their weight. Some of them had been left-wingers who had spent much of their work time organizing protest meetings instead of teaching. The left-wingers had been enraged. Many of them were friends of the CIO labor leaders. I said, "Art, it's going to be tough titty."¹

"That's where we thought you'd come in. You know

¹In the early 1940s Humphrey held several jobs with New Deal and wartime agencies in Minnesota. After helping train adult-education teachers under the WPA in Duluth, he directed the Workers' Education Program at different levels in the state. In 1942 he became state director for war production training and re-employment for the WPA and the next year served as assistant director of the Twin Cities area War Manpower Commission. See Hubert H. Humphrey, *The Education of a Public Man: My Life and Politics*, 67-72 (New York, 1976). — Ed.



them from the old days when you were a reporter and maybe they'd listen to you."

"I can try. But I'll tell you something. Winning the CIO over isn't going to be enough either."

We talked until early in the morning, going over all the problems. Finally I told Art that I thought Hubert could win. I hadn't yet heard him give a speech, but friends had told me that he was a first-rate spellbinder. Besides, I loved to take chances, big ones. Also several times in the past, both before and after Governor Floyd B. Olson died in 1936, I myself had been approached to run for a political office. Roman Becker, an editor for the old Farmer-Labor paper, the *Leader*, had wanted me to run for the state legislature, first as a representative, then as a senator, and slowly build up a reputation until I would be ripe to run for governor. Becker had heard me one night arguing eloquently with some professors.

A DAY OR SO later, Hubert took the plunge. He filed for office of mayor of the city of Minneapolis. We had a hectic time. It was assumed that Mayor Marvin Kline would easily win first spot in the primaries. For second place, Hubert had to beat out eight other candidates, among them T. A. Eide, perennial labor candidate, and Henry J. Soltau, a crusading minister who had decided to run and clean up the city. Eide was a prominent leader in the co-operative movement, and Soltau often spoke on radio shows.

Hubert was like a whirlwind. He was everywhere at once, it seemed. And he beat out both Eide and Soltau, coming in 13,477 votes behind Kline.

THIS VIEW, looking northeastward up Hennepin Avenue, shows a portion of Minneapolis in 1943 when Humphrey first ran for mayor. His headquarters were at Hennepin and Ninth Street, catercorner from the Orpheum Theater.

Hubert set up campaign headquarters on Hennepin and Ninth. Two women from labor leader Harold Seavey's office manned the telephone and the reception desk. The rest of us, Art, Evron, Hubert, and myself, scurried all over town with our leaflets. Sometimes when Hubert couldn't quite make a speaking engagement, we would fill in. Art and Evron were good at it. I wasn't.

Hubert soon learned that I knew the city quite well. As a one-time reporter for the *Journal* I had made it a point to know where every street was. Art and Evron had their duties on the campus and couldn't always be around. So gradually I was the one who rode with Hubert everywhere in his car. I was supposed to be his driver, but he was too impatient to let me drive and I wound up sitting in front with him, listening to him expound on one thing or another.

Still Hubert could be a good listener. I researched for meetings he was scheduled to address. For the Townsend Club, for example, I dug up material on the founder, Francis W. Townsend, who believed in giving pensions to old people for them to spend within a month to speed up the use of money. Filled in, Hubert would take the few facts I gave him and make a dramatic flourishing talk.

On another occasion I took him to a practice session

HUMPHREY



for MAYOR

Who Is Humphrey?

Humphrey is your candidate for mayor.

Humphrey is trained for the job by education and experience.

Humphrey is a graduate of the University of Minnesota.

Humphrey has two college degrees—B. A. and M. A. in Political Science.

Humphrey has had administrative experience as:

State Director—War Production Training and Re-employment—WPA

Assistant Director—Twin Cities Area War Manpower Commission

Humphrey is endorsed by labor and supported by business, church and civic groups.

Humphrey is married and has two children.

Humphrey is of Norwegian-English ancestry.

Humphrey will be the next Mayor of Minneapolis.

Vote for Humphrey

Prepared and circulated by Humphrey for Mayor Volunteer Committee, Mrs. A. Boyd Thomas, Treasurer, 724 Eighth Avenue Southeast

A LEAFLET for Humphrey's 1943 mayoralty campaign included the portrait at left and answers to the question, "Who Is Humphrey?" He was very much an unknown at the time.

of the Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra in Northrop Auditorium. I boned up on what the orchestra would be playing at its next concert and provided Hubert with some background on both the musical selections and the composers. Hubert walked in and instantly noticed they were not too excited about seeing him. Dimitri Mitropoulos, the conductor, barely had time for him. But Hubert took the background material I had given him and gave one of the best ten-minute impromptu talks on music I ever heard. When he finished, the musicians gave him the ultimate in ovations by lightly tapping their bows on the strings of their instruments; and Dimitri went over to Hubert, threw his arms around him, and gave him a Grecian kiss.

My wife Maryanna, meanwhile, had been taking a pretty dim view of my sudden interest in politics. As she often said, politics was about the last thing she would ever be interested in. And she was amazed that I, a man who wanted to be a writer, a man who loved solitude, had suddenly become so active in public affairs and traveled around with "a would be politician."

Then one evening Maryanna met him. We had been

invited to a small supper party at which Hubert was to speak. Frederick Kottke and William Kubicek, medical instructors at the university, were hosts. Everybody but Hubert was there on time. This caused quite a laugh. Hubert's reputation for always being a little late was growing rapidly. He just couldn't resist adding a second conclusion and a third conclusion to any speech he gave. Also, he loved people and couldn't tear himself away when they wanted to tell him the sorry tale of their lives or give him some sage advice on how to handle the worthy opponent.

Finally, he arrived with Muriel, he chipper and quick-moving and greeting everybody at once, Muriel demure and apologetic. The room was instantly galvanized by his presence. It was like magic to see what had been somewhat desultory talk suddenly become excited talk. When he looked at you he looked at you directly, piercingly with those dark blue eyes, to your core, and it always made you jump, made you want to do something, promise something, get something done. And before an evening was over he usually got in that look at everyone. Dialogue quickened, laughter

deepened, wit flashed. Soon the talk turned political, and then Vesuvius took over.

On the way home that night my wife, her face alive and her eyes sparkling from the lively evening, said: "Well, I've just met a man who is going to be the president of our country some day. You were right. He is an exceptional man."

AS ASSISTANT campaign manager, I was called on to do some strange things. We had some difficulty, for example, in reaching William (Bill) Mauseth, CIO leader in Minneapolis. He was known as the king of the left-wingers (an odd title for a revolutionary) who pretty well dictated the politics of his union. When I called him on the telephone, he was always out, not available. Finally, I suggested to Hubert that he just go barge into the CIO headquarters and keep asking for Mauseth until he got hold of him. Hubert was game, and we drove over. But when we got there it was as though they had had advance notice we were coming, as though they had a spy in our midst. The offices were empty except for a couple of girl clerks. Well, for Hubert two people was a crowd, and he proceeded to lecture them on the issues of the mayoralty campaign. The girls tried to voice their objections to what he was saying but he overwhelmed them with his rhetoric and his pointing finger. For myself I thought he was overdoing it a bit. It was as though Hubert felt that if he could properly indoctrinate the two girl clerks they in turn could influence others in the CIO ranks. He had to get that CIO vote.

This went on for about five minutes — when abruptly a little sliding pass-through door in a wall opened and through it popped Bill Mauseth's head. Mauseth's face was all worked up. He had been listening on the other side of the wall. "That's all very well, Hubert," he rasped, "but what about the international situation, ha?"



BILL
MAUSETH,
CIO leader

Mauseth meant, of course, what was Hubert's attitude toward the USSR.

Hubert, astonished to see Mauseth's face in the pass-through opening, reared back a step and flashed a look at me as if to say, "My God, Freddie, what kind of place have you brought me to?" Then, recovering and re-presenting his pointing finger, he shot back, "Mr. Mauseth, I doubt that as mayor of Minneapolis I'll be very much concerned with any international dealings with Russia. The really important issue is this: Do you want a good mayor in the office here who will clean up the city, get rid of gambling, prostitution, and all underworld connections? Or do you want to continue with Marvin Kline as your mayor and have a wide open town? And furthermore, don't you want a mayor in office who for once will give a fair shake to the labor movement?"

The two of them went at it a good quarter of an hour, with Mauseth trying to swing the argument around to how Hubert felt about the Communists, and with Hubert continually emphasizing the need for clean government.

Mauseth finally gave up. Actually, he slowly pulled back his head and closed the little sliding pass-through door. And then, after a moment and somewhat reluctantly, he came around by the regular door and shook hands with Hubert. It was my turn to be astounded. I had heard that Mauseth wasn't much for shaking hands unless it was with a very good comrade.

The campaign committee was broke all the time. We were always short of money: for postage, for posters, for campaign literature. Hubert was such an unknown that it was hard to get backing. Also, Hubert was picky about where the money came from.

I remember one mysterious call I took at the headquarters. The man on the other end of the phone, who at first wouldn't give his name, suggested that he could get a \$10,000 campaign contribution for Hubert, but he wanted a certain understanding with Hubert first. I finally got the man's name and his telephone number. I reported it to Hubert. Hubert was instantly on the alert and told me to investigate it further.

The fellow lived near the corner of Eighteenth Street and Third Avenue South in a sleazy apartment with smelly overstuffed furniture. He had told me to come over late in the evening but I decided to pop in on him in the morning. I had gathered that he was a night owl, and I figured his thinking would be slower in the morning than in the evening. While I myself was best in the morning, I rapped on his door around 9 A.M. He didn't want to answer the door at first and was irritated as hell when he discovered who it was. He had the sniffing manners of a wary old cornered rat. He shuffled into his clothes and poured himself some cold black coffee, desperately trying to wake up.

It took him a while to get to the point. But at last,

coughing, working hard to clear his head, he finally told me that he and his bunch wanted to have the right to name the chief of police for that \$10,000 contribution. Hubert could run the city any way he wanted to except for that. The chief of police had to be their man. I kept a good poker face but inside kept wondering who this fellow's "bunch" might be. And at last my stratagem of rousing him out of bed when he was at his sleepest paid off. He let slip "they" were out of Chicago.

I thanked him, said I would let him know, and left. I went back to the campaign headquarters and reported to Hubert.

Hubert was outraged. "We won't even bother to get back to them. You hear?"

On another occasion Gideon Seymour, executive editor of the *Minneapolis Star and Tribune*, called me. I had been in to see him several times about a job and had met him at parties around town. He was a portly man with a heavy flushed face. After some hemming and hawing, and making sure that I wouldn't go tattling around town, he finally told me what he had in mind. "I think I can raise \$500 for Hubert. From the Dayton boys and some other fat cat friends at the Athletic Club. They are willing to take up a collection."

"A whole five hundred?" I managed not to let sarcasm creep into my voice.

"Yes. Hubert can use it. can't he? We hear he is hard up for funds."

I almost laughed out loud. It meant the fat cats were beginning to worry Hubert might win and they wanted to make a side bet to get in on the game. I told Gideon I would talk it over with Hubert. "Hubert is mighty careful about where he gets his money."

"I know he is and that's why we like him."

It made me wonder a little if Gideon knew about the rejected \$10,000 offer.

About that same time, a man who identified himself as Kelly called me one evening. After some throat clearing, he indicated he and his friends wanted to help Hubert win, too. Would Hubert be interested? I had just had a nap and still wasn't altogether clear-headed. But as we talked it hit me that I had met the man at the same party where I met Bill Mauseth and other left-wingers, along with some artists and writers. Kelly was a Communist. He ended by saying, "We think Hubert has a good chance to win. And we want to help put him over. Also, we think we can help his thinking on certain social-oriented matters."

I reported that call to Hubert, too. He almost snorted. "That would be the kiss of death. Stay away from them."

Gene Williams, one of the leaders in the Teamsters' union, liked Hubert and wanted to help him. Williams suggested that if Hubert could print up some postcards with a pointed message the postcards could be run

through the Teamsters' addressing machine. There were some 2,000 members. Hubert thought that a great idea. It was bound to pick up a few extra votes. He'd been hearing around town that, while the A F of L was completely behind his campaign, the Teamsters were dragging their feet. Hubert assigned the job of running those postcards through the addressing machine to me. Evron helped me carry the cards over from our headquarters on Hennepin to the Teamsters' headquarters on First Avenue North across the street from the Greyhound bus depot. The two girls from our office came along to help run the machine.

We were about finished addressing the cards, when the door burst open and in tromped Fred (Fritz) Snyder and several other Teamster goons. Fritz was known as a brawler of nightspots. I had met Fritz once before. As a member of the Newspaper Guild I had helped on the picket line when the WTCN radio news staff went on strike in 1938. The 544 goon squad wanted to run the engineers, who were A F of L, through our CIO Newspaper Guild picket line at the WTCN transmitter. Our Guild members were augmented by the CIO meatpackers of South St. Paul, a notoriously tough bunch, and it looked as though there was going to be a real showdown. Rather than have general bloodshed, I suggested that a champion be selected from each side and have them fight it out. Fritz was chosen for the 544 side and I for the Guild side. (I was a sports reporter at the time and it was known I had also done some boxing.) Luckily, just as we were taking off our jackets and shirts and were bare down to the belt, a man came running from the WTCN transmitter to tell us the strike was settled.

Fritz was a huge man, well over six feet and built like a super wedge. I was taller but he was heavier. He and a

FRED
(FRITZ)
SNYDER
of the
Teamsters



couple of his boys bore down on us where we were running the addressing machine. He ordered us to stop the machine and told his boys to grab the postcards already addressed.

"What's the trouble?" I exclaimed. "Williams told us we could use this machine."

"He don't know from nothin'," Fritz said. "Besides, he ain't the real boss. Shut off that machine!"

The rumor that the Teamsters were dragging their feet proved to be right.

I had always regretted that I hadn't had that tangle with Fritz, just to show him that brawlers can't always have their way. I decided to front up to him, and with a little Siouxsland smile to disarm him I stepped up to him. I could see that he was wearing a gun, as were his buddies. I said, "Look, Fritz, I'm not packing a gun. See?" With both hands I opened wide my suit jacket. "So I'm no match for you." I reached forward and patted his chest, and then, easy does it, flipped back the left side of his jacket to reveal a shoulder holster and gun. "Now, you don't really want to scare my girls with that thing, do you?" I turned to look for Evron to include him in the dialogue, only to discover he had disappeared. When I glanced back at the girls, I could see that, if they already didn't have wet panties, they sure as heck were going to have them soon. I gestured behind my back for the girls to keep running those cards through the addressing machine.

Fritz was taken off guard. He blinked and stood hesitating.

"Fritz, remember that time on the picket line? When we almost went for each other?"

Fritz nodded. Out of the corner of his eye he watched the addressing machine pump out more cards. "Yeh, but. . . . Look, we had orders to grab them postcards of yours. So if. . . ."

"Maybe we should have that go-round after all. Of course, I'm going to have to ask you to strip down to your waist, like that other time. And I'll do the same." I began to take off my jacket. I knew that in any case a jacket was a bad thing to be wearing in a fight. All the other fellow has to do is jerk your jacket back by the collar and he has your arms pinned.

"Naw," Fritz said, "I don't wanna fight you. We just want them cards, is all. We had orders."

I kept putting him off with more palaver, and he kept hesitating.

Finally, I heard the last postcard drop out of the addressing machine. I shut off the machine and picked up the big box in which all the cards lay neatly stacked. With a nod at the girls I indicated they could go. They grabbed their purses and skedaddled. I was left alone with Fritz and his two boys. With the box under one arm, and gesturing amicably, I started for the door in as casual a manner as I could muster. Fritz and his buddies

followed me, Fritz arguing all the while that he had had orders and it would be his neck if those postcards got mailed.

I kept joshing them as we went down the stairs, and then outdoors onto the sidewalk. I remembered that there was a big mailbox on the corner across from the entrance to the bus depot. I made it a point not to look at the mailbox at the same time that I gradually eased over to the side of the walk where it stood. Then, before they knew what was happening, I opened the big mouth of the mailbox and dumped the whole load of postcards in it.

"There, boys, if you want those postcards back, go after them. But remember, if you dig them out of that mailbox, it'll be a federal offense."

Fritz stomped and cursed and threatened the air, but he didn't quite dare to pull his gun.

I stepped across the street and headed for the Humphrey headquarters. Once out of sight of Fritz and his buddy goons, I broke out in a cold sweat. And wondered where in God's name I'd got the guts to do what I'd just done.

When I showed up at headquarters, Hubert heaved a huge sigh of relief. Evron had filled him in about what had happened. Evron was white — and angry. The two girls, I learned, had on arrival headed straight for the ladies' room and were still in there. Hubert commended me, but he said he wasn't sure we needed all that bravery.

MOST TIMES Evron and Art and I got along well. Evron and Art, as University of Minnesota political scientists, were a little heavy on the strategy side and not very heavy on the actual work side. Evron and Art felt they were too valuable as thinkers to be distributing leaflets door to door, which I did when I wasn't driving Hubert around.

But we clashed one day when it turned out that Art had scheduled a luncheon meeting with some businessmen for Hubert, cancelling out a meeting that I had set up with the difficult CIO. I still wasn't sure about CIO support but I felt a few more visits with the leaders would help. I got up from my chair. "Hubert, the heck with the businessmen. Besides, I promised the CIO boys you'd come and you better be there." I spoke with some force. Torn between an old loyalty to Art and Evron and my show of some anger, Hubert didn't know what to do. But finally he sailed out the door with Art, and he did it with a look over his shoulder as if he were afraid of me. His leaving so sheepishly really did make me feel disgusted. I had been drawn into the whole thing in the first place to help him get CIO support.

I didn't remain angry very long. Like Hubert, I never could stay angry. Besides, he was such a lovable fellow, with his endless cheer, his indomitable force, his



THESE PHOTOS record a confrontation between Humphrey and Mayor Kline in May, 1943, that considerably warmed up the campaign, especially since newspapermen had been alerted. In the top picture Humphrey, seated in the mayor's office, demanded that Kline explain or retract his charge that racketeers were backing Humphrey.

In the bottom picture, Humphrey took some of the sting from his face-to-face meeting with Kline by shaking hands with the mayor.



witty greetings, his endless concern for the welfare of his workers.

Herbert McClosky, also from the Department of Political Science at the University of Minnesota, sometimes helped out. He wrote some of Hubert's radio speeches. McClosky and I often argued about these scripts. McClosky always approached his subject matter as if everything he wrote had to be on a par with Plato's *Republic*. His writing wound up, of course, being very heavy, loaded with polysyllabics. Two minutes into the speech and there would be nobody listening. I tried to jazz up the language a little after McClosky got through with his draft, but that made McClosky angry. So I finally told Hubert to quit reading the McClosky scripts and to speak extemporaneously. Hubert was ten times better talking off the cuff than anything either McClosky or I wrote for him. Twice I threw McClosky's drafts away, after jotting down the gist of them, and told Hubert to take it from there. Hubert was impressive when he talked extemporaneously. Curiously enough, Hubert, otherwise too long-winded, always managed to confine his remarks to the time slot allotted him.

With two weeks to go, Mayor Kline began to worry that Hubert was gaining on him. Kline, on the advice of his secretary, Frank Mayer, decided to hit out at Hubert. In one of his campaign speeches he called Hubert a political upstart who made promises he could never deliver on. He claimed Hubert was guilty of making misstatements if not telling lies. Kline's remarks made the front pages of the *Star* and the *Tribune*.

Art and Evron were dumbfounded. And Hubert was angry. They debated what to do about it. Hubert had to strike back somehow.

I said, "Hubert, know what I'd do if I was running?"

"What's that, Freddie?"

"He's calling you a liar, isn't he?"

"Well, yes, I guess he is."

"I'd never let anybody call me a liar, political campaign or not. Not even President Roosevelt."

"You mean, you'd go see him personally?"

"You bet I'd go see him personally. I'd barge right into Mayor Kline's office, mad as a hornet, and challenge him to prove his allegations."

"Gee, I don't know"

"Hubert, if you'll go over there, right now, I'll see to it that some reporters and photographers will be on hand to witness it all. That'll really make the front pages."

Art and Evron weren't sure, either, that my idea was such a good one. Because of that Fritz Snyder episode of mine, they were already a little wary about some of my suggestions.

"Hubert," I said, "until now the newspapers haven't given you much space. They've assumed all along that Kline will win easily, that you really aren't newsworthy. Well, if you beard that fellow in his own den, the mayor's

office, and point your finger at him, and hit him with a blunt face-to-face challenge, you'll get coverage like you've never had before."

Hubert gave it some more thought and finally said, "All right, Freddie, you call up your newspaper friends and Art you come along with me."

Hubert did get attention in all three Minneapolis papers. Kline, totally startled, was almost speechless. The only trouble was, after the confrontation some reporter suggested that the two shake hands. Well, you know Hubert. He never could carry a legitimate grudge longer than a minute or so. Hubert shook hands with Kline. The handshake was photographed, and it defused the point of his dramatic visit. But it made news.

EVERY NOW AND THEN Hubert would come flying into the office of a morning, take a good look around, and then shake his head over all the clutter underfoot, the kind of clutter all campaign headquarters collect: torn posters, old newspapers, folders, leaflets, cards. He'd grab a broom and sweep up the place. He had a curious way of skipping about as he worked. Soon everybody caught the spirit and helped clean up. "You see, my friends," he would say, "that's the way I want people to see me. That I like to clean things up. Just like I intend to clean up the city of Minneapolis."

Several times while visiting his home, I saw Hubert glance around at his living room and decide there was too much clutter about there, too. He wouldn't complain to Muriel but instead would go to the broom closet and actually, with company present, neat up the joint. Muriel always smiled quietly to herself as she watched him bustle about, then went on doing whatever it was she was busy with — like washing dishes or changing diapers.

Hubert was the same way with his clothes. He was always neatly dressed, dapper. His tie was always in place. He was always cleanly shaven. And his haircuts had to be just right. He was a man who as a boy had been trained to meet the public with his best foot forward.

When anybody showed up at campaign headquarters, Hubert would invariably be the first to greet the stranger. Hubert was not one to sit in the back office, inaccessible to the public, thinking deep thoughts about the issues, but was always out front. He had the typical shopkeeper's philosophy — serve the customer immediately. For myself I wasn't always sure I wanted to meet every Tom, Dick, and Harry who dropped in. I wasn't a natural glad-hander. When I asked Hubert where he got that trait, he had a ready answer: "Working for my father in his drugstore. When you have a shop, you better be prepared to give the customer service. Right now. And do it with a smile."

Later on this work ethic served Hubert well. He became known for the promptness with which he an-

swered his mail, both as mayor of Minneapolis and as United States senator. Even conservative farmers had to admit, grudgingly, that they got quicker service from Hubert's office than they did from their own Republican senator.

One weekend shortly before the general election Hubert announced that he and his friend Orville Freeman were going out on the town for the evening to have some fun, just the two of them. I showed surprise, thinking he'd be glad he could at last stay home one night with wife and children. Hubert caught my look. "Well, Freddie, my dad taught me a number of things, and one of them was to make the women in the house understand we men weren't always slaveys. Dad said that every now and then we men have got to break free of the women, wives, mothers, sisters, daughters, and have a night out with the boys." There was a hint in the way Hubert said it that, should the boys decide to see other women, well that, too, according to Hubert's father was a man's privilege. I was very much in love with my wife at the time and had trouble understanding that philosophy. Furthermore, I had always been somewhat of a feminist, believing that what was fair for the men should also be fair for the women.

A few days before the election, Hubert's brother Ralph and his wife drove up for what was to be a victory celebration. Ralph was helping his father run the Humphrey drugstore in Huron. Ralph was a bluff man, full of wisecracks, with a quiet, almost hard, eye for the passing show. He liked to goad Hubert, and the two of them were constantly challenging each other.

One evening the subject came up as to why Hubert wasn't in the armed forces, helping his country fight the Germans and the Japanese. The question of Hubert being a draft dodger had been raised several times by the Kline camp. Ralph in turn taunted Hubert with it. Hubert said he had tried several times to enlist but neither the army nor navy would take him. He had a bad hernia.

"Oh, hell, Pink," Ralph said, "your hernia ain't all that bad. While me now, man, I've really got one. In fact, my hernia is so bad it looks like I've got an extra appendage there."

"G'wan, Ralph." Hubert said. "When it comes right down to it, mine's the worst. I've got a double hernia. Two of 'em."

At this point both wives, sitting in Hubert's living room listening to the combative talk, woke up. Such kind of talk was going a little too far, they said, especially with company present. I was the company.

But Ralph was not to be outdone. "I'll show you," he said. He promptly unbuckled his belt and lowered his trousers and his shorts to reveal he was wearing a truss, and that the truss was holding back a considerable protuberance.

With a laugh Hubert followed suit. He slipped down his suspenders and lowered his trousers and shorts to reveal a truss. His was a double truss. I hadn't known he wore such a device. So that accounted for his odd skipping walk. He worked his legs directly off his hip joints. Because of the truss he couldn't let his whole body flow into his walk. The two men standing there with shorts and trousers lowered to almost half-mast was a sight to behold. There was a lot of laughter.

Muriel decided things had gone far enough. "All right, you two, if you must show off your torsos, into the bathroom with you. Shame on you."

HUBERT ALMOST WON the election. He lost only because of his honesty. One of his last talks was before the bartenders' union. He gave his usual rousing speech. At the end he asked for questions from the audience. One question proved to be his undoing. Someone asked him, "Is it true, Mr. Humphrey, that if you get elected, you're going to close down the town?"

Hubert shot back, "Yessir, tight as a drum. I'm sick of hearing that Minneapolis is a two-time town — in the day a sleepy conservative financial center, at night a wide open town for gambling, prostitution, and liquor."

Nothing more was said at the meeting. But afterwards, from then until the election, every bartender in town made it a point to tell his customers that if they voted for Hubert they wouldn't be able to have a beer on their way home from work or an occasional night out on the town with the boys.

Hubert lost by just 5,725 votes.

Sometime during the summer of 1943, after Hubert got a job teaching at Macalester College, he dropped by my house for a visit. I was living at 1814 Southeast Fourth Street, at the time. We sat in my study in the back of the house, first floor. I had gone back to my writing. The walls of my den were lined with books and I had built myself both a slanting writing desk and a typing stand and was raring to go.

We reviewed the campaign and had some good laughs together about it.

Finally, Hubert got around to why he'd come to see me. "Freddie, right now, so long as I work for Macalester I'm not supposed to be politicking. The fact is, though, politics is my life, and I'm going to run for mayor again in two years. But the next time around it's going to be different. I want you to be my right-hand man. Art and Evron are okay, you know, great friends of mine. But they really are a little too academic. Labor leaders don't like that university crowd and I need the support of labor to win. Besides, I noticed in the last campaign that you were willing to get out and pound the streets and ring doorbells and peddle leaflets. You were willing to go see Mauseth with me. You went into that Teamsters' den that time. A real precinct worker. You not only know

how to read many different kinds of people, you also get along with them. You know the man in the street, and I'm sure you know the man in the country coming as you do from the country. You have a down-to-earth way with people. So look, Freddie, you work with me and we'll someday go to Washington, D.C., together."

I was glad my wife wasn't listening. She already had a premonition of the kind of hard life I was going to have as a writer. She would have urged me to go with Hubert, and if I still wanted to write, do it in my spare time.

Hubert went on. "And the best thing is, Freddie, you and I get along. We understand each other instantly. Maybe it's because we both come from the sticks. You were raised around Doon, Iowa, and I was raised in Doland, South Dakota. Let's work together. What do you say?"

I am easily moved. Too often I've let people persuade me to get into things I afterwards regret. And Hubert with his very persuasive personality, his winning infectious manner, was hard to resist. Somehow, though, I for once stubborned up inside. I knew one thing absolutely for sure — I would never be happy in politics, or for that matter in any kind of public life. I had had a taste of it with him in the election just past, and I hadn't liked it at all. I was a private man. I liked my privacy. I liked working at my desk of judgment.

"What do you say, Freddie?"

"Hubert, I'm sorry, but really I'm not all that hot about politics. I'm not good with crowds. I don't like crowds. I love sitting alone here working at my novels. I've already got three written, you know, various drafts of them, and my head is full of other ideas for books. If I don't get them all down, and published, I'd feel terrible later on in life. Like I'd betrayed some kind of holy trust given me. So I've got to do them. I'll go crazy if I don't."

Hubert looked at me surprised.

"And anyway, Hubert, for your sake, you and I really shouldn't be seen together as a team. I'm a good six foot nine and you're about six feet. Every time we step down out of a train together, or off an airplane, they'll first look at me and then at you. When you should be the first and only main attraction. Furthermore, seeing my huge bulk, people would begin to think you'd hired yourself a big goon for a bodyguard. No, Hubert, it won't work."

Hubert argued for a while, trying to make me change my mind.

But I wouldn't do it.

Very reluctantly, a little sadly, Hubert finally got up to go. It was almost one o'clock. We shook hands, warmly, regretfully, and agreed to keep in touch.

THAT FALL I wrote an article about Minnesota politics. It was accepted by *The New Republic* and was published under the title of "Report From Minnesota," October 11, 1943. We had a party at our house on Fourth Street

the day it arrived in the mail. The Naftalins, Kubiceks, Kottkes, and others from old campaign days were all there. It was to be one of those parties where Hubert would meet privately with his political friends to help keep the Humphrey dream alive. Hubert and Muriel, as usual, were a little late. I saw them coming up the walk, so I went to the door to greet them, and then in the hallway I showed them the article in *The New Republic*. I was quite proud of it. It was my first published piece in a national magazine. It was also the first mention of Hubert in a national magazine. In it I suggested that Humphrey would probably move up the political ladder, while Harold Stassen would go down. Hubert had antennas out for people; Harold did not.

Hubert was delighted to see it, and with his quick eyes glanced through it. Then he handed it to Muriel. Muriel also glanced at it. She wanted to know if any of the company had seen it. I said they hadn't; I'd been saving it for Hubert and Muriel to see first.

We entered the room where the others had been waiting. Muriel with her quiet smile held up the magazine. "It's in there all right, just as Freddie promised it would be."

There were pleased smiles all around.

(That same article caught the eye of Robert Penn Warren, poet and novelist then teaching at the University of Minnesota. Warren called me one afternoon to ask if he couldn't talk to me about it. We agreed first to take a walk and then go to his house on Logan Avenue in south Minneapolis and talk. Sitting in his den with a hot buttered rum in hand, Warren explained he was working on a novel on southern politics. He said he was curious to know what northern politics might be like, on the inside. Of course, Red said, if you're going to use the material yourself, then you shouldn't help me. I told Warren it would be years before I got around to using what I knew about Hubert, or for that matter about Stassen and the former Governor Elmer Benson. By that time, I said, I'd probably have a different slant on what I'd be telling him.)

The next summer I had lunch with Hubert and Art. During the course of some lively male talk, Hubert leaned over to Art, and said with a smile at me, "By the way, Art, Freddie's got one in the oven."

I blushed. It was true that my wife and I were expecting.

A few months later when our first child, Freya, was born, Muriel brought over a supply of used diapers and a bassinet. The Humphreys were in between babies, she said, and didn't need the diapers just then. Hubert and Muriel knew we were hard up. My first novel, *The Golden Bowl*, had gotten fine reviews but no great sales, and I was struggling to complete my second book, *Boy Almighty*.

When the Humphreys' next child was born, I re-

turned the diapers and the bassinet. I remarked to Muriel that the diapers had by that time become pretty threadbare. They were hardly much better than cheese-cloth. But here they were anyway. "Thanks for all your help."

Muriel laughed. "I'll just have to put on two at a time then."

By the time Hubert ran for mayor again, my wife and I had moved out into what was at that time open country in Bloomington, on the bluffs overlooking the Minnesota River, and I couldn't be of much help to him. The next time around Hubert swamped Mayor Marvin Kline.²

I visited Hubert in the mayor's office many times. He had left word with the office help that any time I showed up he was to be told. I was often ushered into his office. Sometimes I sat in on conferences, and after the visitors had left, he'd ask me for my opinion on what I'd seen and heard. I had one piece of advice for him that he never followed. I told him, "Hubert, you read other people's minds so fast you never give them a chance to finish what they've come to say. You take the words right out of their mouth. Hubert, nobody really likes that. Why don't you bite on your tongue and let them finish? Let them think they've told you something important."

Once while I was in his office talking, the phone rang. It was Muriel. Hubert leaned back in his armchair and listened. He sat silently listening for what seemed at least five minutes. There was a patient, indulgent smile on his lips. I gathered it wasn't so much that she was whining or complaining as that she was voicing her wifely concerns about various family matters.

Finally, he leaned forward in his chair and brought it all to an end by saying, "Muriel, you know that I'll do what is right, and you know also what that is," and hung up, shaking his head.

For once he had sat back and listened. I sat there wishing he'd do the same thing with labor leaders and other people who came to his office. But a wife has more rights. Also, she had probably let him know earlier that she didn't like for him to take the words right out of her mouth.

On another occasion we got around to talking about our ambitions. He never failed to tell me that someday he was going to go to Washington, D.C., as either a representative or a senator, possibly even as president.

WHEN HUBERT RAN for the United States Senate in 1948 against incumbent Joseph Ball, I campaigned for Hubert as much as I could out on the bluff. I wasn't always well and had to husband my strength for the writing of novels. But I wrote a letter for him to the *Minneapolis Star* that was printed in full. I drew a series of comparisons between Humphrey and Ball and what they stood for. The letter got a lot of attention. Virginia Saford, for one, then a columnist for the *Star*, called me to

say that because of the letter she was going to switch her vote to Hubert. She said many of her friends were going to do the same. Hubert also called me up to thank me. At the end of the conversation he said, "Freddie, that was a wonderful letter, and I still say that if you'd have gone with me, we'd really have climbed the heights together."³

A year after he was elected to the United States Senate, I was appointed writer in residence at Macalester College. I hadn't been on the job a week when I got a letter of congratulations from Hubert. As a former professor at Macalester he welcomed me to the Macalester ranks.

With him living in Washington, D.C., our lives drifted apart. We kept in touch by writing occasional letters. When the Viet Nam war came along I wrote him to protest the bombing of Hue. The destruction of one of the most beautiful cities in the world, I said, with some of the world's great art in it, was not worth the few North Vietnamese hidden in it. It would have been better to starve them out of it rather than blast them out of it. Except possibly for the work of William Faulkner, we had nothing in the way of an art in our country to match Hue — and that included the Johnson administration, of which Hubert was a part as vice president.

Hubert wrote right back. "Thanks for the brickbats," he said, and then went on to defend his action in a two-page letter. From the tone of the letter I detected that what he said was not necessarily his own personal point of view.

I wrote him again and suggested he resign as vice president. I told him he would be the first in American history to do it, and the young would love him for it, and if he finally wanted a chance at the presidency that was the route to take. He wrote back to say that he had given it serious thought but felt that there was much to be said for party loyalty.

The last time I saw him in person was at Sauk Centre. Humphrey was the main speaker at the dedication of the Sinclair Lewis Interpretive Center on June 15, 1975. As an old friend of Red Lewis I had been invited to sit on the speaker's platform. When Hubert arrived he spotted me sitting alone on a corner of the platform waiting for things to begin. He immediately strode over and shook hands.

"What are you doing here?" he asked.

"Paying my respects to an old friend. Russell Fridley,

²In 1945 Humphrey defeated Kline by 31,114 votes, the largest majority in the city's history up to then, and carried eleven of the city's thirteen wards. — Ed

³The letter appeared on the editorial page of the *Minneapolis Star* on October 13, 1948. The original, dated October 4, 1948, is in the Manfred Collection, Manuscripts Division, University of Minnesota. — Ed.

director of the Historical Society, invited me up. And then I wanted to see you again."

He was all smiles and we embraced warmly.

A little later, while the master of ceremonies was introducing the various dignitaries, Hubert got out a sheaf of papers on which he had earlier scribbled some notes and wrote something in the margin. I found out what that was a few minutes later.

Hubert was well into his speech, lauding Lewis' contribution to Minnesota as a literary giant, when he turned and pointed at me, saying, "Yes, and we have here right now in our midst another writer, typical of the giants of letters that Minnesota produces. Stand up, Freddie, and let them see how big you really are."

I felt small for a moment. I could feel my face turn beet red.

Russell Fridley, sitting next to me, nudged me and told me to stand up. So I stood up.

Hubert laughed and said, "See? That's what I mean about a real Viking giant."

Many people complained that Hubert harangued too much in his talks, that he came on too strong, strident, didn't vary his attack enough, didn't speak softly at times. It was true that he was always in great high dudgeon about one problem or another.

But I heard another Hubert Humphrey in August, 1969, when he gave the main address at a national meeting of the American Association for State and Local History in St. Paul. He had asked that questions historians might be interested in be given him beforehand. Patiently, quietly, with wit and humor, and with a humor that was often directed at himself, at his own expense, he told about his visit to Premier Nikita Khrushchev in Moscow, his relations with President Lyndon Johnson, and the like. It was all done in an off-the-cuff, conversational tone. I had never heard him talk to better effect in my life. In fact, I had never heard its equal anywhere. Before those hard-eyed historians he was open, frank, confessional. The audience began by being very silent and wound up laughing with enjoyment. It was a masterpiece of an evening.

Hubert had a monolithic intellect. He was very brilliant, with high peaks in politics and history. Some of us who knew him in the beginning used to lament a little that he didn't read enough outside his field, in fiction

and poetry; that he didn't look enough into philosophy, or astronomy, or general science. When I first visited his house I was shocked to see how few books he had in his library. I've often wondered if his being color blind didn't have something to do with it, that he wasn't interested in those lively extra tones of life.

We all liked Muriel, but some of Hubert's friends were heard to say they wished she could have been more of an intellectual helpmate for him. It was too bad, one old friend of his said, that Hubert hadn't married a rich cultural woman. In the long run, though, Muriel was just right for him. She kept his feet on the ground. He was a high flier and had a tendency to forget he was only mortal.

Hubert was a man of endless energy. He was so full of energy that he remained boyish all his life. Even up to the very last he still had the air of a man who was running for office for the first time. He never got sick of politicking, as he called it. Myself, I got sick of saying the same thing the second time around. His ability to put fire and steam into an old subject was utterly out of my understanding. I would have gone wild in a month if I had had to give the same talk over and over again. I think it was the teacher in him, and his love for people, and his full-hearted concern for their destiny that gave him the ability to repeat his lectures and talks and harangues ad infinitum. For me it would have been ad nauseam. But that was Hubert.

We're going to miss Hubert in the years to come. We already missed having a great president in him.

When he walked into a room it was like an extra current had been turned on. The lights in the room were suddenly brighter, the smiles were wider, and suddenly you were in glory land with Hubert.

He was a man of tremendous internal drive. Never did I see him in a down mood.

He was a great man to know.

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