



THE BOYS' LATIN SCHOOL OF MARYLAND

this week at 

Pride & Tradition: James Murray Kempton '35



Pulitzer Prize winner **J. Murray Kempton '35** was born in Baltimore on December 16, 1917. Murray wrote later in life that he came from a family of "shabby gentility." His mother was Sally Ambler and his father was James Branson Kempton, a stock broker, and the family lived at 8 East Preston Street in downtown Baltimore, just blocks from the old Boys' Latin School location on Brevard Street. Unfortunately, James Kempton died of influenza when Murray was only three years old leaving the family in financial straits.

Both Murray and his older brother **Bill Kempton '34** came to BL in the fall of 1927. Murray entered as a fifth-grader and brother Bill as a sixth-grader. Murray was a good student. His records reveal he had an aptitude for English along with Latin and French. Murray also was involved in the school's publications becoming the editor-in-chief of both the *Inkwell* and the *Maroon and White* his senior year. Murray was well-liked by his fellow classmates. It is apparent that Murray

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was shaping up as a real character by his senior year. In the class ballot he was selected as "Biggest Politician," "Talks Most, Says Least," and "Done school for most." The winner of the class ballot for "Most responsible" went to "Not Kempton."

When he graduated ranked 6th in his class of 21 in 1935, Murray decided to follow his older brother Bill and enroll at Johns Hopkins University. He recalled later in life that when his father died he looked to literature for his father figures and one of the most influential role models was one of his first employers -**H.L. Mencken**, for whom Murray worked as a copyboy at the *Baltimore Evening Sun*. At Hopkins Murray was involved with the school newspaper becoming its editor-in-chief by 1938. After his graduation in 1939, he worked for a short time as a labor organizer, then joined the staff of the *New York Post*.

During World War II he served in the United States Army Air Corps and was stationed in New Guinea and the Philippines. After the war he returned to journalism and in 1949 re-joined the *New York Post* as labor editor and later as a columnist. Murray also wrote for the New York based *World-Telegram and Sun* and a short-lived successor, the *World Journal Tribune*. During the 1960s he worked as an editor of *The New Republic*.

By 1981, he was a columnist for *Newsday*, the Long Island based daily. A tireless journalist, Murray filled four columns a week for most of his career, and in 1985 he won the **Pulitzer Prize** for distinguished commentary. He also wrote articles and essays for several New York publications, including *The National Review*, founded and run by conservative writer **William F. Buckley, Jr.** Murray, was a devout liberal yet he and Buckley became close friends. Their friendship and ideological rivalry lasted throughout their lives.

Murray Kempton was known for his kindness and generosity with fellow journalists and friends, One close friend recalled Murray, a devout Episcopalian, ending nearly all conversations with people with, "God bless you, my friend."

But the character and his love for life that he developed during his years on Brevard Street always surfaced. He was always upbeat and once wrote, "There's no excuse for kicking somebody unless he's up." Living in New York his entire adult life, Murray didn't feel the need to ever learn how to drive a car. New Yorkers could always see him riding his bicycle in the city usually clad in a three-piece pin striped suit. When *Newsday* began to advertise on television in the 1980s they decided to highlight Murray. In one commercial he was shown on his bicycle at a major intersection in New York City. He looked into the camera and said, "I guess I've been around so long that people think they *have* to like me." His bicycling through the streets of New York was later depicted in a *New Yorker* cartoon.

"Murray, bicycling around New York in his pinstripes with some classical music singing along in his earphones, was not up to H. L. Mencken's savage snooty despair," critic **Alfred Kazin** wrote of Kempton. "Murray always knew, as a true journalist, what was going on around him, and that it was all manner of life in the great terrible city, not human existence in general, that stimulated exhilaration as well as horror at so much violence, greed and dishonesty."

Murray Kempton wrote many books and his last one *Rebellions, Perversities, and Main Events* was written in 1993 and dedicated to his friend Bill Buckley. He told friends that Buckley had nagged him for years to assemble the collection and in the book's author's notes wrote, "For William F. Buckley, Jr., genius at friendships that surpass all understanding." Buckley later said of Murray, "He was the most thoughtful and amusing and resourceful journalist in town . . . He was a great artist, and a great friend."

In 1995 he received the *Elijah Parish Lovejoy Award* as well as an honorary Doctor of Letters degree from Colby College. Not too long after, he developed pancreatic cancer, and two years later died of a heart attack. He was 79 years old.

With news of his death *Newsday* Sunday Currents editor Chris Lehmann wrote, "It was easy to think of Murray as indestructible. Although he was at an age when many people settle into dotage, he could, and did, run circles around us all. After *New York Newsday* folded in 1995 and op-ed space shrank in the Long Island mother edition of the paper, Murray complained regularly about only being able to file his column two times a week instead of four." Bill Buckley later wrote that Murray, even near death, planned to write an autobiography and had completed a first chapter. He quoted Murray as saying, "I think I can get it done in eight or nine months."

The Pulitzer Prize and Boys' Latin school publications have a long standing relationship. All three Pulitzer Prize winning BL graduates (**Hanson Baldwin '20** in 1943, **Murray Kempton '35** in 1985 and **Rick Wartzman '83** in 2004) were Editor-in-Chief of the school newspaper the *Inkwell*. In addition, **Jamie Day '67** was Editor-in-Chief of the *Inkwell* and the son of a Pulitzer Prize winning journalist (**Price Day** in 1948) and Upper School History teacher **Lee Kennedy '73** was Editor of the *Maroon and White* and the grandson of a Pulitzer Prize winning journalist (**Lee McCardell** in 1932.) McCardell and Day were the best of friends and both worked for the *Baltimore Sun*.

Alumni Soccer Game 2010



The Alumni Soccer Game against the BL Varsity soccer team will take place on Saturday, August 21st at 10:00. **Butch Maisel H'09** will again lead the alumni squad. The series is tied at two games apiece with last year's game won by the Laker Varsity 5-3. Please let me know if you are interested in playing in this year's game. Lunch will again be provided by longtime BL supporter **Jim Hense**.

Robotic "Battle O'Baltimore"

The 4th Annual Battle of Baltimore Robotics competition will take place here at Boys' Latin in the Gelston Athletic Center on Saturday August 7th from 9:00 a.m. until 6:00 p.m. US Science teacher **Jim Haluck**, head of the Robotics

program here at Boys' Latin, invites everyone in the BL family to stop by and watch the competition. Admission is free!

Homecoming 2011

Homecoming 2011 will take place the weekend of **April 29th and 30th**. The Homecoming luncheon on Friday the 29th will be followed by a varsity lacrosse game be against MIAA rival St. Mary's of Annapolis. At the luncheon BL will recognize and honor all of the school's valedictorians from the past. We hope to have a great crowd. .

The x1 and x6 graduating classes will be celebrating their reunion years. The Brevard Street Alumni will once again have a reception dinner in the Alumni House on April 30th, 2011. Mark your calendars for the entire weekend.

The 2010-2011 academic year will be a special one as Boys' Latin celebrates its 50th Anniversary on Lake Avenue. Stay tuned!

Alumni Notes

Wes Bramble '68 writes: "My wife Kathleen and I were crew members aboard the *Wharf Rat* which saved the five capsized people 4 miles north of the Bay Bridge last two weeks ago. **Larry Vazzano**, skipper and owner, was at the helm.

Kathleen and I were part of the return crew to bring the *Wharf Rat* home from the race to the Solomons. We decided to come home after the awards ceremony rather than next day which we usually do. It was just too hot. At 11:36 pm and two tenths of a mile east of Baltimore Light, I heard voices but did see any boats. I had Larry stop the boat so we could find out what was going on. Kathleen then saw three men clinging to a very small capsized boat holding a red/green bow light. Their light was not very effective because it was too low to the water and blocked by the waves. We called the Coast Guard immediately on channel 16. We threw two ropes to them and pulled them in to our boat. They said that a man and a woman had also been hanging onto floating ice chest. We did not see them. The government arrived in force with the right tools. They were able to illuminate acres of water with the spotlights on the helicopter. They found them and rescued them. We then transferred the three on our boat to a government boat and continued on our way. Kathleen and I arrived back home at 4 a.m."

Bill Wilson '81 writes: "The ABC television show *Extreme Makeover Home Edition* was in Baltimore, July 11th through July 18th. The show was here to tape, as it turns out, the season premiere which will air September 26th.(tentatively) The house that was being built was the largest that *Extreme Makeover Home Edition* had ever done at just over 11,000 square feet. This was also the first home that was done for a non-profit organization rather than a family, The recipient was, Boys Hope Girls Hope of Baltimore. Boys Hope Girls Hope helps academically capable and motivated children-in-need meet their full potential and become men and women for others by providing value centered, family-like homes, opportunities and education through college. Many of the children come from home environments marked by drug abuse, poverty or neglect, while others come from caring families unable to meet the child's needs. Boys Hope Girls Hope works to positively impact the community through participation in community service days each month, as well as asking scholars to become involved with a non-profit of their choice. Typically, each scholar completes about 100 hours of community service annually, spending time helping such entities as the Maryland Food Bank, Johns Hopkins' Children's House, Food for Thought, Student Sharing Coalition and East Rosemont Neighborhood Association....."I was there volunteering labor during the week finishing drywall and doing some carpentry work as well. The project was delayed two days by rain and rework of several areas due to water damage from the passing storms. I was even offered the chance to be on the bus during the unveiling or as the show refers 'Move that bus' segment. I even got the chance to meet a few of the build team while at the site. The unveiling was even delayed 4 hours on Sunday and did not occur until about 7:30 (it was scheduled for 3PM). The efforts of everyone were greatly appreciated and the girls will move into the

10 bedroom home in the next couple of weeks. The home is located near the intersection of Northern Parkway and Belair Road."

Edgar Johansson '81 continues to work hard on his campaign as a candidate for the Colorado State House District 23. He has been busy walking the district. So far he has personally knocked on 3,000 doors and walked over 60 miles (someone gave him a pedometer!) His team is working hard every day and while Edgar's feet are tired his motivation to win in November keeps him going. He invites everyone in the BL family to visit his website and let him know what you think -www.johanssonforhd23.com.

Alex Previdi '90 is living in New Jersey and is working in the Commercial real estate profession as a vice president for Cassidy Turley in Teaneck, NJ.

Tripp Onnen '01 and his brother **Dietz Onnen '06** recently started a website and they are trying to get it off the ground. The domain name is www.godietzy.com. GoDietzy is an easy to use website where anyone can create their own domain name. Take a look and let Tripp and Dietz know what you think!

Stuart Mitchell '06 was accepted to the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine a week ago and has decided to attend Hopkins instead of the Jefferson Medical School as previously reported.

BL is Best

The August 2010 *Baltimore Magazine* includes its "Best Of" edition. For the "Restaurants Destined to Ignite Romance" the Antrim 1844 in Taneytown was one of the winners. Antrim 1844 is run by **Dort** and **Richard Mollet '69**. For more information about dinner or for an overnight stay at Antrim 1844 go to www.antrim1844.com or call 410-756-6812.

Under the category "Home Goods - the Place to Score for Your Home" the Antique Exchange at 3545 Chestnut Avenue in Hampden was one of the winners. The Antique Exchange is run by **Tom Finnerty '82**. For more information about the Antique Exchange go to www.antique-exchange.com or call 410-532-7000.

75 Years Ago

According to the 1935-1936 Boys' Latin School Catalog there were 18 graduates in the Boys' Latin Class of 1935. Seven of the Latinists from this class continued their education at Johns Hopkins University here in Baltimore (**Wethered Barroll '35**, **Hugh Brent '35**, **Howard Gillelan '35**, **Murray Kempton '35**, **Charles McLane '35**, **Harry Primrose '35**, and **Emmet Reid '35**); two went to Trinity College (**Crombie Garrett '35** and **Bill Vickers '35**); two went to St. John's College in Annapolis (**William Hopps '35** and **Henry Stringer '35**); one to the University of Maryland (**John Koontz '35**); one to the University of Georgia (**Jack Loizeaux '35**); one to Loyola College (**Lindsay Spencer '35**); one to the University of Wisconsin (**Raymond Staley '35**); one to Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute (**John Stebbins '35**); and one to Duke University (**Robert Ward '35**.)

60 Years Ago

The Inkwell reported that **Larry Donoho '50** was granted a full scholarship to attend Williams College in Massachusetts. Larry entered BL in the first grade in 1938 and was fantastic student. He was ranked second in his class of twenty. He was also a fine athlete earning 5 varsity letters and was the leading goal scorer (tied with **Walt Calwell '49**) on the 1949 varsity lacrosse team. Larry's brother **Tom Donoho '48**, was also a 12 year Latinist.

*“.....What impresses most about the boys who went to the (Boys’) Latin School in my time, as I look back on them, is their spirit of personal independence and individuality. They had characters of their own. There was no striving for a school pattern of personality, no effort to sink to a level of conformity, and above all no hero worship with its surrender of personality to the will and tastes of others.....Each youngster was himself.....The Boys’ Latin School has had a long history. It is now crossing the centennial mark, a span of life which is most unusual for a preparatory school in this country of rapid changes and few traditions. It owes its longevity not to buildings or athletic prowess or to sentiment, but undoubtedly to the soundness of its methods, the intelligence of its purposes and the sincerity and integrity of those who have been connected with it, whether as masters or scholars. There will always be a need for these things in the future as in the past. The life of the school will be prolonged while it continues to supply them. May we all hope that will be for a very long time indeed. For another hundred years at least.” Commencement comments June 1944 by **John S. Dickinson, BL Class of 1909***



BELIEVE