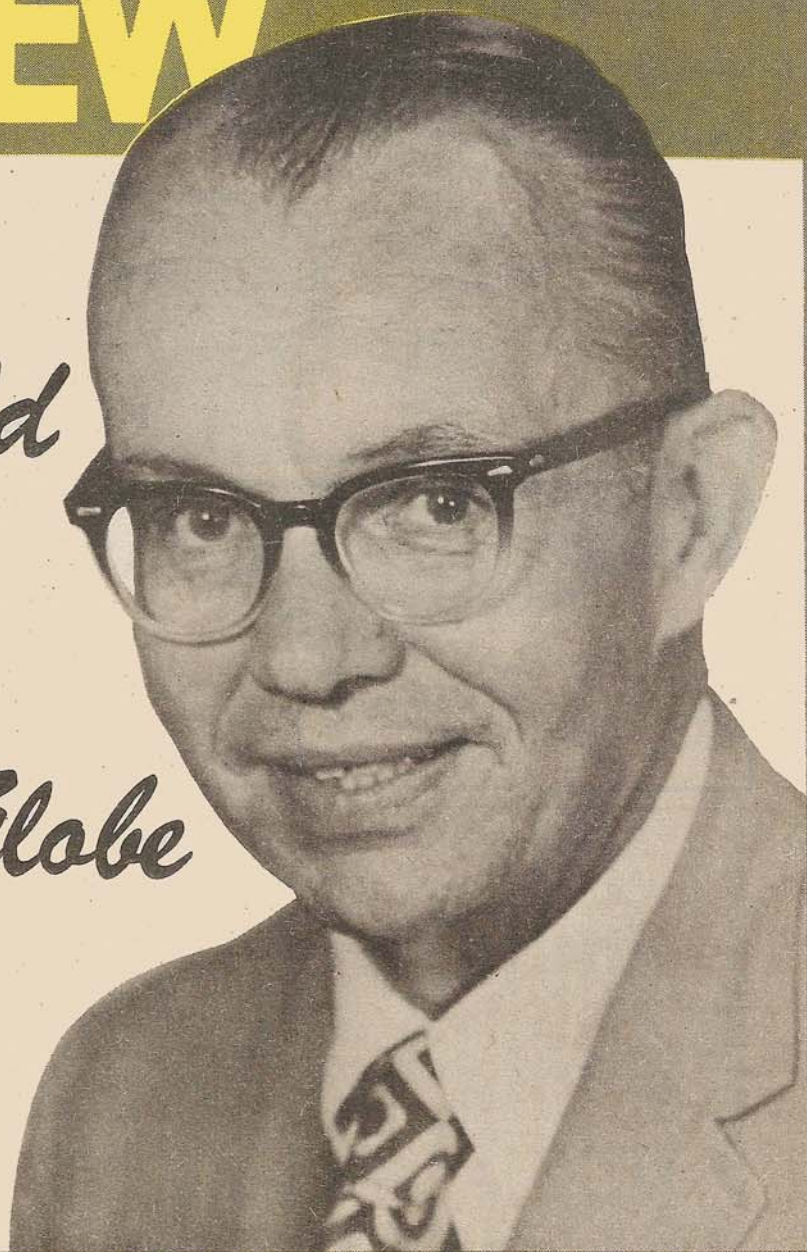


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*Seeing
the world
through
the eyes
of the Globe*



Globe editorial page: the midwest's most provocative conservative voice



Martin L. Duggan, editorial page editor

By Roland Klose

Every weekday at about 11 a.m., four men with well over 140 years in journalism between them meet to bandy about the vexing issues of the day. By the time they are finished, they will have excoriated a liberal politician, sent a civic leader a nosegay, or released another fusillade at the Russian menace.

This coterie of writers and committed conservatives provides the voice for one of the nation's most conservative newspapers and now St. Louis' leading daily, the *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*.

By the standards of the rival, *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, the *Globe's* editorial page staff is economical: one editor, three writers and one cartoonist, compared to the *Post's* one editor, six writers, and one cartoonist. Yet, the *Globe's* smaller staff manages to

churn out as much grist for public consumption. And in the opinion of some partisan readers, the *Globe* does so in a more effective manner.

"Our editorial page is written in clear, simple, direct language. We don't leave people wondering 'What did they really say?' It's not a substitute of Sominex. It's intended to get your attention," says Martin L. Duggan, who for nearly ten years has edited the *Globe* editorial page. He answers only to publisher George Duncan Bauman, who appointed Duggan after the death of Hamilton Thornton.

A veteran team

Duggan, 62, began his tenure as editorial page editor in July 1973. His first "official" editorial was a nuclear power endorsement which blasted "Walden Pond pastoralists"

responsible for slowing the pace of atomic plant construction. Duggan has been a *Globe* man for 44 years, beginning as a summer employee in 1939 while still attending St. Mary's University in San Antonio, Texas. Duggan joined the paper fulltime in 1941 as a copy editor.

After a stint in the Marine Corps during the war, Duggan returned to the *Globe* to begin a meteoric rise through the ranks. Before he was 30, he was chief of the copy desk, and in 1953, he was promoted to news editor. From 1966 until he was named editorial page editor, he served as associate managing editor.

Duggan inherited two writers from Hamilton Thornton's editorial page staff: Oliver "Buck" Starr, who has been a *Globe* editorial writer since 1964, and Phil Sunkel, who has been on the editorial page staff since

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1968. Duggan added Edward Kosmal to the staff when Richard Amberg, Jr., son of the late publisher, opted to join the news staff instead.

Kosmal was graduated from the University of Missouri Journalism School, and started his career with the Chicago *Sun-Times* in 1949. He joined the *St. Louis Star-Times* a year later, moved to the *Post* when the *Star* was bought out, and finally came to the *Globe* in 1960 to work on the copy desk.

Starr, who writes a weekly column in addition to his regular duties, attended the University of Michigan, served in the war, and worked for Gary, Indiana *Post-Tribune* as a reporter, feature writer, and columnist for 17 years before joining the *Globe*.

Sunkel worked at a variety of small papers, including the Carbondale *Southern Illinoisan* and Rockford, Illinois *Register-Republic*, after graduation from the University of Illinois in 1952. He joined the *Globe* in 1959, and four years later, became suburban editor.

Each man claims areas of expertise. For Starr, matters concerning foreign policy, national defense, and the military are his specialty. Sunkel writes about the Middle East, Missouri and Illinois state government, and NATO. Kosmal, in light of his years of local news experience, is most likely to write about local matters, such as St. Louis County and City. And while each has an area in which they believe they are especially conversant, they all argue that they are also generalists.

The editorial process

In addition to their editorial-writing duties, the three writers split up regular day to day duties. Kosmal is responsible for choosing and editing the 50 or so letters that come in each day to the "Mailbag" section. Sunkel is responsible for make-up (design of the editorial page) and for choosing editorial col-

umnists. Starr prepares the "Through the Years" and the "Live a little more" features which are editorial page standards.

Each day, each writer and Duggan proffer ideas. Usually, each writer will be expected to generate at least two editorials, sometimes more depending on whether a staff member is vacationing or not. Most ideas are not rejected by Duggan—not because he's a push-over, but rather because his staff is ideologically in tandem. Sunkel, who is number two man on the staff and serves as editor in Duggan's absence, estimates the staff's "batting average" with editorial ideas is in the 80 to 90 percent range.

"There might be some days when an idea will be rejected because of some development we didn't happen to be privy to—something going on, some behind-the-scenes negotiations," says Sunkel. Sometimes Duggan suggests a topic or passes along a directive from Bauman. The writers are not obliged to write on a subject, but as Starr points out, "generally speaking our views are in line with what's proposed."

As is the case at virtually every metropolitan daily, editorial positions are not taken by vote or consensus. The editorial page editor makes the decisions and he does so representing the publisher. Duggan points out that Bauman sees each day's editorials and exercises his prerogative to change them.

Duggan and Bauman have known each other for many years. "We were sidekicks in the newsroom many years ago when he was night-city editor and I was chief of the copy desk. We worked very closely together then. Our relationship is one that you'd have to have enjoyed to appreciate it fully. Philosophically, we're on the same wavelength," says Duggan.

Duggan and Bauman have been longtime members of a number of organizations, including Backstoppers, a group which assists

families of police officers killed in the line of duty, Dismas House, a halfway house for convicts, and the Mathews-Dickey Boys Club.

While Bauman's editorial contributions are much more limited than former publisher Richard Amberg's, observers see his ideological and political thumbprints all over the page. Joseph Pulitzer's famous dictum, "a newspaper has no friends," not only has no meaning at the *Globe*, but it runs contrary to the formula that has preserved the paper's toehold in the community. The *Globe*—and publisher Bauman—has its friends and they are well-known.

Conservatism runs deep

The *Globe's* conservatism runs deep. Aside from regularly endorsing Republican presidential nominees with the exception of 1964, the *Globe* has articulated the conservative agenda of the 1980s. For example, the *Globe* is opposed to legalized abortion, the nuclear freeze, and busing as a means to integrating schools. The paper supports the MX missile, the B-1 bomber program, advocates nuclear power and the controversial Clinch River Breeder reactor, supports James Watt's effort to allow oil exploration on federal lands, endorses U.S. involvement in El Salvador, supports tuition tax credits for private schools, and calls for unleashing the CIA.

Locally, the *Globe* is a strong advocate for area businesses, promoters, and developers. Within the last three years, the *Globe* has championed the Pride of St. Louis Gateway Mall plan, the Veiled Prophet fair, and is credited by business leaders for speeding up construction of the Vandeventer Overpass. The *Globe* is encouraging the speedy completion of the Innerbelt and the construction of a new jail in St. Louis County.

The *Globe* is able to combine its pro-fence and pro-local business message thanks to McDonnell-Douglas—the area's number one employer. Editorials have noted every hurdle the F/A-18 Hornet fighter plane has crossed. The F/A-18, which has been plagued by record-setting cost overruns and an inability to meet its original performance specifications, has been praised by the *Globe* as "a valuable weapon to help safeguard America's future" and "an important economic benefit for the community."

The *Globe* has come out swinging for other McDonnell projects, including the F-15 Eagle fighter plane and the C-17 cargo plane.

Though the *Globe* is fair to heap McDonnell's planes with praise, it does not surrender its traditional journalistic independence. How else to explain a stinging rebuke directed toward Raymond Deffry, a publicist for McDonnell? The *Globe* opined last September, "A \$40 billion naval aircraft program is very much the public's business and is not to be swept out of sight as Raymond Deffry... seems to prefer."

One factor that influences *Globe* editorial policy is the deep-rooted Catholicism of Bauman, Duggan, and managing editor George Killenberg. As Duggan puts it, "I have the advantage of being Catholic." Duggan and his wife Mae are active in a variety of Catholic charitable organizations. Duggan is a Knight Commander of the Holy Sepulchre by appointment of the late Pope Paul VI. Bauman is likewise active in the Catholic community, as a Master Knight of Malta, also by appointment of Pope Paul.

Thus, it isn't unusual that the *Globe* takes a rather hardline stance on abortion. Duggan calls it the "slimiest of crimes." When Archbishop John May called on St. Louis Catholics to boycott the play "Sister Ignatia," the *Globe* held stir public passions with a swift endorsement of the bishop's message.

It was a different story, however, when the archbishop embraced a pacifistic pastoral letter that rejected the use of nuclear weapons.

For strong defense

The *Globe* has long editorialized for a strong nuclear deterrent. The growth of the nuclear "freeze" movement has provided a sharp example of the *Globe's* headline stance. After President Ronald Reagan's charge in early October that the Soviet Union was involved in encouraging and supporting the freeze leadership, and in the wake of similar charges made by *Reader's Digest*, by Sen. Jeremiah Denton (R. Ala.), and by other pro-fence groups, the *Globe* directed a barrage of criticism towards the "freezeniks."

The *Globe* claimed in October of last year that "from the beginning the freeze movement has taken the Moscow line... United States counter-intelligence identified more than 20 Soviet agents trying to influence elements of the U.S. peace movement." A month later, the *Globe* questioned freeze leaders who complained that they had been smeared by Reagan. "Who's smearing whom?" asked the *Globe*. "The most convenient ploy for someone doing a smear job is to complain of being smeared. [Freeze spokesmen's] rhetoric is tell-tale. They are first class smear artists." A week later: "The Russians... have been steering segments of the anti-nuclear movement in the U.S. from the start."

The *Globe's* columnists have echoed the same charge. Retired Maj. Gen. Henry Mohr, a weekly contributor and hardliner, linked the freeze to a "better-red-than-dead attitude." Phyllis Schlafly, a frequent contributor, says the "freeze is based on the threat of inevitability and the psychology of fear."

The *Globe's* position on the nuclear freeze is consistent with its position on national security. After all, the paper had used the expression "peace through strength" long before Ronald Reagan held political office. But tackling the merits of a bilateral freeze by calling into question the political loyalties of freeze supporters proved too much for local freeze supporters. William Ramsey, head of St. Louis Committee for a Nuclear Weapons Freeze, and representatives of the local freeze movement requested and got a meeting with Duggan to discuss his editorial attacks.

"The problem we really had with them," says Ramsey, "is when they joined into the 'red-baiting'... They've really hit us hard with the accusations about Soviet involvement." Ramsey argues the freeze movement is an indigenous popular movement and by bringing along a variety of supporters, he sought to convince Duggan of the same. He believes that he succeeded.

"Duggan promised not to 'red-bait' us anymore—in at least his own editorials. Although he's continued with a very harsh critique of the freeze proposal, he's toned down the 'red-baiting' as far as we can determine from our monitoring," says Ramsey.

Starr, who with Duggan wrote the anti-freeze editorials, argues that the *Globe* really never did "red-bait" freeze supporters. "We don't suggest that the nuclear freeze people are controlled by the Soviets... We realize there are a great many people who are well-intended, but we think their support of the nuclear freeze is not motivated by anything in particular except their beliefs," Starr says, adding, "We disagree with them and we think they are actually hurting the defense posture of the country."

If only a convinced cadre of conservatives bothered reading the *Globe*, freeze supporters may have ignored the paper entirely. But the *Globe* makes waves in St. Louis. "We feel a lot of people read the paper. A lot of people that read the *Globe* are the people we need to reach," Ramsey says.

A matter of clout

The clout a newspaper wields in a community can be measured by the number of readers it keeps and, to a lesser degree, the number of issues it wins.

A sign of the *Globe's* relative strength in some areas of the community is its success with election endorsements. The *Globe* has recently fared better with General Assembly candidates than its competitor, better in St. Louis County, and has been with the winner in the key John Danforth-Harriet Woods senate battle.

Duggan is quick to take credit for Danforth's victory. "Sen. Danforth was kind enough to feel that the *Globe-Democrat's* support might have made the difference. If you go back a little, both Stuart Symington and Danforth felt that our support for Symington when Danforth ran the first time (for Senate) was the difference in that election. Symington won by only 30,000 votes. Danforth won this time by 27,000 votes."

Nobody ever has asked not to receive a *Globe* endorsement, Duggan says. "Our endorsement is widely sought even by people we tend to disagree with."

One area of the city in which the *Globe's* endorsements probably don't count for much is the northside. The *Globe's* rapport with

The Globe view of the 'freeze'



Cartoonist Don Hesse has been drawing a different picture than others with the *Globe-Democrat's* editorial crew. While "freeze" proponents are shown chained to former Soviet strongman Leonid Brezhnev, Oliver Starr suggests that the "Soviet control angle" may be just a little overplayed. Starr, who wrote many of the *Globe's* anti-freeze editorials, says of "freezeniks," "We think their support of the nuclear freeze is not motivated by anything in particular except their beliefs." Needless to say, the *Globe* editorial staff does not share those beliefs.

Admitted newspapers

black politicians—with the possible exception of J.B. "Jet" Banks—is poor. The paper made no endorsements in the six north-side house races in the August primary. It saved most of its energy attempting to dislodge Rep. William Clay (D-1) by promoting the candidacy of Allan G. Mueller. Under-scoring how unimportant the paper was, Clay not only defeated Mueller in his new district, but swamped him. Soon afterwards, the paper initiated an investigation of alleged voter fraud.

Duggan notes, "one of the things I'm proudest of is that we maintain a respectful, even friendly relationship with politicians whom we happen not to agree with." Duggan describes Bill Clay as "a notable exception."

"But even if he wanted to come in and see me, he'd certainly be most welcome," Duggan quickly adds.

One black politician won a surprising nod from the *Globe* last year. The generally unanticipated endorsement of Freeman Bosley Jr., son of outspoken Alderman Freeman Bosley, probably helped Bosley defeat two seasoned St. Louis politicians, incumbent circuit court clerk Joe Roddy and white challenger, former city attorney Tom Connolly.

Political endorsements

That endorsement, like all others, was made by the publisher in consultation with some of his editorial writers and other key editors. In addition to Duggan and Sunkel, regular reporters participate. Political editor Jack Flach and either Jefferson City bureau chief Tim Flach (the son of the political editor) or Illinois bureau chief Jim Broadway interview and discuss the *Globe's* endorsements with Bauman. The other two editorial writers are not involved in candidate endorsements. "Those conferences occupy a lot of time—somebody's got to keep the store going," Starr says.

The conferences tend to be advisory. "It's not an entirely democratic process. Let's face it, in the end, any publisher has the determining vote," Sunkel says. Of course, there are times when Bauman can be swayed, Sunkel notes. "We have convinced him not to endorse the particular candidate he was inclined to support if we can offer solid reasons."

One of the paradoxes of the *Globe* is that

while it leans Republican in statewide and national elections, locally it is adept at playing Democratic factional politics. The elder Flach and Bauman are both close to Democratic power-broker Floyd Warmann, owner of the Missouri Terminal Oil Co. Bauman reportedly called on Warmann to get a House investigation rolling of the St. Louis city police board after the commissioners failed to select any on the civic leadership's favorite candidates for chief, let alone Bauman's favorite. In turn, Warmann benefited a few months later when the *Globe* fired off a salvo at the police board after the Republican-appointed commissioners ended an expensive gasoline contract with Warmann's firm.

In the police board imbroglio over the new chief, Bauman was supporting a friend, Lt. Col. William E. Brown. In other matters involving politicians and "smoke-filled rooms," the *Globe* editorial page is an effective voice for the civic leadership. Sometimes the results are ironic.

Critics might accuse the *Globe* of ideological rigidity on social issues and public policy, but when it comes to playing hardball, the paper shows all the agility and cunning of an Ozzie Smith.

Love it or hate it

If the *Globe* editorial page is agile, it has also been called "vicious." That may be one reason readers are attracted to the paper. You are compelled either to love it or hate it.

The *Globe* is known for sharp rhetoric. In its attack on police board commissioners, the *Globe* called them "puppets" and said they were "bungling and inept." Before the November elections, the *Globe* contrasted Harriett Woods unfavorably with Soviet President Leonid Brezhnev. "Not even Brezhnev has suggested that the United States abandon its total capability to protect itself, which is what would happen if Mrs. Woods had her wildly irresponsible way on slashing the defense budget." A jab at AFL-CIO president Lane Kirkland was penned by Duggan himself. "Kirkland has lost a lot of credibility in recent years due to his penchant for letting his mouth run while his mind is turned off."

Perhaps a recent "classic" *Globe* editorial was a commentary by Duggan on the drug overdose death of comedian John Belushi entitled "Death of a Slob."

Is this style of going for the jugular necessary or justifiable? Duggan says, "I would be the first to regret sincerely if we had ever unfairly criticized anybody. But people in public life are big boys and girls. . . I've never seen in our newspaper—or in any other newspaper regardless of its political persuasion—any attack that was more severe than the politician himself or herself was willing to make and indeed had made. . . Harriett Woods said things about Danforth that were equally harsh as anything we said about her."

The *Globe's* vitriolic barbs at opponents mirror a desire to be direct and focussed on issues as contrasted with the *Post's* expansive, reasoned approach. A typical example is the rebuke of St. Louis County Council Republicans who had sought to exclude reporters from their caucus luncheons. The *Post's* lead to its Jan. 23 editorial was cautious and slow. "In barring reporters from their weekly luncheon meetings at the St. Louis Club, the four Republican members of the St. Louis County Council apparently want to have things both ways," wrote the *Post*. Of newly elected Ellen Conant, the *Post* opined, "We are disappointed to note that . . . Conant objects to the presence of reporters taking notes at the luncheon table."

The *Globe* was more direct in its approach. "St. Louis County Council Republicans are acting high and mighty these days, now that they're back in the majority," Ellen Conant, for her part, could "act as cute" as she like, but would become "eminently forgettable while doing so," warned the *Globe*.

The *Globe* under Duggan is more aggressive than the *Post* and, insiders say, even more than under his predecessor Hamilton

Thornton. As Sunkel says, "I think the paper under Martin takes a more direct approach."

Simplifying the world

One reason the *Globe* may have a more direct approach to it is that "it probably oversimplifies the world," says Prof. Paul Fisher, director of the Freedom of Information Center at the University of Missouri School of Journalism. "Some people would say that's pretty good: state it strongly state it simply, state it without any equivocation and you'll appeal to many readers that way." Fisher thinks it might be working for the *Globe*. "If you consider how circulation is going, the *Globe-Democrat* has been doing something right in St. Louis." He hastens to point out that circulation is not a barometer of quality. If it were, "that would have made the *New York Daily News* superior to the *New York Times* for a number of years."

Apparently, professors who teach editorial writing skills at Missouri's journalism school are not avid readers of the *Globe*. Fisher stopped his subscription to the *Globe* after the 1978 strike. Likewise, Prof. George Kennedy, chairman of the news-editorial department at the journalism school, reads the *Globe* "only sporadically." But Kennedy takes issue with some of the governing assumptions that seem to prevail in St. Louis daily journalism.

For instance, the *Globe* regularly runs about ten syndicated columnists who are all outspoken conservatives. They include M. Stanton Evans, former editorial page editor of the *Indianapolis News*, Phyllis Schlafly, who took much of the credit for stopping the ERA, William Buckley, publisher of the *National Review*, and Patrick Buchanan, former

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er *Globe* editorial writer and former press secretary for Richard Nixon.

Why doesn't the *Globe* run columnists that provide readers a diversity of political views? "We don't see that there's anything to be gained by paying columnists to express views that are generally inconsistent with our own," Duggan asserts. "It'd be out of character to be printing that we're trying to give some of the message that we're trying to give our readers." On that score, Duggan even influences the *Post*. William Woo, *Post* editorial page editor, argues that the *Globe* lessens "our obligation to print conservative columns."

Kennedy thinks that both editors are making a mistake by assuming a competing newspaper substitutes for balance and fairness on an editorial page. "Number one, I think that you assume a two newspaper readership," Kennedy argues. "The fact is steadily and significantly fewer people actually do read two papers. And in St. Louis, if they do, one of them is probably one of the suburban papers than both of the metros."

"The editors of both of the St. Louis papers . . . ignore the 'forum of ideas' function that historically and theoretically has

been one of the more important functions of a daily newspaper: that is, to expose people to a pretty wide range of notions as to what the truth is. If in your publication, you have it as a policy to stifle a big part of the range of possible truths, it would seem to me that you're failing in your public education, your 'forum' function," says Kennedy.

An example of a two-newspaper town in which both dailies deliberately feature an assortment of columns is Miami, Kennedy says. The *New York Times* and the *New York Daily News* also make a concerted effort to present a wide range of opinion, he says.

Prof. Ernest Morgan teaches editorial writing at Mizou. He argues that "most people give maybe 35 minutes a day to the whole newspaper." Most, he says, don't even bother with the editorial page. And yet the editorial page is critical to a newspaper in shaping its identity to the reader, Morgan points out. That's why despite the similar quality in news reporting by St. Louis' two dailies, readers identify the *Post* as a liberal paper and the *Globe* as a conservative paper.

Mixed Reviews

The *Globe* remains, in a sense, one of the last doctrinaire, or ideologically committed

conservative newspapers in the nation. And that's precisely why St. Louisans, with some exceptions have strong reactions to the newspaper's editorial voice.

One fan of the *Globe* is conservative businessman John O. Shields, who made headlines in the past for organizing protests of radical speakers at St. Louis University and recently has spearheaded an effort to organize local opposition to the nuclear freeze. "The *Globe* editorial policy is great. It's much more stimulating and creative than the *Post*," Shields says. "The *Globe* reflects my viewpoints. They reflect the viewpoint of the U.S. government. The government's policy is for a strong defense."

Businessman George Capps prefers the *Globe* to the *Post*. "I think the *Globe* reflects the opinions of the city of St. Louis better than the *Post*. The *Post* is more national like the *New York Times*—except it's not as big nor as good," Capps says. "I'm conservative. I'm getting more conservative all the time. I go along with the *Globe* 100 percent on defense."

On the other hand, the *Globe* has its many detractors. Sylvia Hampton, public affairs director for Reproductive Health Services, a local abortion clinic, says, "I have to admit the only time I will read the *Globe* is when I don't have to pay for it. Their editorial stand on many issues is abhorrent to me," she says. Of course, it doesn't help that the *Globe* is strongly opposed to abortion.

Many have mixed opinions of the *Globe*. Former Republican Congressman Tom Curtis describes himself as a maverick conservative. The *Globe* reflects his opinions on "political and economic philosophy, while the *Post* is much more akin on civil rights." Curtis faults the *Globe* on freedom of information issues. "They're frequently apt to back the military, the CIA and others who call for the need for secrecy."

Tom Ryan, co-director of the Missouri Public Interest Research Group, a local consumer organization, also gives the *Globe* a mixed review. "The *Globe* has shied away from taking a stand on a lot of consumer issues. They usually come down on the side of big business and free enterprise. On the other hand, they can surprise you. For example, the *Globe* endorsed our proposal for a

national advisory referendum." Ryan, who ran in 1982 as a Democratic candidate for the U.S. Senate and who is somewhat miffed at the *Post* for downplaying his candidacy, chides the *Post* for liberal "elitism." A wide gulf may separate Ryan's politics and the *Globe's* philosophy, but Ryan forgives them their rhetorical rapier. "Overstating your case is part of advocacy. They are very effective advocates of their conservative positions. And they often make some damn good points."

A conservative St. Louis?

"Conservative people are constructive people. For a liberal, the sky's the limit. A conservative wants to see that both the liberal and a conservative get a fair shake for their money," Duggan emphasizes his conservatism is not the same as reaction. "We're self-propelled," he says.

Many reasons explain why one person sees the world through one prism instead of another. A simple clue could be age. The average age of *Globe* editorial writers is at least ten years older than the *Post's* editorial staff. All four men remember the Great Depression and Pearl Harbor.

Each has been with the *Globe* for many years and their previous experiences have been limited to smaller newspapers, in most cases, in smaller towns. All believe St. Louis to be generally conservative in orientation. As Sunkel puts it, "I've always felt St. Louis was a big little town and basically conservative. In the county, more outsiders with more liberal viewpoints have come in into particular areas over the last generation. But the community is pretty much conservative-leaning."

Their perception of their readers is probably right on target. And who are those readers? Prof. Morgan says, "If you want to talk to people who actually read the *Globe* editorial page, you might go down and check with people who are 'downscale folk'—those with less education and with less social status. The *Globe* aims at them if it aims at anybody."

That is the inexplicable paradox and perhaps the success formula of the St. Louis *Globe-Democrat*. It is a voice for the well-to-do which speaks effectively to the man in the street.

