

It was Cedric's spirit

Everyone claimed him as part of them

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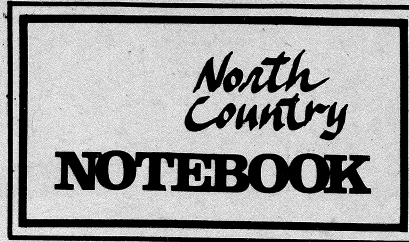
They held a Memorial Service for Cedric Parker the other day out at the cemetery and I honestly feel I have never been part of a stranger gathering.

There were a lot of people from the Capital Times there, of course; people who walk the picket line at the MNI plant and people who cross the picket line.

We all stood around in little enclaves pretending that there was no polarization of beliefs, no lack of communication, no wellspring of compassion.

We looked past each other and through each other and we were guarded and terse when we spoke. We all pretended that this was the most natural thing in the world: A gathering on the lush greensward in the golden light to pay homage to a fallen companion. It was almost medieval, a morality play in modern dress, the story old as mankind, "his kind will not come again," Manfred Swarsensky reminded us gently, yet sternly.

We all knew that to be true.
And now that Cedric Parker



was dead, we all claimed him as one of us.

We, the rival factions in the family torn asunder: The castle under siege, the drawbridge up. The battlements manned and then Death coming for our friend and brother, The Good Knight of Old, who fought well always and now The Burial Truce and we fought over him.

We fought, we factions, silently; psychically; spiritually.

We sought to save ourselves by saving part of him.

We sought to save, not his armor. Not his sword. Not his shield. We sought to save, I think, his soul, his spirit for ourselves.

He fought Sen. Joseph McCarthy when almost no one else would and William T. Evjue backed him and fought McCarthy, too,

and the courage of the Cap Times was legendary in those days.

It demeans Cedric Parker not at all to note that only last summer a Times executive sneered at the Parker reputation, stating pointedly that Evjue was the real hero of the McCarthy era and that Cedric was a phony.

I don't think he ever told Cedric that to his face. I know he never put it in print. I never said anything to Cedric because there wasn't much he missed anyway about people and the things they said they believed in, and the things they really believed in.

Standing next to Irv Kreisman at the gravesite, I had a vision of Cedric at his desk downtown — in the Mao cap. And there was George R. and Sterling; and James Roy; and Mac in the cubbyhole, writing, writing.

I regret that I never fished with Cedric.

I regret that I never worked under him.

Both might have been interesting. He was calling me "Georgie" before I turned 40 and after I turned 50.

The only other person who would have was The Old Man.