



**IAAS Walks of Life 2007**  
**George Condon**

George E. Condon, long time Cleveland journalist and gifted wordsmith, joined The Plain Dealer in 1943, then in 1948 became the paper's first television and radio critic, a position he held for 14 years. He next produced a popular daily column until his retirement in 1985. His love of a good story may have begun at birth in Fall River, Massachusetts, where memories of a shocking axe murder 14 years earlier were still fresh. (George thinks the real culprit may have been Lizzie

Borden's family's hot-tempered Irish maid.)

The 11 books authored by Condon include Cleveland: The Best Kept Secret, Laughter from the Rafters, Stars in the Water: The Story of the Erie Canal, Gaels of Laughter and Tears and a photographic history called Yesterdays Cleveland. His most recent book, West of the Cuyahoga, was published by Kent State University this past November, a few weeks after his 90th birthday.

Condon's father, John J. Condon, was born in Dungarren in County Wexford. His mother, Mary O'Malley, was reared in Blackburn, Lancashire but, George hastens to assure us, was conceived in Mayo. They moved to Cleveland in 1927 to be near Mary's extended family, her aunt Catherine O'Malley. At one point in time, George's mother found work as a maid at the old Hollenden Hotel.

Young George was to learn about the world in the backyards and playgrounds of Cleveland's Irish neighborhoods, which he would immortalize in several books. His writing skills were honed at Bridge Avenue's St. Patrick School, West Tech High School and Ohio State University's School of Journalism.

It was there he met his future bride, Marjorie Philona Smith. They married in 1942 and had seven children: Theresa Ann Condon; Mary Katherine (deceased); John Raymond (deceased); George Jr., now Washington Bureau chief with Copley News Service; Katherine Elizabeth Condon; Mary Philona Brereton and Susan Condon Love, Plain Dealer Homes editor and weekly columnist. George's wife Marjorie, who died in 2001, taught in the Cleveland Public Schools for 20 years.

During his long career with the Plain Dealer, George was honored by the Press Club of Cleveland in four separate categories: public service, headline writing, humor and general excellence. He also has received the Ohioana Award for history, the Cleveland Women's City Club Award for Literature, the Burke Award for Literature and the Society of Professional Journalists' Distinguished Service Award. In 1990 he was inducted into the Press Club's Hall of Fame.

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