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Biography

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Biography

Growing up in Springfield, Tennessee, Bill Sanders showed a talent for drawing at an early age. A star athlete, his cartoons were first published in the Pompano Beach High School (FL.) yearbook. After spending one year at the University of Miami, he enrolled at Western Kentucky State College in 1951. A football walk-on, Sanders played the backup quarterback for two years before setting an NCAA passing efficiency record in 1953.

While attending Western, Sanders acquired the nickname “Whitey,” met his wife Joyce, and earned a degree in English. WKSC Art Professor Ivan Wilson and Joyce’s uncle by marriage, Gene Graham, a columnist with the *Nashville Tennessean*, encouraged his interest in art and cartooning. In 1953-54, Sanders contributed cartoons to the student newspaper, the *College Heights Herald*.

Sanders’ life took a turn after he turned down a tryout with the Cleveland Browns and accepted a commission in the U.S. Army. Initially assigned to a mortar platoon in Korea, Sanders was eventually put in charge of the *Stars & Stripes* unit in Seoul. It was there that a chance encounter with a book on cartoonist Herblock in the Post Library led him to become a professional cartoonist.

After stints at *Pacific Stars and Stripes* in Tokyo, the *Greensboro Daily News*, and the *Kansas City Star*, Sanders spent 24 years at the *Milwaukee Journal* where he typically drew six cartoons a week. Sanders’ cartoons were syndicated nationally and can be found in the collections of museums and libraries across the country.

Over the years, Sanders has maintained his ties to his alma mater, donating hundreds of his cartoons to WKU Library Special Collections and returning often to attend football team reunions and talk with Journalism students about the art of cartooning and the role of journalists in American society. In 1997, he was inducted into WKU’s Hall of Distinguished Alumni. Five years later, the Kentucky Museum featured his work in the exhibit, *Bill “Whitey” Sanders’ Comic Opera*.

Today, Sanders continues to draw and blog his reaction to current events in his blog, *Sanders Cartoon/ Commentary*.