

***What the Blind Man Saw:
James Perley Storer (1926-2012)
Conservationist, Philanthropist, Benefactor***

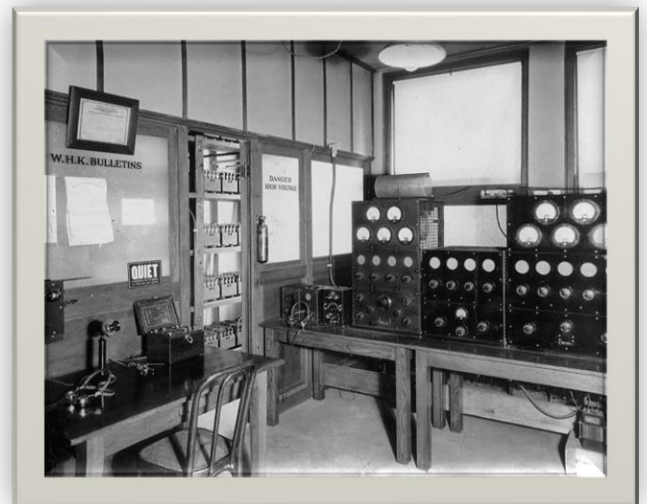
In the early 1930s, 6-year-old Jimmy Storer was playing in a rubbish pile near his Detroit home. A tear-gas gun he'd found accidentally went off, blinding him almost completely. Though he and his three brothers were born to an affluent family, little could be done to help, and Jimmy's scant remaining sight would vanish over time.

The **Storer family** came from Portland, Maine, to be early Ohio settlers, arriving in the Cleveland-Akron areas in 1818. Bright, hard-working, and prosperous, the Storers established an array of businesses.

Young Jimmy, a sixth generation Storer, was born in Shaker Heights in 1926. His father,



George B. Storer Jr. inherited a steel-tube business in Toledo and sold it in Cleveland. During negotiations, George's wife Mary gave birth to their second son James. George and his brother-in-law John Anderson created the **Fort Industry Oil**



Company in Toledo shortly thereafter. They invested in gas stations and a radio station to publicize them. To George's surprise, radio seemed to pay better than gasoline sales.

He recognized the power of broadcasting and



wireless communications as they pertained to sales and marketing for companies of all sorts. The brand new **Storer Communications** incorporated in 1927, with the company's eventual reach covering markets in several states, including major cities like Cleveland, Atlanta, and Philadelphia. Over time, their business continued to evolve as technology advanced, and the



Storer Broadcasting Co. went on to own a large chain of radio and, eventually, television outlets.

Jimmy Storer's disability might have tempted his parents to shelter him, but instead they nurtured his confidence. They encouraged him to swim, play golf, water-ski, bowl, play piano and ride bicycles on country roads just like his three brothers. (He didn't know it for years, but his mother Mary trailed his bike in her car, just in case he needed her.)



FORM APPROVED
Budget Bureau No. 33-E012-42

REGISTRATION CARD (Men born on or after July 1, 1924, and on or before December 31, 1924)
(Also for the registration of men as they reach the 18th anniversary of the date of their birth on or after January 1, 1943.)

SERIAL NUMBER 1. NAME (Print) ORDER NUMBER
W-319 JAMES PERLEY STORER 12,501

2. PLACE OF RESIDENCE (Print)
West Long Lake Road, Blenheim Hills, Mich.
(Number and street) (Town, township, village, or city) (County) (State)

3. MAILING ADDRESS

4. TELEPHONE 5. AGE IN YEARS 6. PLACE OF BIRTH
Blom 1796 18 Cleveland
DATE OF BIRTH
Dec 28 1926 Ohio
(Month) (Day) (Year) (State or country)

7. NAME AND ADDRESS OF PERSON WHO WILL ALWAYS KNOW YOUR ADDRESS
Mrs. Wayne Woodruff, 506 New Center
8. EMPLOYER'S NAME AND ADDRESS
Student
9. PLACE OF EMPLOYMENT OR BUSINESS

I AFFIRM THAT I HAVE VERIFIED ABOVE ANSWERS AND THAT THEY ARE TRUE

DSS Form 1 (Rev. 11-16-42) e16-21630-4 (OVER) J. P. Storer (Signature)

JAMES P. STORER

Jim has been living in Hanna Hall, as a guest of Middle and North divisions. In spite of his piano playing at indiscriminate hours, he was never unwelcome. Sparkling chatter, sparkling music, and the same type refreshment were doled out to all who were interested. Who wouldn't be? Between Dance Week-ends, he majored in History.

By the time Jim Storer was 18, World War II was raging across Europe



PAUL L. NEWMAN

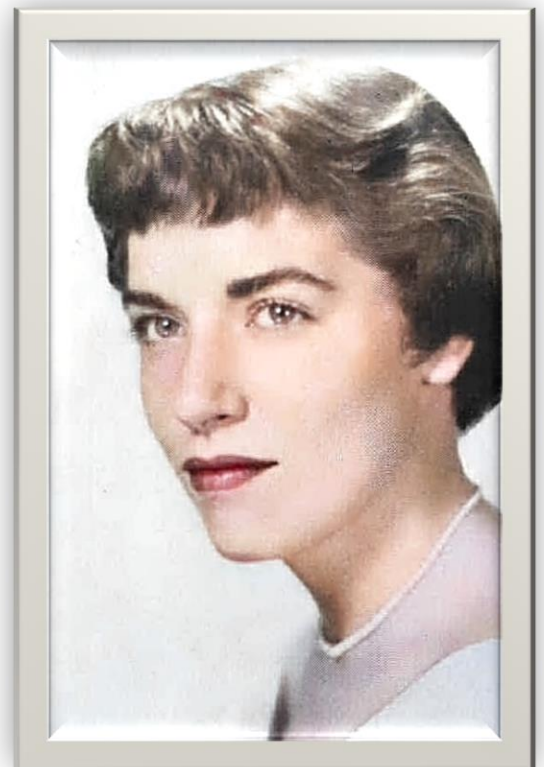
Perennial T-Barracks master of ceremonies, itinerant laundryman, antagonist of roommates and proctors alike, author of musical review, leading actor in dramatic productions, host to innumerable parties and never one to miss the opportunity for a fast buck are just a few of Paul's endearing charms. Prone to getting out of hand on long and trying evenings.





and the Pacific. Though he registered for the draft, he was, of course, ineligible to serve. Despite the challenges of blindness, he planned for a college career as did all the men in his family. He spent a year at Swarthmore College in Pennsylvania before transferring to small, private **Kenyon College** in Gambier, Ohio. The liberal arts institution for men was the alma mater of **President Rutherford B. Hayes** and sits on 1000 acres in quiet Knox County. There Jim felt at home, joining the **Delta Phi Fraternity** and the Middle Kenyon Association. As a member of the Class of 1949, he graduated with one of the college's most famous alumni, **Paul Newman**. During their senior year, Kenyon suffered a horrifying loss when the oldest original building on campus caught fire. Nine of their classmates perished in the blaze. Thankfully, it was not Jim's dormitory.

Jim Storer graduated from Kenyon as a history major, was admitted to Harvard Law School, and moved to Cambridge, Massachusetts. He stayed for a year and then joined the family broadcasting business. He focused his career on radio, working in various executive capacities in Miami, Florida; New York City; Philadelphia; and Cleveland, Ohio. He later told The Plain Dealer, "I never planned a radio career. I studied law at Harvard and discovered I would only be a mediocre lawyer.... My father put me into the music library in our Miami station." Jim spent six months converting the library's catalog of 20,000 records to Braille and served as program director for two shows. His personal life expanded too. He married Joan Spaulding of New York City in 1956, but the union was short lived. In 1959, he wedded Vassar art graduate **Ann Tipton**. (Their 26-year marriage lasted until Ann's passing in 1985.)



In 1962, Jim took over Cleveland's floundering **WJW-AM Radio**. Pushing "more music and less chatter," he boosted the station to Cleveland's third or fourth most popular in different ratings. He delivered daily on-air editorials and rose to vice president for radio of Storer Communications.

The addition of television stations led to a robust and profitable company portfolio that reached its height in 1964-65, continuing for another two decades before a 1986 court order broke up their holdings. Storer Communications had under its umbrella an array of Northeast Ohio radio stations: WHN 1050, WJW 850, WJW-FM 104.1 as well as television stations **WJW TV 8** (1954-1986) and WJKW TV.

Jim and Ann Storer resided in Gates Mills, but part two of his life really began with the 1967 purchase of the **W.A. Blair property** flanking both sides of the **Grand River** in **Leroy Township** in **Lake County**. Their second house was built on the 180-acres Jim called

The best way to reach teen-agers is Radio!

● Teen-agers . . . whether you'll admit it or not . . . are an undeniable buying influence. They criticize your clothes, choose your cars, plan your trips and give you tips on almost everything!
Everyone who knows (well—just about everyone) says "the best way to reach kids is radio!" And . . . in the great Cleveland market . . . the best way to reach teen-agers is with WJW's *Teen-Timer Revue*.
Teen-Timer Revue, in its Sunday slot, is a hot spot for any all-family product that needs added promotion in the great Cleveland market.



● Chuck Plotz . . . whose WJW show by teen-agers for teen-agers is a skillful blend of styles, sports, safety hints and hot music . . . is a junior sensation in teenage circles.

● Alert, aggressive, articulate, this group . . . the cast of WJW's *Teen-Timer Revue* . . . packs a powerful wallop with the younger set. And what they do to parents couldn't happen to nicer people!



Bill O'Neil, President



BASIC
ABC Network

WJW

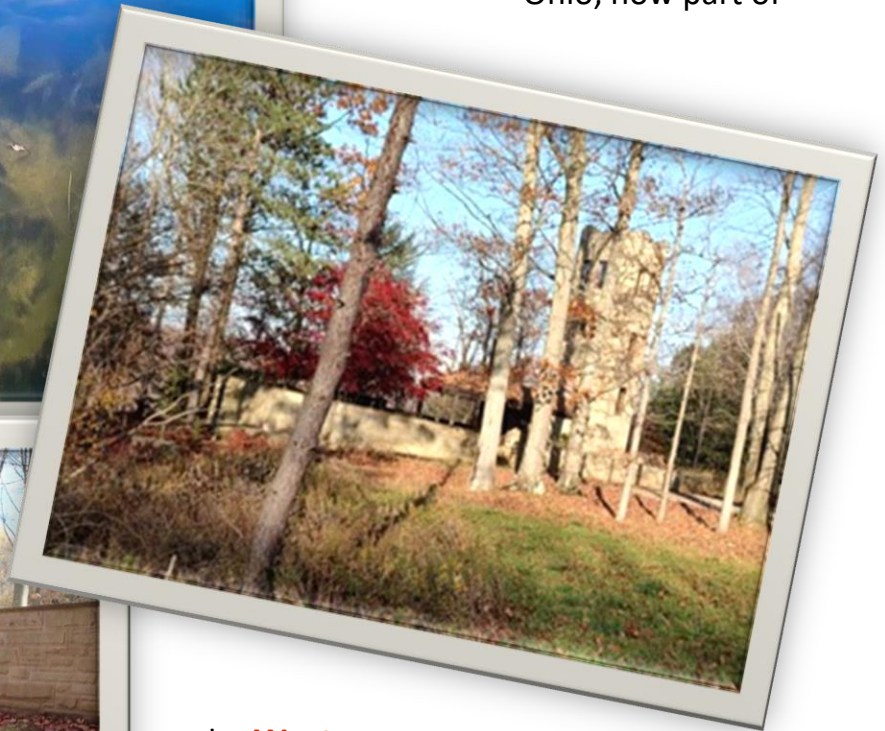
CLEVELAND

850 KC
5000 Watts

REPRESENTED NATIONALLY BY HEADLEY-REED COMPANY



Walden II, after Henry David Thoreau's Walden Pond. By 1973, the summer home and pond pool overlooking the scenic Grand River were completed. A 1980 easement to the **Ohio Chapter of the Nature Conservancy** protected their wooded estate from the lumber industry. Jim wouldn't forget it. Though he claimed he was no "tree hugger," he went on to chair the **Grand River Partners**, an organization dedicated to protecting the land in the Grand River Watershed in northeastern Ohio, now part of



the **Western Reserve Land Conservancy**.

During that same period, Jim Storer founded one of the nation's first assistive digital technology centers in the





country for the visually impaired. Opening in 1984, he funded the **STORER** (Specialized Training Orientation and Rehabilitation utilizing Electronic Resources) **Computer Access Center**, which made pioneering use of adaptive technology. "Jim keenly understood early on the important role technology plays in the blindness community." He helped to create the **Cleveland Clinic's** esteemed **Cole Eye Institute**.



In retirement, Jim's philanthropic activities knew no bounds.

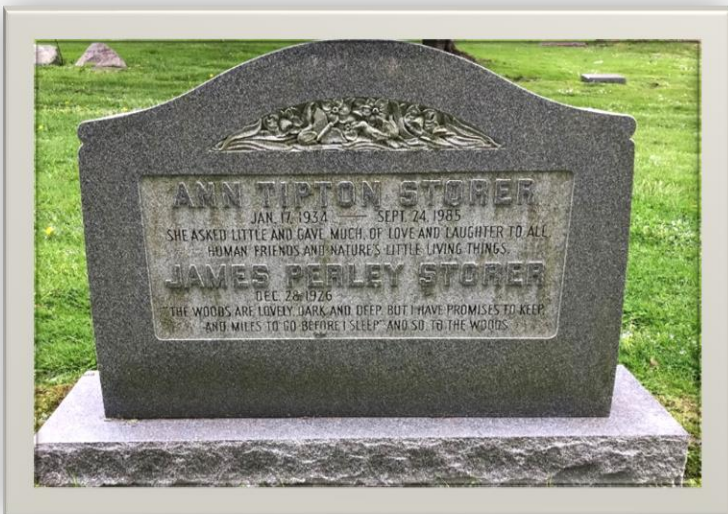


He served as benefactor and trustee of the **Cleveland Clinic, Lakeland Community College, The Holden Arboretum, Blossom Music Center, The American Foundation for the Blind, The Seeing Eye, Inc., Cleveland Museum of**

Natural History, Case Western Reserve University, and many others. As a trustee for the Cleveland Orchestra, he had 20 years of their recordings digitized.



Meanwhile his association with his alma mater **Kenyon College** continued. He became one of its greatest benefactors. In addition to being a trustee, he donated \$1 million to build the college's Bolton Theater. He donated or gifted the Kenyon Festival Theater and campus radio stations. In 1990, he endowed a department chair. Storer Music Hall followed.

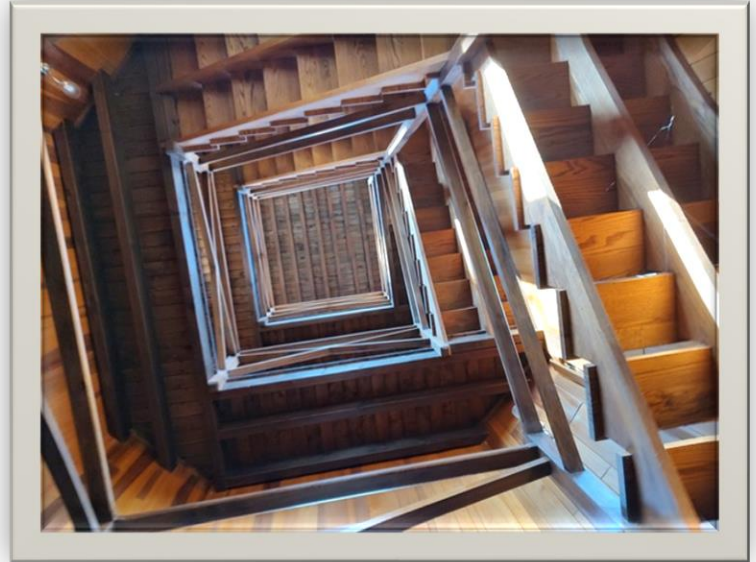


A curious lifeline learner, Jim took several graduate courses over the years, especially in British history. He also traveled widely with his seeing-eye dogs.





When Ann Storer died in 1985, Jim built the clock tower still standing in her honor. In 1986, he opened the Walden II property to qualified non-profit organizations, mostly from Lake County. Cabins for campers and trails down to the Grand River dotted the estate. The bell rang 12 times every quarter hour during the day to assist the



visually impaired who

became frequent guests. Walden II was acquired in 2012 by **Lake Metroparks**, and renamed **Blair Ridge Park**. Much of Storer's plan remains intact, even the cemetery for his

beloved guide dogs. Visitors can see their grave sites and epitaphs.



Two years after Ann's death, Jim married **Dolores D'Angelo**. She carries on much of his philanthropic work. Curious, bold, and generous became three adjectives that followed **James Perley Storer** until his passing in 2012. His was the story of overcoming adversity and living a fully productive life. Lake County is proud to claim him!

Sources: Kenyon College Alumni Archives, 2012 Brown-Foward Obituary, February 2012. Cleveland Sight Center archives. Lake Metroparks archives 2013. With additional research by Virginia Jeschelnic.

Submitted by. Dan Maxson - Local Lore by Max, 2010-2016 - The News-Herald, Community Media Lab; Volunteer Docent, Curator - FHHS / Fairport Harbor Lighthouse & Marine Museum; Volunteer Curator / Docent - Old Stone School, Concord Township.