



# No Ordinary Joe: A Life of Joseph Pulitzer III (Missouri Biography Series)

*Daniel W. Pfaff*

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The widely known Pulitzer name is considered by many to be synonymous with the Pulitzer Prizes and the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*. Joseph Pulitzer III (1913–1993) was editor and publisher of the *Post-Dispatch*, as were his father and grandfather before him. In *No Ordinary Joe*, Daniel W. Pfaff provides an insightful look at the life and career of Joseph Pulitzer III, using correspondence and records that were made available exclusively to the author. Pfaff also includes interviews with more than seventy individuals who knew and/or worked with Pulitzer.

Trained for succession to the Pulitzer media empire by his father, Joseph Pulitzer III strove above all to maintain the paper's liberal/reformist philosophy profitably practiced since 1878 by his predecessors. When other newspapers began blurring the boundary between news and entertainment as a way of keeping and attracting readers and advertisers, Pulitzer resisted letting the *Post-Dispatch* put profit motives ahead of journalistic independence. When Pulitzer died in 1993, he had managed to sustain the *Post-Dispatch*'s distinguished tradition of editorial independence, and he left behind a company that was substantially larger and more competitive than when he took charge thirty-eight years before.

In addition to his work with the *Post-Dispatch*, Pulitzer was the head of the Pulitzer Publishing Company from 1955 to 1993. He also served as chairman of the Pulitzer Prize Board at Columbia University for thirty-one years. The board, which had been established by his grandfather, was responsible for awarding the coveted annual prizes in journalism, letters, and music.

As much as Pulitzer was known for his affiliation with the *Post-Dispatch*, he was also known for his collection of contemporary art, regarded as one of the largest and finest in the world. He was known, too, for the stately way in which he carried himself, for his elegant attire, and for his impeccable taste and manners. This remarkable biography will be of interest to scholars of journalism and media history and American history generally, as well as those interested in the tribulations of family businesses. It will also appeal to cultural historians and general readers, who will be interested in how this bearer of a widely known name handled the power, responsibility, and privilege of the position into which he was born.

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