

# HISTORY MAKER

## VERONICA ESTELLE "BONNIE" ANGELO

**Born:** Jan. 29, 1924, in Winston-Salem

**Died:** Sept. 17, 2017, in Bethesda, Md.

**Known for:** A White House journalist for Time Magazine, Time's first female foreign bureau chief and an industry pioneer who worked to advance women journalists past gender-barriers.

Sen. John Kennedy's 1960 presidential run faced a background murmur of public mistrust of his Catholic faith. In September of that year, 150 prominent Protestant leaders gathered at the storied Mayflower Hotel in Washington to discuss "the religion issue." Reporters from the Washington press corps who arrived to cover the event were turned away.

Bonnie Angelo, Washington correspondent for the New York-based Newsday newspaper and described in her Winston-Salem Journal obituary as having "a spitfire personality," sneaked in a back entrance and hid in the sound booth next to the room where the group met. She described the discussions as "very ugly and bigoted," starkly different from the group's public statements.

Realizing the potential gravity, she called a journalist from the Washington Post to join her, to act as a second witness to the clandestine meetings but securing a guarantee that they wouldn't publish until her paper broke the story.

That scoop helped advance an already remarkable career.

The youngest of four children born to Winston-Salem grocer Ernest Angelo and his wife, Ethel Hudgins, she graduated from RJ Reynolds High School before attending first Salem College and then Women's College (UNC-Greensboro).

She joined the Winston-Salem Sentinel as a writer for the "women's pages" in the mid-1940s. By 1950, she was one of a small but growing number of women covering politics in the nation's capital and would remain fierce trailblazer for women in journalism.

In 1966, she joined Time Magazine and became a regular on political news programs as she covered the fall of Vice President Spiro Agnew and then President Richard Nixon and the transition to the Gerald Ford administration.

In a 2009 interview with the Gerald Ford Foundation, she revealed Ford asked her to be his press secretary. She was honored, she said, especially since she'd have been the first woman to hold that job, but she had



WINSTON-SALEM JOURNAL

Bonnie Angelo, shown at her typewriter at the Winston-Salem Sentinel, wrote for the newspaper's "women's pages" before making a name for herself covering U.S. presidents and other world leaders.

to decline. She had a young son "and that's a 20-hour-day-on-a-good-day job, and I can't do it."

In 1978, she became the London bureau chief for Time, the first woman in the organization to hold that position. There she covered the rise of Margaret Thatcher and the marriage of Prince Charles and Diana.

Called "98 pounds of pepper out of North Carolina" by a Time colleague, she was elected president of the Women's National Press Club, an

organization necessary because women were barred from membership in the National Press Club until 1971.

"In professional terms, it couldn't have been meaner, it couldn't have been pettier," she said in an interview years later.

"It was discrimination at its rawest."

Her decades of journalist excellence and "ferocious work ethic" earned her the prestigious International Women's Media Foundation Lifetime Achievement Award in 1998.