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# In Memoriam: William J. 'Sandy' Colton

## Inaugural winner of the Eddie Adams Award died on Christmas Day.

By Paul Myers, Brooks Institute

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Jim McNay, Sandy Colton, Chip Maury and Irene Colton at the Eddie Adams Workshop in Jeffersonville, NY on October 12, 2008.

*(Sandy Colton, former Associated Press photographer and editor, as well as Stars and Stripes Korean War correspondent and chief photographer of the paper's Pacific edition, died Christmas Day after a long battle with cancer at 83.)*

Photojournalism is a path, a journey through life. You can take the path as far as you choose, as far as you dare, continually learning as you go. Indeed, mastering this path is a lifelong endeavor that few achieve.

Sandy Colton achieved mastery as a photojournalist. He achieved this by working as a photographer, an editor, a champion for the Eddie Adams Workshop, a father of two great photojournalists/editors, a husband, a friend and mentor to many others. Through all this he came to photograph without photographing and to understand the importance of giving back to the community.

As told by James Colton, Sandy's son and Photography Editor at *Sports Illustrated*, during his presentation on *Sports Illustrated's* Olympics coverage with Steve Fine, Photography Director at *Sports Illustrated* at the Eddie Adams Workshop in October 2008: "On Monday of Workshop Week Sandy had a heart attack. On Wednesday we asked him if he was going to stay home because of the heart attack. Heart attack?"

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F#@! that, I am going to the Workshop.” The roars of applause filled the room in his honor. Thankfully, he kept that attitude right up to the end. No excuses. These are the kinds of friends Eddie had, friends like Sandy who attend the workshop, no matter what, to give back to the community. This field has given us so much. Give back.

The workshop is what you make out of it. For the students, for the team leaders and everyone else involved. The workshop is what you make out of it.

Not a bad metaphor for Sandy’s life.

Sandy listened and commented, laughed and grabbed you with his eyes. Sandy defined my workshop experience. He is the elder that I spent a lot of time checking in with, he and his wife Irene. They introduced me to the people who stopped by to say hello. People like Hal Buell and Bill Eppridge; you know, idols. Eventually he tells me to go and meet other people at the workshop. No need to hang out with the old guy. I saw many reasons to hang out with him and his wife, Irene. Sweethearts.

They were enjoying themselves, basking in the community that they foster along with Alyssa Adams and everyone else who creates this experience for our future. For our brethren, a community of people who care more about getting access into the lives of people for a story than about a date on Saturday night. A community that values truth and the quest for truth in this chaotic world.



**Photo by Paul Michael Myers**

Sandy Colton and Bill Eppridge converse at the Eddie Adams Workshop in Jeffersonville, NY on October 11, 2008.

Sandy cherished his time at the workshop. This year he held court near the light switch. While working the lights he mentioned once in a while that he wished he could still work the event introducing the speakers on stage or participating with cleanup. He wanted to be working, he wanted to do more. He wanted to be a part of the action. Sandy cared too much just to sit back and watch. His presence was felt throughout the workshop. In the conversations down the hall, in the presentations given to the students, and in the work of the Black Team. And definitely in the stories photographed throughout the Jeffersonville area that weekend. Stories shot alongside Eddie Adams, Henri Huet, Larry Burrows, Michael Laurent, Kent Potter, Huynh Thanh My... Eddie and his friends all working in spirit through the eyes of the 100 students and in the guidance of the team leaders.

There are only so many ways to enter into this world and so many ways to leave it. The possibilities are infinite in each case and, though these are the experiences that define us, that are written into the stone maker, what we do with our lives in between these two dates has the potential to obliterate our mortality, has the potential to live on in the lives and work of those we encounter. I realize that I have

been influenced by Sandy Colton as a photojournalist since before I can remember, though I did not know that was his work and the work of his photographers and students that informed my understanding of the world.

During our conversations Sandy reminded me why our work as photojournalists is important. Bear witness, f/8 and be there. And that as a photojournalist, giving back to the field by passing on our knowledge to the people entering the field is as much an imperative as it is an honor.

You make the picture.  
Great. Now make  
another. You make  
the picture. No  
excuses.

Sandy makes the  
pictures and will as  
long as we pass on  
the knowledge he  
taught us, directly or  
indirectly.

The torch is ours to  
bear and it burns ever  
so bright with Sandy's  
spirit.



**Photo by Paul Michael Myers**

Sandy Colton, left, Jimmy Colton and Al Paglione at the barn at the Eddie Adams Workshop in Jeffersonville, NY on October 10, 2008.

Stars and Stripes

Obituary for Sandy Colton:

<http://www.stripes.com/article.asp?section=104&article=59660>

Associated Press Obituary for Sandy Colton:

<http://tinyurl.com/7n7x38>

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*(Paul Myers is a faculty member of the Visual Journalism Program at Brooks Institute in Ventura, CA. Prior to his arrival at Brooks, Myers worked for a variety of publications including newspapers in Freeport, IL and Marysville, CA.)*

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