

NALC remembers *Family Circus*' Bil Keane

Artist's generosity helped promote food drive throughout country

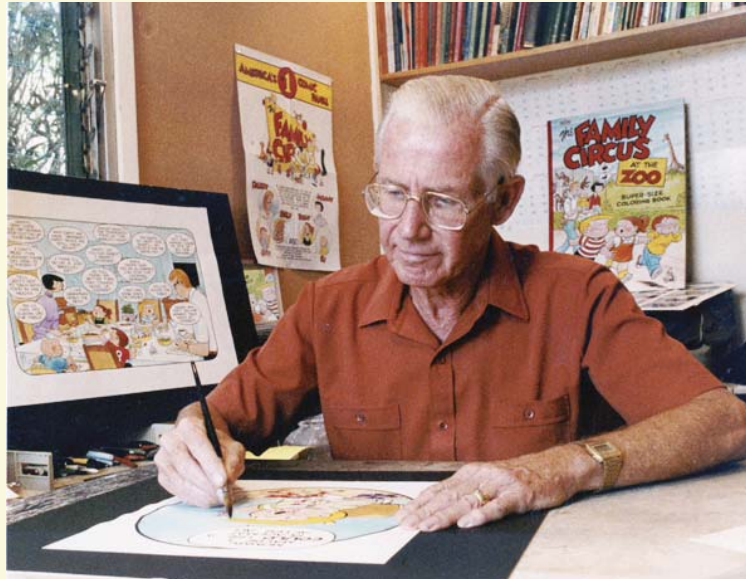
Bil Keane, the cartoonist whose donated “Family Circus” artwork helped promote the NALC’s national “Stamp Out Hunger” Food Drive for many years, died Nov. 8 at his home near Phoenix. He was 89.

“Keane’s drawings served as a sort of unofficial logo for each year’s drive,” NALC President Fredric Rolando said. “His characters were so familiar to our customers that, when you saw the image of Billy, Jeffy, Dolly or P.J. on a promotional poster, bag or T-shirt, it seemed as if a close, trusted friend was encouraging you to dig deep to help feed the hungry.”

Keane began drawing the single-panel “Family Circus” comic strip in 1960. Today, it appears in nearly 1,500 newspapers. Although he officially retired a few years ago and turned his pen over to his son, Jeff, he continued to provide ideas and jokes for the daily strip.

In a 1995 interview with The Associated Press, Keane suggested that his cartoon had such staying power because of its consistency and simplicity. “It’s reassuring, I think, to the American public to see the same family,” he said.

“‘Family Circus’ brightened a lot of postal customers’ days,” said Drew



Von Bergen, the NALC’s longtime national food drive coordinator who retired last year. “Its broad and consistent appeal made it a perfect fit with our national drive.”

“While we will miss Bil’s generosity, his legacy lives on in his art,” the union’s Community Services Coordinator Linda Giordano added. “We look forward to keeping ‘Family Circus’ a part of our annual drive for many years to come.” ✉

