



# Restless Genius: Barney Kilgore, The Wall Street Journal, and the Invention of Modern Journalism

*Richard J. Tofel*

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## **Restless Genius: Barney Kilgore, The Wall Street Journal, and the Invention of Modern Journalism**

Richard J. Tofel

### **The story of the man who transformed *The Wall Street Journal* and modern media**

In 1929, Barney Kilgore, fresh from college in small-town Indiana, took a sleepy, near bankrupt New York financial paper—*The Wall Street Journal*—and turned it into a thriving national newspaper that eventually was worth \$5 billion to Rupert Murdoch. Kilgore then invented a national weekly newspaper that was a precursor of many trends we see playing out in journalism now.

Tofel brings this story of a little-known pioneer to life using many previously uncollected newspaper writings by Kilgore and a treasure trove of letters between Kilgore and his father, all of which detail the invention of much of what we like best about modern newspapers. By focusing on the man, his journalism, his foresight, and his business acumen, *Restless Genius* also sheds new light on the Depression and the New Deal.

At a time when traditional newspapers are under increasing threat, Barney Kilgore's story offers lessons that need constant retelling.

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