For God, my son Matt, my mom Rose, Tom & Joy Marcou, other family/friends incl. Paula Apfelbach, Stephanie Awe, Msgr. Bernard McGarty, David W Johns, Mark & Jean Smith, Dale Barclay, Freiberg Family, Yi Family; the memory of my dad David A Marcou Jr., nephew Tony Skifton, & cousin Dick Kiedrowski; plus all ancestors, parents, offspring, teachers, peers, benefactors, care-givers, medics, religious, publishers, archives & schools.

“(A) writer’s spirit is necessary to this enterprise. Isn’t photography writing with light? But with the difference that while the writer possesses his word, the photographer is himself possessed by his photo, by the limit of the real which he must transcend so as not to become its prisoner.”
— Abbas Attar, star photographer.

“Life is either a great adventure or nothing.”
— Helen Keller, who could only see with her inner eye, but what a truly great inner eye she had.

“Nothing seemed to me more appropriate than to project an image of our time with absolute fidelity to nature by means of photography...about our age and the people of our age.”
— The Great August Sander.

“Looking at beautiful things is what makes me the happiest.”

“I’m a kid who grew up working hard.”
— UW-Madison alum & NFL 2017 Walter Payton Man of the Year JJ Watt.

“Reality is more unbelievable than anything you can imagine.”
— PBS-TV ad.

“The biggest... the shiniest thing, ain’t the most important thing”
— Actor George Lopez regarding the main message for him from Herman Hesse’s “Siddhartha”.

“The reports of my death have been greatly exaggerated.”
— The inimitable Mark Twain.

“We will celebrate the fear you faced down to make [your accomplishments] happen. On Wisconsin!”
— From ABC News Anchor David Muir’s 5-12-18 UW-Madison Commencement Address.

“Don’t forget to show love.”
— President Austin Perine, a 4-year old Alabama boy who uses his allowance & money for toys to buy chicken sandwiches for the homeless.

With all he’s authored so far, including helping conceive a truly great son; plus his 154 published books; more than 1,250 published short non-fiction writings; 15 plays; many hundreds of poems; & hundreds of thousands of photos he’s taken, DvJM is Wisconsin’s all-time most prolific author.
John Michuta Knew Football, Science, & the Hearts & Minds of the Young—By David Joseph Marcou, AHS'68, UW-BA, UIowa-MA, MU-Columbia BJ.

In 1964-65, I was a freshman at La Crosse Aquinas High, where my parents had graduated in 1949. My freshman year I went out for wrestling, was soon put on the varsity, and soon after lost a wrestling-match to the upper-class brother of a classmate. I quit the wrestling team for good, though the locker-room banner said something like, “Quitters never win; winners never quit”. In key ways, I’ve rarely quit on anything I’ve believed in since then. The wrestling coach was Jack Nockels, known to be the toughest grader among all AHS teachers, incl. a tough-love band of wise FSPA nuns. Freshmen year was also notable for me my experience of Coach Michuta, head varsity FB coach plus a Biology teacher, a former second team All-American tackle at Notre Dame, & briefly a Detroit nightclub bouncer. Immediately after lunch each weekday, we had about 20 minutes “free”, during which the boys went to the gym to chat. We seemed wasn’t supposed to bring food in there, though AHS sold candy bars in the lunchroom. The rule hadn’t stuck in my brain yet.

One day after lunch I was finishing a Snickers candy bar, that wonderful caramel and marshmallow confection I thoroughly loved. As I entered the gym from the hallway, I heard some sort of noise and then felt an intense pressure on the seat of my pants. Coach Michuta, known for his patented kick to the posterior, had just booted my backdrop into the uprights for a score. Needless to say, I didn’t eat any candy in the gym again after that. If I hadn’t been fully aware of that rule until then, was I EVER aware of it afterward. In any case, last term freshman year, I excelled in Mr. Nockels’ English class. He taught us vocabulary, grammar, sentence-structure, & basic writing via rote & logic. He congratulated me in class when I earned an “A” from him. I deserved it; I was superb at rote-learning and my logic wasn’t bad either. He said my “A” was 1 of only 3 he gave in the many classes he taught that term.

Freshman year I believe I gave up my paper route to go out for football. I was about fifth string and close to broke, so sophomore year I worked as a stock-clerk at Boulevard IGA, where my dad was meat manager. I didn’t go out for football that year, so I could earn enough to buy a used car plus pay my tuition. Junior year I did go out for football, and worked a few hours at the store too. I was a member of the Junior Varsity in autumn 1966, and No. 1 at fullback on offense and cornerback on defense, until I fumbled twice versus the Jesuit school’s team at Prairie du Chien, Campion. I was removed at fullback, but continued No. 1 at cornerback that season. If memory serves, we went undefeated that year as a JV team.

Senior season, 1967, I didn’t start on the Varsity, but played on special teams, mainly as a tackle. I remember one play I made a tackle on, because we didn’t do well that game (versus either Wisconsin Rapids Assumption or Marshfield Columbus, if memory serves; our overall season record was barely .500 if that, though we won the City Title). Reviewing the game’s film that week with us, Coach Michuta saw something and asked an assistant coach to back up the film a bit. When it ran again, Coach M-known for his “The hard way is the easy way”—asked who the player was who made the tackle on a kickoff. I raised my hand sheepishly because I didn’t know what Coach had in mind, but I was on film as the tackler and I remembered the play. Coach glanced at me, then raised his eyebrows and said: “You Men remember that play, b/c Marcou made that tackle, and Men, That’s HOW You Make a Tackle!”

The Inimitable Mark Twain (1835-1910), by David Joseph Marcou.

In 1867, Mark Twain, funded by a newspaper, visited the Holy Land. MT was put off by its “desolate” vegetation (in a very hot summer); & mysteriously he wrote that he hardly saw a single human being during his walks there. A scoffer at religions, he said every church had a piece of the “authentic” cross. But MT did buy his mother an olive-wood bible. He wrote of the Jews’ small world population as “ a nebulous puff of star dust lost in the blaze of the Milky Way. …”[Yet] its contributions to the world’s list of great names in literature, science, art, music, finance, medicine and abstruse learning are very out of proportion to the weakness of his numbers….The Egyptians, the Babylonians and the Persians rose, filled the planet with sound and splendor, then faded;…. the Greeks and Romans followed and made a vast noise, and…were gone…. “The Jew saw them all, survived them all, and is now what he always was, eternally, eternally a myriads-of-parts, not a whole, alert but aggressive mind. All things are mortal but the Jews….” MT may have sensed long-diasporatic Jews would return to the Holy Land to govern in future, but the Jews there in 2018 should be more compassionate to those it sent into a 20th-century diaspora, the Palestinians, who inhabited the Holy Land thousands of years.)

As most readers know, Mark Twain was one-of-a-kind, his courage included; it was embedded in his literary life-to-be that one of his siblings was named Pleasant Hannibal, who passed at 3 weeks old in 1828. The Poet’s Forum a “modernist” academy of poets considers MT a traditional 20th-century fiction writer who wrote political satire late in life; that’s only partly accurate. MT’s early works show satirical edges at key times too, as per his early short stories, as do the Adventures of Huckleberry Finn and Tom Sawyer. He used the “n” word 200+ times in Huckleberry Finn, & often in Tom Sawyer too. He rarely used it outside those two novels. Whoppi Goldberg & my friend Charlie Freiberg, keen students of history, said Huck Finn is a great novel, not because we relish its “n” word uses, but b/c it’s true to where our nation came from in many ways, good & bad. James Baldwin, not usually terse about literary history, stated only that Huck’s whole predicament is wrong – whether or not he should sell Jim back into slavery. My brother Dan, an author too, says Mark Twain respected his character-depictions’ authenticity, though MT didn’t agree with everything his characters said/did personally -- no author of fiction does.

What we should admire is Mark Twain’s true artistry & the goodness in key characters (as Whoppi says, Jim is “Huck’s running buddy”, i.e., his best friend). In those two books about growing up in the South, MT used the “n” word mainly to hit Old South readers over the head with their own bad word. And would the man who published Pres./Gen. Grant’s top-selling memoir be a person who backed slavery? Missouri-born & in the Confederate Army two weeks until deserting, Twain wasn’t content with all things Southern, one reason he moved to Connecticut in 1873 soon after marrying his beloved Yankee bride, Olivia “Livy” Clemens. MT did give rein to key boyhood reveries in HF; but he was a satirist who didn’t side w/slavery, though he did know its emotional yoke would be very hard for many people to throw off.

In reading countless Twain quotes and several of his books & stories, there’s so much truth in what he said & wrote, it seems to me his wisdom surpasses all other modern writers’, though Will Shakespeare, Charles Dickens, Sean O’Casey, Walt Whitman, & Lorraine Hansberry are nearly equal to MT. That claim may seem dubious to lovers of Shakespeare especially. Shakespeare famously held the mirror up to society; but America’s greatest satirist held it up to society, then asked key characters/people, often with humor, why the hell are you doing what you’re doing? But despite some librarians not liking MT’s works, the latter continue to find their way into many “Main Street” bookstores & libraries worldwide.

Shakespeare apparently didn’t criticize British rulers w/their personal voices; Twain did for US rulers, especially Teddy Roosevelt. History shows TR was a fine president w/domestic policy, but a ruthless war-monger overseas. TR launched America’s ever-since status fighting wars abroad by engaging the US, in
his role as assistant secretary of the navy, in its first war abroad, the Spanish-American War, ordering Admiral Dewey to seize the port of Manila in 1898. As a field-leader in Cuba soon after resigning its navy post, TR became famous for a charge up a hill. As MT wrote: “He [TR] was in a skirmish once at San Juan Hill, and he got so much moonshine glory out of it that he has never been able to stop talking about it since. I remember that at a small luncheon party of men at Brander Matthews’s house, once, he dragged San Juan Hill in three or four times, in spite of all attempts of the judicious to abolish the subject and introduce an interesting one in its place. I think the President is clearly insane in several ways, and insanest upon war and its supreme glories.”

TR received the Nobel Peace Prize for arranging the treaty in 1905 between Russia & Japan. But that treaty made Korea a colony of Japan 40 years, which Koreans still remember as a sell-out into murderous serfdom. (Japan in more recent years has been an ally to many nations, including the US & Korea, though its leaders & historians still have a hard time admitting past war crimes.) Also, TR preached US troops for WWI from its start in 1914 (the US entered in 1917). He learned a key lesson though when his youngest son, Quentin, was killed in a dogfight over France in 1918. That death did what tons of meandering blood-don’t-contaminate-the-donor bloodlettings could not do before, and got TR to see the war in a new light, and thus he opposed the war. He went on to introduce an interesting one in its place. I think the President is clearly insane in several ways, and insanest upon war and its supreme glories.

Despite the efforts of the Menominee Indians at the Alexian Brothers Novitiate in Gresham, WI; actor Marlon Brando also took part. Chief assistant to Groppi in many protests was Fr. Dismas Becker, who also would leave the Catholic church after Groppi. Fr. Groppi was famous for boycotts, marches, and protests for civil rights, and worked with Martin Luther King Jr., Vel Phillips, and Dick Gregory on federal equal voting and fair housing laws that passed in the 1960s; he took part in the March on Washington in 1963, the March from Selma to Montgomery, etc. One boycott he led began in TR’s 1966 outside the Wauwatosa home of Robert Kennedy, a real civil rights activist. In 1969, Groppi, Jeff wasn’t Catholic, but he asked me to come to a Mass said by Fr. Groppi, because I believed the notable priest could aid me. After Mass, I introduced myself and we talked in sacristy. When I described my wife to him romantically, he advised me to be as sensitive to her needs as possible and show her great charity. I may have mentioned to him Ann was a close friend of a priest’s, who’d eventually leave the priesthood after Ann divorced me in 1979; they’d marry ca. 1983 and have twin daughters. It’s even conceivable JG knew the priest my wife would marry, because they both did a lot in the Milwaukee area.

James Groppi also led a protest that commandeered the Wisconsin State Assembly Chamber on behalf of welfare mothers, on Sept. 29, 1969, and served a draft written by me/DvJM on 5-20-18, & revised by DvJM thereafter.

Confession with Fr. Groppi—By David Joseph Marcou.

Educated during the early part of my life by tough-love Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration, I learned early that sex before marriage was a mortal sin, and that a male should only have sex with a female after their church wedding. This lesson confounded some really good opportunities for me to do well with the beautiful young women I dated and knew ca. 1969-70, my first real period of opportunities that way. I married a Catholic woman from Fond du Lac, WI in June 1972 who’d graduate from UW like me, but we never enjoyed a successful sexual relationship together. It took 2-3 months after our wedding for us to even “consume” that marriage. And after our first year together, we no longer had physical contact with each other. On a visit to a UW dorm-mate’s family’s home near Milwaukee’s 1973-1975, it was clear civil rights activism fueled by Groppi, Jeff wasn’t Catholic, but I asked him to take me to a Mass said by Fr. Groppi, because I believed the notable priest could aid me. After Mass, I introduced myself and we talked in sacristy. When I described my wife to him romantically, he advised me to be as sensitive to her needs as possible and show her great charity. I may have mentioned to him Ann was a close friend of a priest’s, who’d eventually leave the priesthood after Ann divorced me in 1979; they’d marry ca. 1983 and have twin daughters. It’s even conceivable JG knew the priest my wife would marry, because they both did a lot in the Milwaukee area.

Fr. Groppi was famous for boycotts, marches, and protests for civil rights, and worked with Martin Luther King Jr., Vel Phillips, and Dick Gregory on federal equal voting and fair housing laws that passed in the 1960s; he took part in the March on Washington in 1963, the March from Selma to Montgomery, etc. One boycott he led began in TR’s 1966 outside the Wauwatosa home of Robert Kennedy, a real civil rights activist. In 1969, Groppi, Jeff wasn’t Catholic, but he asked me to come to a Mass said by Fr. Groppi, because I believed the notable priest could aid me. After Mass, I introduced myself and we talked in sacristy. When I described my wife to him romantically, he advised me to be as sensitive to her needs as possible and show her great charity. I may have mentioned to him Ann was a close friend of a priest’s, who’d eventually leave the priesthood after Ann divorced me in 1979; they’d marry ca. 1983 and have twin daughters. It’s even conceivable JG knew the priest my wife would marry, because they both did a lot in the Milwaukee area.

As a field-leader in Cuba soon after resigning its navy post, TR became famous for a charge up a hill. As MT wrote: “He [TR] was in a skirmish once at San Juan Hill, and he got so much moonshine glory out of it that he has never been able to stop talking about it since. I remember that at a small luncheon party of men at Brander Matthews’s house, once, he dragged San Juan Hill in three or four times, in spite of all attempts of the judicious to abolish the subject and introduce an interesting one in its place. I think the President is clearly insane in several ways, and insa