

What Happens When You



Mind Your Manners

How does a Texas high school teacher rise to national fame and prominence? Here's how Allen Ludden made the grade.

For a man who's so quick with questions, famous emcee Allen Ludden is rather quick with his answers too. TVSP decided a turnabout was fair play, so we put Allen in the hot seat—asked him endless questions and waited for his replies, just as he does to the contestants on CBS' successful *Password* show.

It was a proudly beaming tall and blond (no, he doesn't do anything to his hair) man who started out by revealing that he had just been voted Texan of the Year by the Texas Editors Association. He must be doing something right, we figured, so we inquired further into his life to see what made Allen Ludden such a winner.

Born in Mineral Springs, Wisconsin, the bespectacled emcee moved to Texas at an early age and remained there until Uncle Sam singled him out for duty over-

seas. But by then he already had his master's as well as bachelor's degree in English and some high school teaching under his belt.

With his interest in the theater and his record of summer stock performances down in the Panhandle, Allen was a natural for the Special Services division of the Armed Forces. He was assigned to the Pacific Ocean area under the command of Major Maurice Evans, the noted Shakespearean actor.

Peace having once more descended upon the frenzied world, the University of Texas grad journeyed to New York to work once again for Maurice Evans, only this time as a lecturer in advance of the touring company of the *GI Hamlet*. After over 500 appearances, he turned to press agency in Hartford, Conn. But Allen was never one to do anything classically—he's a

Allen's been host of *Password* several years and isn't bored yet. Famous guests like Tony Newley and Joan Collins love to play too.

Allen found national fame as originator and host of the famed G-E College Bowl quiz.



Allen's married to actress Betty White who loves to play *Password* when home in N.Y. So do stars Lee Remick and Peter Lawford when in town.



thinking man with answers of his own.

WTIC beckoned and he figured, "Always take the job where the door is open. Other doors should open after that." It's been his philosophy ever since and from the looks of things, it's been a successful one. From a mere title, he masterminded a show called *Mind Your Manners* where he interviewed teenagers. Five months after its debut, the show went on the NBC network and later on TV.

From minding his manners and his shows so well, Allen was again given a title and asked to create a new show. Thusly, NBC radio made history with the now long-running *College Bowl*.

But he was NBC's rich-in-ideas man who became producer of *Monitor* and *Weekday* until CBS grabbed him for their program director. It was during this hectic

period that CBS bought the TV version of Ludden's baby, *College Bowl*. There he was—leading two lives—the five day executive, the two day TV personality.

When the scholars' scholar found *Password*, word went around that Allen Ludden was now a full-time performer. Besides the five-day-a-week show, he had offers for summer stock. "And why not?" he told us. "I had always loved theater. It looked like a great chance to go back. And since my wife had passed away that winter, I was looking for something new."

He found plenty! He packed up his family, by now a son David and two daughters, Sara and Martha, and off they went to Maine, where Daddy was to co-star with Betty White in *Critic's Choice*. Betty and Allen broke all box office records. Better yet, they were married the following June. (Continued on page 67)



ALLEN LUDDEN

(Continued from page 41)

And what did they do to celebrate? They packed up and took off to Maine to try *Critic's Choice* again!

Not only was it the start of a new life and a new wife, but the start of a second career for this man with two lives. Since then, Allen and Betty have appeared in summer stock from Maine to California in such varied plays as *Bell, Book, and Candle* and *Brigadoon*. Where did the singing voice fit in with that rich speaking tone? "I love to sing. I've always loved it," he confessed candidly. "I've even sung on Merv Griffin's, Art Linkletter's and Milton Berle's shows." Well, you can't knock success, especially in two fields all the time.

In what time he has left from performing, Allen has authored several books. *Plain Talk For Men* has become an Armed Forces guide book. "That surprises my son immensely." His girls are resigned to the *Plain Talk For Women*. "I was writing about teenagers before I even had them," Allen said. "My kids are always trying to put down my books, but they can't because they sell."

The CBS personality is out selling "the positive" to American teenagers. "There is a great pulse of positive thinking among young people. They're not given enough encouragement. My lecture was originally going to be called, 'Bye Bye Beatnik,' but I decided to be less negative, and the title is now 'The Pursuit of Excellence.'"

Allen has always had a good relationship with American youth from his early teaching days through *College Bowl*, and his present popularity as a lecturer attests to it. He still hears from *College Bowl* alums dating back to the radio days.

But *Password* is his pet. "Real stars like to play *Password*. You can't be phony and play that game. And audiences get to see the real people." Audience favorites include Allen's wife Betty, Peter Lawford, Florence Henderson, and Frank Gifford. Of all the stars on the show, Allen most remembers Jerry Lewis, who aside from keeping the crew and audience in stitches, played the game well. "I'm so glad Jerry did *Password*. We all got to see the real Jerry Lewis."

After 5 years with his unique show, Allen swears he's never been bored. "Give me a good daytime show anyday. I always want to be on daytime TV." And after sunset? "Well, I'd like to do a nighttime variety show in a special format that I've got planned. (Another Ludden first.) But I'm not sure the audience would accept me in the late hours. That would be an interesting question, wouldn't it?"

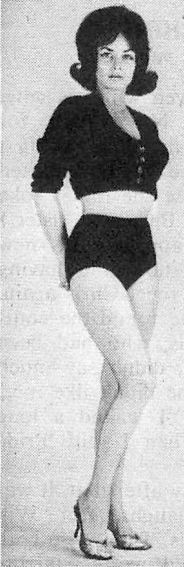
Now can you beat that? We thought we had a fair play turnabout with the question man and he ended up in his usual position—asking us for answers! If you've got an answer, why not give it to Allen Ludden himself. Pass the word along. TV's favorite host is asking you the questions this time!

By JOAN SAND

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AFTER



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36—21—36

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