



L-R

MARTIN'S DEPT STORE  
EMPLOYEES 1990 2

L-R. BUD CORNETT

LOUISE McCLURY

MELISSA Crawford

DOROTHY CISCO

MARGIE HUNTER

Collection Of:

D. Ellis

un St.

NY 40351

7473



Accessories

Back to School

POLO JEANS CO.

Good

MARTIN'S DEPT STORE  
~~1990~~

From The Collection Of:  
Dr. Jack D. Ellis  
552 W. Sun St.  
Morehead, KY 40351  
606-784-7473



# MARTIN'S

DEPT. STORES INC.



MARTINS - 1961  
MARTINS + more help

**From The Collection Of:  
Dr. Jack D. Ellis  
552 W. Sun St.  
Morehead, KY 40351  
606-784-7473**



FREHE CORNETT -  
WAITS ON CUSTOMERS  
IN THE "NEW"  
MARTINS STORE IN  
19602. STORE  
CLOSED ITS DOORS  
IN JULY 2004 - AFTER  
53 CONTINUOUS YEARS.





RC "Rad" Martin

FOUNDED MARTIN'S

CHAIN OF

DEPARTMENT STORES

WAS A

SUPPORT

MORE HERE

UN

From The Collection Of

Project D. Ellis

552 W. Summit

Morehead, KY 40351

606-784-7473

From The Collection Of:  
Dr. Jack D. Ellis  
552 W. Sun St.  
Morehead, KY 40351  
606-784-7473

MARTINS BEST STATE STORE  
1960

Martins was voted best place for formal wear.









MOREHEAD MAIN ST

1955

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Dr. Jack D. Ellis  
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Martins Dept Store  
Main St + S. Wilson Ave  
Morehead Ky 19502

BOOK ENTITLED:

REFLECTIONS OF ROWAN COUNTY

1856-2006

OUT EARLY 2005





## MARTIN'S DEPARTMENT STORES INC.

*"If your clothes aren't becoming to you  
—Then you should be coming to us."*

Phone ST 4-4320

MOREHEAD

KENTUCKY



50  
Years

**Martin's Department Store**  
invites you to our Celebration of 50  
years in business in downtown  
Morehead, KY.

Our celebration will be on Satur-  
day, August 4, 2001 from 9:00 am to  
5:30 pm.

Martins will be giving a 10%  
storewide discount off of your entire pur-  
chase, all day long. That's a 10% discount, in  
addition to Martins everyday low prices and sale  
items already marked down. This is a great time to save for  
Back to School or summer clearance.

Martins will be serving refreshments all day and register to  
win a \$200.00 shopping spree. Drawing will be held at  
5:00 pm. We hope you can come and celebrate this once in a  
lifetime event of 50 years in business.

We hope to see you on Saturday, August 4 and as always  
we thank you for your valued patronage.

Sincerely,  
Margie Hunter  
and  
Bud Cornett

**MARTINS**

606-784-4320  
117 E. Main Street  
Morehead, Kentucky 40351

50  
Years



Burr ran for Mayor - Nov. 6, 1973

? Miles to Jackson 38-40

Rad or R.C. Martin willed 69 shares  
of stock in the Corporation to <sup>Each of</sup> his  
Seven Brothers and Sisters.

5 - sisters

2 - Brothers The kind of man he was

Arrow SHIRTS  
Florsheim shoes

Bass Weegins

Durango Boots

Dexter shoes for ladies also men Casual

Hagar Suits and Coordinistes

Curlee Suits

Campus

Farah

Lee

Levi's

Nike shoes and sports wear

Rebok " "

adidas " "

Connie shoes for ladies

Naturalizers

Tommy Hilfiger for all

Jonathan Logan

Some of Martins Employees

Don Hardin

Juanita Cooper

Olive Rank

Edg Weese

Madean Clark

Dorothy Ciseo

Hazel Sparkman

Sandy McKenzie

Beulah Jackson

Ruby Parter

Mac Graham

Jeanne Bradley

Geraldine Owen

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## Local Trivia

### Local Families

■ Burr and Irene Cornett moved to Morehead in 1949, when Burr enrolled in Morehead State Teachers College.

## SECTION C

# History

THE MOREHEAD NEWS, AUGUST 31

## About the Author



Dr. Jack Ellis is a retired Morehead State University Library director and a retired minister.

# Morehead Memories:

## People & Places

### *Martin's Department Store: Surviving 50 years, II*

By Jack D. Ellis  
Special to The Morehead News

"After he had patiently endured he obtained the promise" (Hebrews 6:15).

When Burr and Irene Cornett opened Martin's Department Store in 1951, they had one employee, Maude Adams.

Mrs. Adams had worked for the previous owner and was of

fashionable at reasonable prices, and continued to prosper under the management of the popular, friendly, colorful ex-Marine manager.

#### **Martin's moved to another location**

In 1960, Martin's purchased property across Main Street, and after much excavation in order to get the lot to street level, local builder Phil Hardin

attractive.

Soon the friendly, outgoing Mr. C.B. Cornett became widely known throughout the community as "Burrhead". That made him a natural to enter politics.

#### **Martin manager Cornett elected mayor**

In November 1973, the colorful, outspoken ex-Marine was elected Mayor of Morehead.

It could be said of Burrhead Cornett that you may not agree with him, but you always knew where he stood on any issue. He was never "wishy washy" and perhaps that was detrimental to his political career. When asked a question, he didn't tell you what you wanted to hear, but told you clearly where he stood.

Among his accomplishments as mayor was getting funds for much of Morehead's present infrastructure, including a new water treatment plant, a new bridge over Triplett Creek to the City Park, Carl Perkins Building and the C.B. Cornett Manor. Those apartments named in his honor are located near the Carl Perkins Center.

#### **Death of C.B. Cornett brings widow into business**

C.B. "Burrhead" Cornett was a strong supporter of sports and Morehead State University, and all four of his children graduated from that institution.

He was president of the



Irene Cornett waits on customers in the "new" Martin's Store (1960s).



Martin's Department Store owner/managers Irene Cornett and Margie Hunter. (1990s).





**Martin's Department Store owner/managers Irene Cornett and Margie Hunter. (1990s).**

great help to them in learning the community, and they soon expanded their inventory.

The store offered Cayce Jones overalls, Butte Knit suits for women, muslin, white bleached material, as well as piece goods for quilting and tobacco canvas with grommets. They sold a wide variety of shoes, including Naturalizer and Peters Shoe Company shoes.

The store offered credit and often times waited until harvest time for farmers to pay their bills. There was no such thing as credit cards or credit checks and the store did lose money on some customers. But the store offered good quality, latest

built the new modern building that continues to house the business today.

Don Hardin, who worked at Martin's six years, recalled he and "Burrhead" moved the merchandise into the new store by working all night. Following the move to their new quarters, business began to grow.

More employees were added and people came from the surrounding counties to shop at Martin's. The business advertised a wide range of good quality, and the latest styles of items at reasonable prices. They provided good service and credit was also available (before credit cards), which made shopping



**Martin's Department Store employees, 1990s. From left, Bud Cornett, Louise McClurg, Melissa Crawford, Dorothy Cisco, Margie Hunter.**

an issue. He never "wishy washy" and perhaps that was detrimental to his political career. When asked a question, he didn't tell you what you wanted to hear, but told you clearly where he stood.

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**Death of C.B. Cornett brings widow into business**

C.B. "Burrhead" Cornett was a strong supporter of sports and Morehead State University, and all four of his children graduated from that institution.

He was president of the MSU Alumni Association in 1952. Mr. Cornett was also a past Commander of American Legion Post 126, and along with Russell Barker and Jack Cecil, established the local American Legion baseball team. Those men paid much of the early expenses of that team out of their own pockets.

Following Mr. Cornett's death in 1981, longtime baseball coach Don Hardin named the annual Morehead Fourth of July Baseball Tournament in honor of C.B. Cornett.

Also following the death of Mr. Cornett, his wife Irene and daughter Margie continued to manage the business. However, recently Irene has turned the job over to Margie.

Martin's Department Store has operated in Morehead continuously for over 50 years. They are successful in today's competitive business world because of good management, and merchandise that offers style, quality and service at reasonable prices in a friendly family atmosphere.

**Owner/managers Irene Cornett and Margie Hunter operate business**

Martin's manager, Margie (Cornett) Hunter in today's market has to keep up on the latest styles and trends in fashion. She serves as a buyer for the store.

Hunter said, "We used to be able to buy clothing for the spring and fall season, but now the inventory must be turned over quickly, and we



**Irene Cornett waits on customers in the "new" Martin's Store (1960s).**



**Customers look through Martin's sale items at the old store in the 1950s.**

have to keep up on the latest styles and trends. Your stock must be fresh to be able to keep up with the trends.

"We can't afford to wait until the trends begin to stock the items. We must already have them when they are advertised and customers ask for them".

When asked what were some of the most unusual styles they could recall, both Margie and Irene agreed it was "The big bell bottom pants and platform shoes, and they were the hottest items in town".

Margie Hunter readily admitted they cannot offer the selections that are available at larger department stores, but believes that they have a very

good selection and offer friendly service to their customers, whom they usually know personally.

Margie proudly said about the products they carry, "We offer the best quality merchandise on the market. We carry quality clothing for the entire family, sports clothing, shoes, handbags, latest perfumes and much more".

They are proud of the quality brands they carry today, such as: Arrow shirts, Nike, Reebok, Florsheim shoes, Durango boots, Hagar, Curlie, Campre, Tommy Hilfiger and many more.

**Service: the secret of longevity**

Irene said, "We've come a

long way in 50 years when we used to search everywhere to find the best buys for our customers such as 10 washcloths for \$1, or two rugs for \$1". She continued by saying, "Even though we can't find those deals any longer, we are still searching for the best buys for our customers and friends".

Irene Cornett is quick to give credit for their success to the many loyal employees over the years. Those employees include: Don Hardin, Ida Wells, Juanita Cooper, Olive Roark, Nadene Plank, Dorothy Cisco, Hazel Sparkman, Sandy McKenzie, Beulah Jackson, Ruby Porter, Mae Graham, Jean Bradley and Geraldine Owens and many more.



## Local Trivia

### Early Business

■ Burr and Irene Cornett moved to Morehead in 1949, when Burr enrolled in Morehead State Teachers College.

## SECTION C

# History

THE MOREHEAD NEWS, AUGUST 24

## About the Author



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# Morehead Memories:

## People & Places

## Martin's Department Store: Surviving 50 years, I

By Jack D. Ellis  
Special to The Morehead News

"With good will doing service" (Ephesians 6:11).

Martin's Department Store celebrated 50 years of continuous service to Morehead and surrounding counties with a 50-year anniversary sale on Aug. 4, 2001.

The business first opened its doors 50 years ago with a gigantic "back to school sale". That week an am/fm radio was given away, along with consolation prizes of nine boxes of nylon hose to nine lucky winners.

But who was this mysterious Mr. Martin whose name has hung on a sign outside a business in Morehead for 50 years? How did the business come to Morehead?

Martin's Department Store was born deep in the mountains of Knott County in 1918 at Sassafras, Kentucky. The business was the brainchild of Sheridan Martin, who had a dream of developing a department store in the coal country of Eastern Kentucky.

In those early days, he had to haul in merchandise in a wagon from the railroad at Jackson, Kentucky, 38 miles to Sassafras. The roads were almost non-existent and the mules struggled as they pulled their heavy load over mountains and through swollen streams. On those early trips, Mr. Martin usually spent the night in the home of some hospitable mountaineer



R.C. "Rad" Martin, founder Martin's chain of department stores, was a lifelong supporter of Morehead State University.

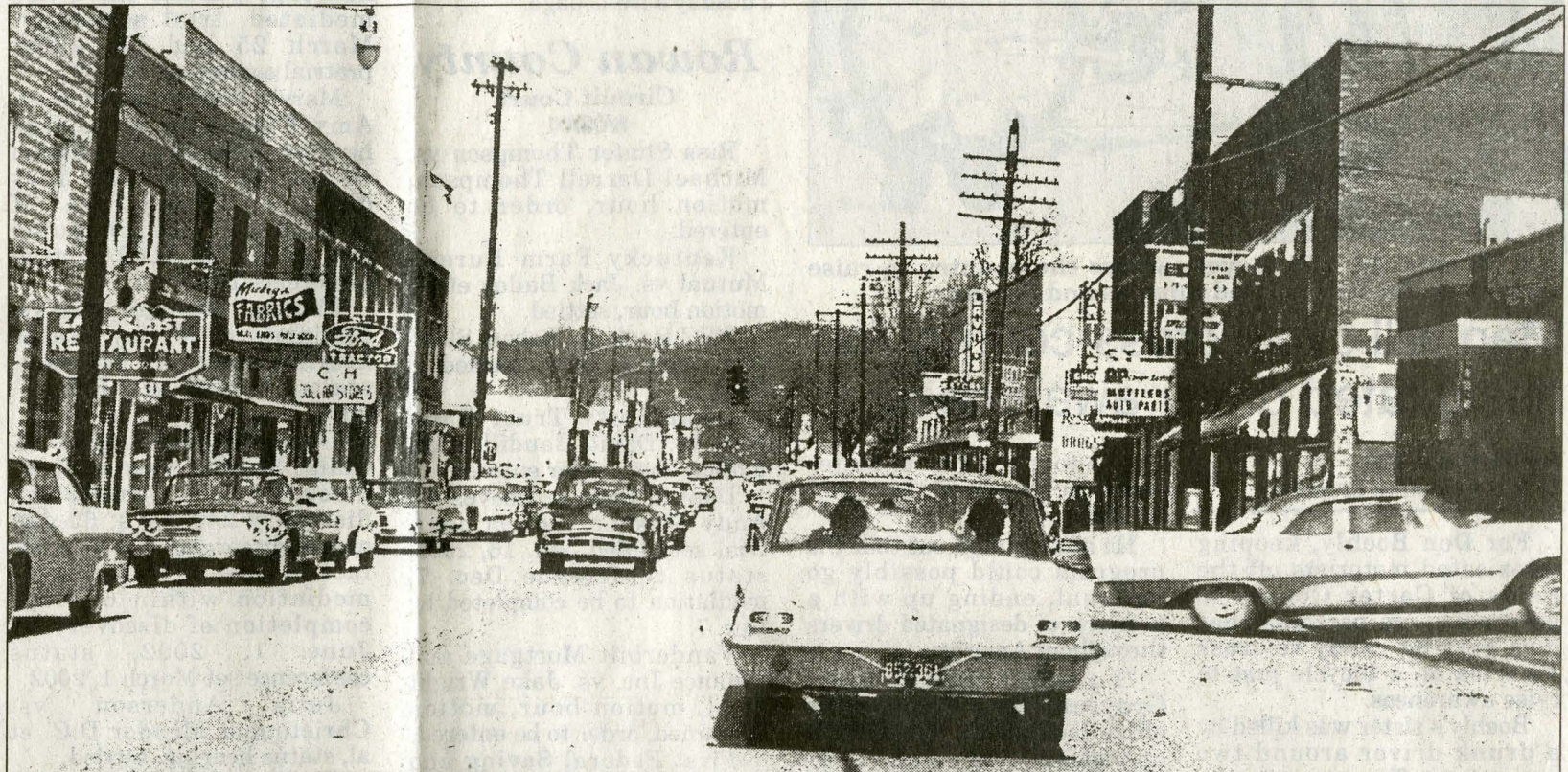
R.C. with his team of mules and wagon, delivered merchandise throughout the region.

### Four nephews - four stores

R.C. and Minnie Martin had no children, but they had four nephews they loved very much.

One of these nephews was C.B. Cornett who was born in 1920 at the mouth of Big Branch in Knott County. C.B., later known by everyone as "Burrhead" or "Burr" walked three miles every day to attend the Hindman Settlement school.

He was a good basketball player and was selected to the all-state team. Following his high school graduation, Burr completed the two year college



Morehead's Main Street in the 1950s shows many former Morehead businesses. Martin's is located on the right at their first location.

each of his four nephews that when they returned, he would set them up in business. They all returned and R.C. Martin eventually opened Martin's Department Stores for his four nephews in Nicholasville, Harrodsburg, Salyersville and Morehead.

In 1943, Irene Bowen, one of six girls who were all "coal miners' daughters", graduated from Carr Creek High School. Following her high school graduation, Irene, her mother and sister migrated to Michigan, where they worked in an airplane factory during World War II. Irene laughed and said, "I was one of those 'Rosie the Riveters' because my job was riveting".

After the war ended in 1945, Irene and her husband





to haul in merchandise in a wagon from the railroad at Jackson, Kentucky, 38 miles to Sassafras. The roads were almost non-existent and the mules struggled as they pulled their heavy load over mountains and through swollen streams. On those early trips, Mr. Martin usually spent the night in the home of some hospitable mountaineer because there were no places to lodge.

**Moved from Sassafras to Vicco**

In 1928, Sheridan Martin's son, R.C. and his wife Minnie Lee, took over the business and moved to Vicco where they quickly expanded their inventory to include not only dry goods and shoes, but hardware, groceries, appliances and furniture.

Although the business struggled during the great depression of the 1930s, it survived because of an ingenious marketing strategy. The store offered free delivery service, and every Saturday,

C.B. Cornett who was born in 1920 at the mouth of Big Branch in Knott County. C.B., later known by everyone as "Burrhead" or "Burr" walked three miles every day to attend the Hindman Settlement school.

He was a good basketball player and was selected to the all-state team. Following his high school graduation, Burr completed the two year college program at Pippa Passes, Kentucky.

After graduating in 1939, he migrated to Newport News, Va., and worked in the shipyards.

During WW II, all four of R.C. Martin's nephews entered the military service. Burr joined the Marines and was soon shipped to the South Pacific. During the battle of Saipan, he was wounded by sniper fire and left for dead. He was later discovered by medics and flown to a hospital where he spent months recovering from his wounds.

R.C. Martin, who never had children of his own, promised

miners' daughters", graduated from Carr Creek High School. Following her high school graduation, Irene, her mother and sister migrated to Michigan, where they worked in an airplane factory during World War II. Irene laughed and said, "I was one of those 'Rosie the Riveters' because my job was riveting".

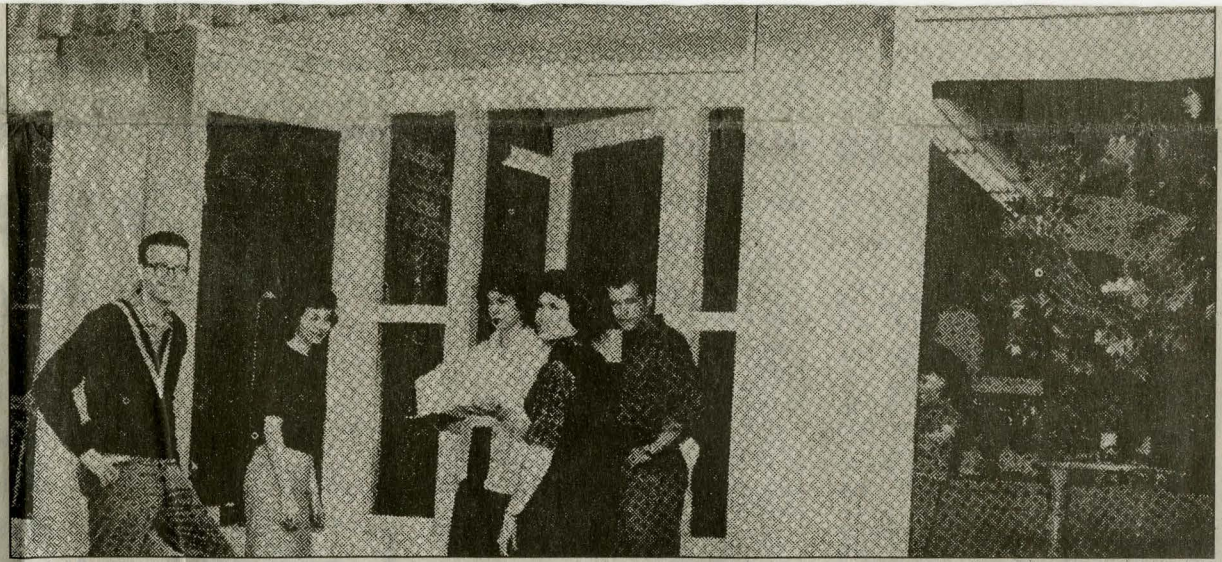
After the war ended in 1945, Irene moved back to Vicco, Kentucky, and taught school for a while before getting a job at Martin's Department Store, where she met Burr Cornett. They were both working in the Martin's Vicco, Kentucky store. After a brief courtship, they were married in 1946, and have four children: Danny, C.W., Margie and Jeanne (deceased).

**Morehead Martin's opening day sales prices**

Burr and Irene Cornett moved to Morehead in 1949, when Burr enrolled in Morehead State Teachers College. Following his graduation in 1951, they returned to Vicco, only to be told by R.C. Martin there was a store for sale in Morehead and they could return to Morehead and open another Martin's Store.

Burr and Irene both loved Morehead and were agreeable to the move. R.C. Martin came down to Morehead and bought Luther Fraley's Department Store on the west corner of South Wilson Avenue.

They took a 10 year lease, and after weeks of hard work, opened the Morehead Martin's Department Store on Aug. 4, 1951, with a "Back-to-School Sale". Grand opening sale



**Martin's Department Store opened in 1951 at Main and South Wilson Avenue.**

prices for the following men's clothing included: dress shirts, \$2.98; work shoes, \$2.98; dress shoes, \$5.98; underwear \$1.49 and boys bib overalls, \$1.29. Women's opening day sale items included: nylon hose 51 gauge, 15 denier \$.88; anklets, \$.25; oxfords, \$3.98 and dresses from \$1.98.

**Politics, economy and religion in 1951**

In 1951, Lawrence Weatherby was Governor of Kentucky, Harry Truman was President, Kentucky's native son, Alben Barkley, was Vice President and Charles Spain had just been inaugurated as Morehead College's newest and youngest President.

Local theater goes attending the Mills Theater that Saturday night saw "Cavalry Scouts", starring Rod Cameron.

Moreheadians attending church the day after Martin's grand opening heard M.L. Tate at the First Church of God, G.H. Bierly at the

Methodist Church, B.H. Kazee at the First Baptist Church and Father Eugene Wagner in the little white Catholic Church on Fourth Street that was formerly Grace Ford's garage. Although services were scheduled at the First Christian Church, there was no minister listed for that Sunday in 1951.

In 1951, the national economy had been through a five year post war boom, but was beginning to suffer a minor recession. That year the Rowan County School system received \$155,756 from state funds to operate the schools. Salary for a beginning teacher was \$1,800 for nine months.

The year 1950, 351 Rowan Countians paid an average of \$57.51 Kentucky State Income tax. But the surrounding counties did not do much better, e.g.: 136 Bath residents averaged \$42.04; 422 Carter residents averaged \$37.37; 106 Morgan residents

averaged \$64.01 and 37 Menifee Countians paid an average of \$20.53 in Kentucky sales taxes.

In 1951, real estate agents Alpha Hutchinson and Curt Bruce had many homes for sale but no prices listed.

But that year, this newly married writer had just purchased his first home in Morehead. It was a two-bedroom, one bath with a half-basement located on Lyons Avenue. I paid \$4,350 and monthly payments under the G.I. Bill were \$33 a month.

Nationwide, the average price of a house was \$13,500; cars \$1,250; gas \$.20 a gallon; bread \$.14; first class stamp \$.03 and the average income was \$3,216.

It was in this setting that Burr and Irene Cornett opened Martin's Department Store in 1951 with one employee: Maude Adams. They had no idea how long they would be in business but were determined to succeed.



**C.B. and Irene Cornett opened Martin's in 1951.**

**ON THE RECORD**

conference, criminal possession forged instrument, report filed. Christy Dawn Swindall, pretrial conference, two counts criminal possession forged instrument, report filed. James Michael Little, pretrial conference, trafficking in controlled substances with intent to sell, report filed. Mervill Lawson vs. James Stevens to stake out proposed boundary lines and report back to court, passed to Oct. 5. Larry D. Skaggs of Christy Creek has asked the newspaper to state that he is