

★ LAS VEGAS ★

'SHOWCAST OF THE STARS'

PROFILES

by Percy Villa



At long last I have met our leading citizen and humanitarian.

We're all proud of only KELL HOUSSELS, head man of the Tropicana Hotel who,

with his son, J. KELL HOUSSELS JR., will be honored at the Israel Bonds dinner October 29th in the Coliseum Room of Caesars Palace. The affair commences at



J. KELL SR. AND JR.

charity that he's not an active part of.

He is continually in good humor, punctual and easy to make an appointment with.

What finer choice than Houssels, Sr. & Jr., to be honored at Bonds for Israel dinner?

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6:30 p.m.
Mr. Houssels was born July 25th, 1895, in Vernon, Texas. He has been a leading resident of Las Vegas for 37 years at 1012 So. 6th Street with Alice (still his beautiful doll) for 35 years. His face broadened into a large smile when we asked of his son J. K. (Ike) Jr., and gave us the following information:

Jr. is 45 years of age and President of the Tropicana; Las Vegas resident since 1930; graduate United States Military Academy, West Point; Stanford Law School; former assemblyman, Nevada Legislature; former deputy district attorney; chairman 1965 United Fund Drive; president of the Resort Hotel Association; board member Variety Club International Tent 39; active civic leader; married, three children. He and Ellen have

a show place of a home at Rancho Circle.

Houssels Sr. is a recognized credit to American racing. That is and has been his hobby for some 30 years. He is known as one of the nation's leading owners and breeders of thoroughbred race horses. He bought his first race horse 32 years ago for \$1,500 and his studs earned over one million dollars in 1963.

The career of the elder Houssels reads like Horatio Alger story. I have heard of this great man before but this is the only way to fully describe him. In his office, behind the cashier's cage, are displayed many of his forget-me-nots such as a couple of dozen trophies and a number of plaques hanging on the wall. I read them all but my favorite one was as follows:

1964 State of Nevada Anti-Defamation Man of the year. J. K. Houssels, Sr.

"For his humanitarian endeavors, distinguished service to his community and country, his dedication to the concept of judging each man according to his merits and his devotion to the principles of ADL: of combating prejudice and bigotry to build a better America."

The above wordage is from the plaque dated October 18, 1964. Las Vegas, Nevada.

J. Kell Sr. was a student at the Colorado School of Mines when the United States entered World War I in 1917. His entire class enlisted at Denver, and Kell became a pilot, flying a single-motor plane.

When the war was over, he got a job as assayer in a copper mine near Ely,

A run of luck in a "21" game yielded enough money to make a down payment on a small hotel. He later opened a small casino in Las Vegas, then a village in the desert. The building of Boulder Dam mushroomed Vegas and Houssels prospered, buying hotels and investing in other businesses. He took over the Tropicana Hotel about 7 years ago when it was threatened with failure. A year later he brought to America, a cast of 80 in the Folies Bergere in Paris, to the Trop, then the Strip's newest hotel. The place has boomed ever since.

In his office he has an extra large oil painting and autographed picture of President Lyndon B. Johnson. He is especially proud of all the board and staff members of his hotel for making it the success and plush spot in Las Vegas.

There is no cause or a

FOLIES BERGERE CENTENNIAL WINS "MUST-SEE" ACCLAIM!

John L. Scott — Los Angeles TIMES
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George H. Jackson — Los Angeles HERALD EXAMINER

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