

Blind Student Seeks Degree, Has Radio Job

Edward Walker, 22-year-old student at American University here, splits his time between studying for a Master's degree and working as a radio disk jockey.

Lots of students work, but Ed is a special case. He is totally blind, and has been sightless since birth.

He is living proof of his own philosophy:

"The blind, if they really want to, can lead a very active and normal life," he says, with conviction.

Ed does staff announcing, and "jockeys" a records program called "Walker's Wax Works" for Radio Station WPGC, in Morningside, Md. Beginning Sunday, he starts a new program of musical records, two hours of "good music and comments" called "This Is Sunday" at the same radio station.

He commutes by bus between his home, American University and the Morningside station. Admittedly, this daily routine keeps him "hopping around like a disk jockey."

First Blind Student

American University's first blind student, he is already somewhat of a campus celebrity—he made the collegiate Who's Who last year before his graduation in June.

Son of the office manager of the National Lumber Manufacturers Association, Ed lives with his parents at 1217 Euclid st. nw. He was five years old when the family moved here, so he can't boast of being a native of the city he's never seen.

The District, with not enough blind children to warrant operating a special school, sent the boy to the Maryland State School for the Blind, at Overlea, a suburb of Baltimore. There Ed progressed through



Staff Photo

EDWARD WALKER
... student and disc jockey

elementary and high school grades at the same scholastic rate of public school students. During his junior and senior high years, he attended classes with sighted students in Baltimore.

"They do this to acclimatize us to working with those who are not blind," he explained. "It better prepares those who want to go on to college."

Passed Tests

In 1950, when he graduated from the blind school, he was tested for collegiate aptitudes by the District of Columbia Rehabilitation Service. Most blind students at this stage of education are tested for vocational trades, such as piano tuning or other manual work.

He showed up well in the tests, and was admitted to major in radio and television production courses, the first blind student entered at American University. DCRS provided him the services of a reader, since college texts are not usually printed in Braille, the raised printing for the blind.

The service also supplied him with a Braille writing machine, which he uses to transcribe commercials and announcements for his radio roles.

In Braille, even commercials can look good.