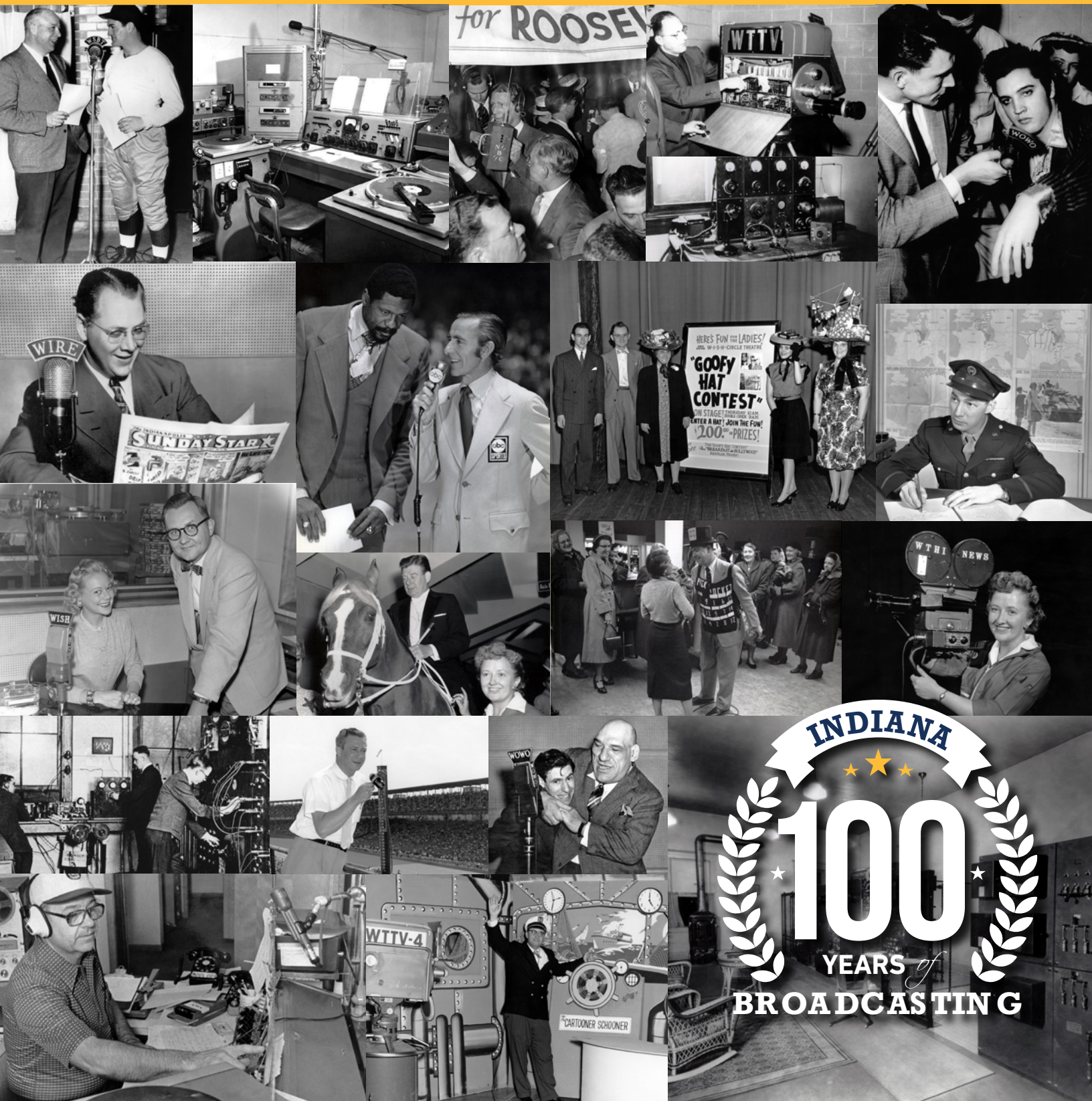


INDIANA BROADCAST PIONEERS

BROADCAST BEAT

Summer 2022



BROADCASTBEAT

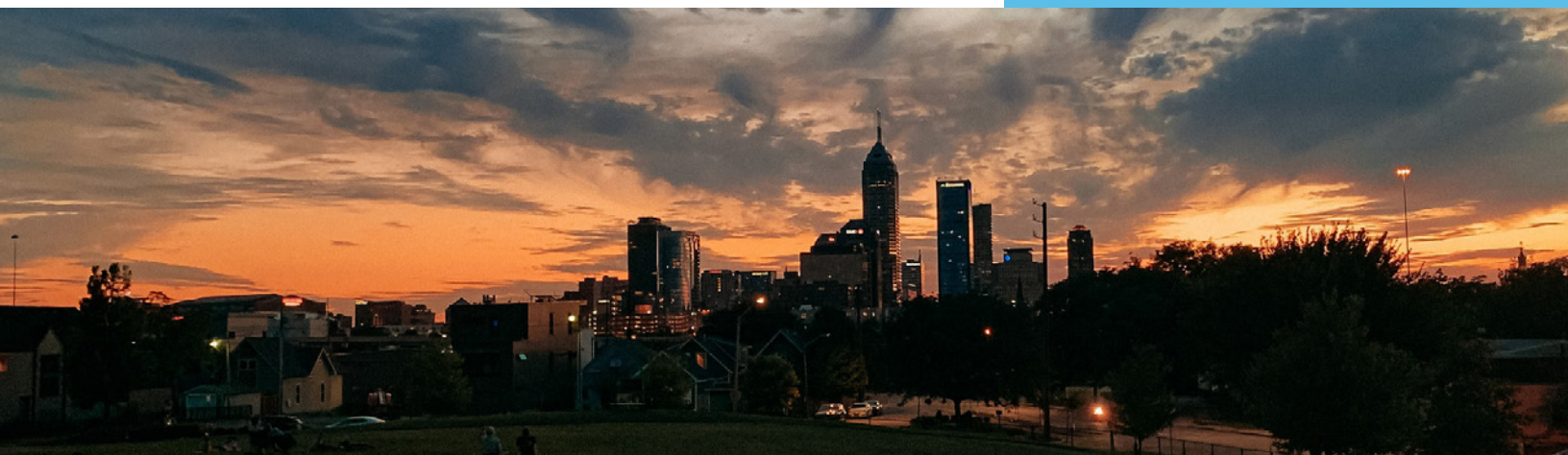


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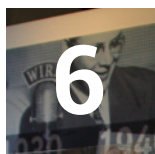
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SPECIAL THANKS to Blaine Thompson of Indiana RadioWatch, which is an online publication that reveals what's new at Indiana radio and TV stations: Format changes, personnel, ownership, engineering, etc. Indiana RadioWatch subscriptions are free. To subscribe, send an e-mail to irw@well.com. You can follow Blaine on twitter at [@irwradio](https://twitter.com/irwradio).

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100 Years — and Still Counting!

by Dave Arland

Executive Director, Indiana Broadcasters Association



It started as dots and dashes of sound, but radio graduated from a military technology to ship-to-ship communications, and eventually to the homes of everyone within range of a signal.

Hoosiers were introduced to commercial broadcasting on December 31, 1921, when Indianapolis mayor Lew Shank posed his immortal question from the “studio” (a garage, actually) of radio station 9ZJ, asking “Hamilton, you mean to tell me that people can actually hear me over that damn dingus!?”

The new year brought new possibilities, and broadcasters soon began using the new technology to bring instant news, sports, and entertainment programming into any home with a radio receiver. If those homes had a receiver and an amplifier, well, the entire family could take it all in from the comfort of their own living room.

Radio in Indiana evolved in the following decades, even when television started reaching Hoosiers after World War II. Broadcasting played a vital role in the national Emergency Alert System (EAS), which was an outgrowth of the Civil Defense Systems developed in the 1950s and 1960s. The backbone of EAS is radio stations across Indiana, for distributing vital emergency information in times of disaster.

It has been a lifeline when tornadoes or other natural disasters strike. Broadcasters step in to keep Hoosiers up to date on the latest safety and recovery information. During the last two years of the COVID-19 pandemic, as broadcasters began to lose advertisers, Indiana radio stations persevered by promoting local businesses and restaurants, broadcasting live updates from the governor’s office, even reading bedtime stories to children over the airwaves, to give parents a break.

I’m optimistic about the future of broadcasting; there will always be a place for people to listen and seek out information. There’s no better place to get instantaneous, free updates on the latest news, weather, sports, and entertainment than on radio and TV. And whether people listen to radio on a dial, in their cars or through an app, the genesis of that critical local information will always be from a local broadcaster. The technology may change, but radio is always the backbone of local communities through high school sports broadcasts, delivering local news and supporting local businesses through advertising. It’s time to celebrate our success in radio now and in the future.

In this significant anniversary year, The Indiana Broadcasters Association encourages all of our stations to share examples of their history (pictures, video and audio tapes) with Indiana Broadcast Pioneers archivist **Dale Ogden at (317) 699-0534** or at **RDogden53@gmail.com**. If you, our Broadcast Pioneers, also have significant artifacts of broadcasting history, we are interested!

Indiana Broadcasting is vibrant today because it has evolved, and it will continue to evolve in its second century. For broadcasters, carving a path through the business has always been challenging, but one can argue that the emergence of new technologies has added many more opportunities, as well as many more roadblocks, along the way.

Some ideas on what that might look like, in 3, 2, 1....



“I’m optimistic about the future of broadcasting; there will always be a place for people to listen and seek out information,” said Dave Arland, Executive Director of the Indiana Broadcasters Association. “There’s no better place to get instantaneous, free updates on the latest news, weather, sports, and entertainment than on radio and TV.”

Dave Arland,
Executive Director of the Indiana Broadcasters Association





TAKE ONE

Indiana Broadcasters' Generation Next

by Len Clark, Ph.D.

Indiana Broadcast Pioneers Board Member

“One cannot get a job in broadcasting without experience, and you can’t get broadcasting experience without a job.”

This adage has been used for years by colleges and universities offering broadcast programs to promote their “hands-on” opportunities, faculty with professional broadcast experience, and internship programs.

The model has been challenged, in recent years, due to ownership consolidation, declining enrollment, technological changes, and perception of today’s media. The COVID-19 pandemic hasn’t helped.

Trying to teach a hands-on skill online has also challenged broadcast education programs and those trying to teach them. Indiana colleges and universities have responded to the challenge by making sweeping changes to their programs to keep them relevant.

Broadcast programs evolved and grew out of speech and drama programs (like the media itself), where voice and articulation courses trained future radio broadcasters. Broadcast programs eventually added courses in film, video, and now social media.

To survive, some broadcast curriculums merged departments with other communication-related programs as part of the social sciences, humanities, or fine arts division, while other programs have been absorbed to create a school of communication. Others have focused on areas of specialization.

When I was researching my Ph.D. dissertation, I looked at training schemes of global media organizations, like the BBC, and university programs around the world. It turns out there is no universal educational model for broadcasting, but the skills and competencies needed, globally, are the same.

There is, also, no right or wrong type of program as long as the program meets the needs of the stakeholders. The real question, then, is what are the needs of the stakeholders? Are



Indiana Broadcaster's Generation Next

As broadcasting in Indiana enters its second century, the form it takes will evolve — and today's students will be the tomorrow's leaders on this new frontier.



students looking to graduate with a bachelors or associates degree in broadcasting and find entry-level employment? Or are students looking to receive broadcast training within the context of a traditional liberal arts curriculum?

It's not just the students— Indiana colleges and universities are also trying to find their niche.

One way forward might be what I call the "Sanjay Gupta Model" (Gupta is a trained neurosurgeon, widely known for his health-related reporting on CNN). This is where students with a specialization in medicine, the environment, the arts, etc. are trained to provide multimedia stories for a consortium of global media outlets where their work can be viewed, read, or consumed on-line.

Maybe someday this model could work in Indiana, and led by the Indiana Broadcasters Association, where a group of content producers could be trained by IBA member schools, in their specialization, and their works aired by member stations. As broadcasting in Indiana enters its second century, the form it takes will evolve — and today's students will be the tomorrow's leaders on this new frontier.

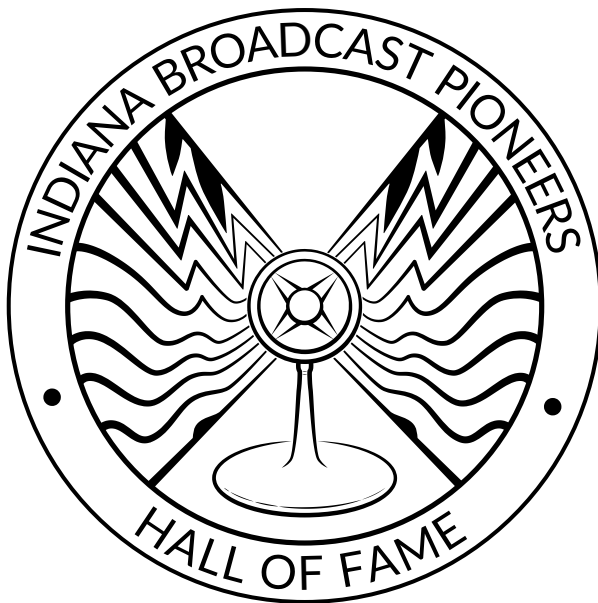
And, here's a new adage for a new frontier: "You need to specialize to freelance, and you can't freelance without a specialization."

You can connect with Len Clark through email at: lenclark@vt.edu



TAKE TWO

Join Us



The main focus of the Indiana Broadcast Pioneers is maintaining the Indiana Broadcast Pioneers Hall of Fame. Part of that is deciding which mostly-retired broadcasters have had careers worthy of induction each year.

We go through the process not only for the long-time broadcasters in our state. We also want energize and encourage current and future broadcasters — by giving them a standard to which they can aspire while they are in the early stages of their journey in the business. It is a profound intersection of those of us in the present honoring those who came before and helped develop the platform that broadcasters enjoy today.

No doubt, an impressive group of broadcasters will join the Indiana Broadcast Pioneers Hall of Fame this year. Honoring them for their stellar careers and contributions to the industry that ties us all together is why the Indiana Broadcast Pioneer group exists as a committee of the Indiana Broadcasters Association. It is our sincere hope that the Hall of Fame can continue to be a goal to which the thousands of people involved in broadcasting in our state can aspire.

You can help ensure that the Hall of Fame will be viable for years to come by supporting it now. Pioneers membership is only 25 dollars a year.

Your membership includes access to the Indiana Broadcasters Association yearly conference and Indiana Broadcast Hall of Fame induction ceremony. Follow this link for more:

<https://www.indianabroadcasters.org/about/indiana-broadcast-pioneers/>



TAKE THREE

From the President:

by **Dave White**

Indiana Broadcast Pioneers President



After half a century in broadcasting, I have an admission to make. I am not the real Dave White. The real Dave White lived and raised his family near Heltonville in Lawrence County, Indiana. He was my grandfather. My parents believed they were naming me after

him by calling me David. One day, my grandmother pointed out grandad's legal name was in fact Dave not David. It's just as well. I could never have equaled his reputation for hard work, integrity and open mindedness. He was beloved by his community and especially by me as his grandson. When he died at 89 I wrote a tribute to him that ended with "When I'm gone remember me for a moment now and then. Because a moment is a lifetime of someone dead and nearly forgotten."

The mission of our organization is to preserve lifetimes that have become "moments." Our focus is on those who dedicated themselves to informing and entertaining their fellow Hoosiers. For nearly two decades I have had the privilege of creating the video biographies of those inducted into our Indiana Broadcast Pioneers Hall of Fame. One of the most heart breaking times in that process came when producing the video biography of Frank Edwards. As a kid, I had enjoyed Edwards as a newscaster and author. I was shocked to discover I could find only one low resolution photo of him on an old radio station brochure. Yet, he had been a local newscaster

on WXLW radio and WTTV, WLWI-TV (now WTHR), a Mutual Network anchor, and the published author of at least seven books. I found only a handful of clippings and books remained despite the fact, for a time, he was well known nationally to radio listeners. Were it not for members of our group who nominated and inducted him into our Hall of Fame, Frank Edwards' "moment" truly would have been in danger of being forgotten.

You might wonder what difference forgetting one Indiana based newsperson might make. Well, Edwards was the first mainstream broadcaster to take on the controversial topic of UFOs on a routine basis. Today it's not uncommon to see reports, documentaries and even whole TV series about them. While much, if not most of this material could hardly be considered serious reporting, it has had a significant impact on our culture and media. So Edwards "moment" is in fact a noteworthy bit of broadcast history worthy of preserving. Strangely, some believe Edwards emphasis on UFO stories was not the cause of his fall from the Mutual Network. They say his demise was his refusal to allow his reporting on labor union news to be censored by the sponsoring union.



On a happier note, thanks to the Internet and our own efforts there are now several other photos of Frank Edwards available beyond the one on our Indiana Broadcast Pioneers video biography. We are making a difference.



TAKE FOUR

Indiana Broadcast “Pickers”

by Dale Ogden

Indiana Broadcast Pioneers Chief Archivist

Commercial broadcasting in Indiana began on December 31st, 1921; when Indianapolis mayor Lew Shank spoke the immortal words into the microphone of radio station 9ZJ, “...Do you mean to tell me that people can actually hear me over that damn dingus!?” It was a rather ignominious start (not that many people heard it), but it wouldn’t be long before Hoosiers relied on the newfangled technology for music, news, sports, interviews, comedy, drama, etc...



“Hamilton, you mean to tell me that people can actually hear me over that damn dingus!?”

Mayor Lew Shank

As broadcasting matured, much of the record of those formative years faded away, but now the Indiana Broadcast Pioneers (IBP) has embarked on an ambitious project to preserve what remains of the artifacts that tell the story of the first 100 years of Indiana Broadcasting. And, we are reaching out to you for help.

The IBP is collecting microphones, cameras, other test and broadcast equipment, audio and video, photographs, scripts, advertising, posters, contracts, correspondence and other documents. These items are stored in a secure location until an appropriate repository (archive, museum, university, etc.) is identified on a case-by-case basis.

The goal is to rescue items from basements, attics, garages, sheds and other storage spaces, and secure them so that they can eventually be made available to both scholars and the general public.





TAKE FOUR CONTINUED

This project is in its early stages, there have been several notable successes so far;

1. We have secured nearly 7,000 scripts from former WIBC Radio News Director Fred Heckman's popular **"My Town Indy"** essays. They are now at the Indiana Historical Society.
2. We have editions of the quarterly **Indiana Broadcast Pioneers Newsletters** catalogued covering the years 2002 to 2020. Thirty eight are now on the Indiana Broadcast Pioneers website (www.indianabroadcastpioneers.org), and the entire collection will soon be accessible through the Indiana Historical Society.
3. The Indiana State Museum has more than 100 costumes, props, photos and other artifacts from **Bob Warren's radio and television career** that ran from 1955 to 2000.
4. We have several pieces of film editing equipment that was used extensively by cinematographer/director **John Blair McGinnis**. The Columbus, Indiana native created nearly all of the television spots for most Indianapolis-based banks, utilities and other companies during the 1960s and '70s.
5. IBP vice-president Ken Owen has provided Indiana University with **hundreds of audio and video tapes** from his extensive collection.
6. The Pioneers group is also working with IU on creating a **permanent database** for all the material relating to Indiana broadcast history.
7. The IBP is currently in the process of capturing at least **two other collections**, which are not yet ready to be publicized.



If you have items related to the history of Indiana radio and television, you can reach out to IBP archivist **Dale Ogden at RDogden53@gmail.com** or IBP vice-president **Ken Owen at kowen@depauw.edu**. The IBP is especially interested in artifacts that relate to Indiana broadcasting in areas of the state beyond Indianapolis.



TAKE FIVE

The Life of Riley

by John Stehr

Broadcast Beat Editor

BETTER-QUALITY FM SIGNALS STARTED CHIPPING AWAY AT THAT DOMINANCE IN THE 80'S AND 90'S. 8-TRACK TAPES, THEN CASSETTES, AND FINALLY CDS BEGAN TO ATTRACT EVEN MORE EARS AS PEOPLE DROVE AROUND TOWN.



Few people outside of the Hoosier broadcast community likely know the name Chuck Riley, but millions of people heard his rich baritone voice over the years — and not just in Indiana. Every hour on the hour, Chuck's voice followed a sharp gong sound on 1070 AM. Listeners heard: "Radio Indiana! W-I-B-C Indianapolis". A sting followed, leading into the top-of-the-hour news headlines. It was tight. It was memorable. It was darn-near radio perfection.

WIBC signed on in October of 1938 with a thousand watts of power. It achieved what broadcasters call "blow torch" status in 1950, when it began operating at 50-thousand watts by day and was a 10-thousand watt powerhouse at night when the AM signal traveled farther. Despite broadcasting on the notoriously "staticky" AM band, WIBC had the power to come in clearly all over the state while the sun shone. At night, (if you dialed it in just right) its signal reached as far as Florida's Gulf Coast to the south and the US-Canada border to the north. The station was so important to Indiana that it was given temporary authorization to broadcast at its full daytime power around the clock during the famous "Blizzard of 1978" until the storm emergency passed.

AM radio was king, and 1070 WIBC reigned supreme in Indiana. Hoosiers woke up to the Jeff Pigeon Morning Show, planned their routes to and from work after hearing the traffic report from Big John Gillis, commiserated with Fred Heckman's "My Town Indy" throughout the day, and listened to play-by-play of the Colts, the Pacers, and local college teams. WIBC solidified its credentials as a local sports broadcast institution when it took over the rights to the Indianapolis 500 in 1952, becoming the

flagship station of the Indianapolis Motor Speedway Radio Network. In its heyday, WIBC on 1070 AM was a constant companion, a reassuring voice, and a touchstone for Indianapolis.

Better-quality FM signals started chipping away at that dominance in the 80's and 90's. 8-track tapes, then cassettes, and finally CDs began to attract even more ears as people drove around town. The rise of streaming services and digital content conspired to knock down the viability of AM stations like WIBC even further. The stark truth is that the land upon which the transmitter and towers once stood became far more valuable than the station's once-powerful (and extremely profitable) signal.

1070 AM dropped the memorable top of the hour station ID in 2007 (ironically, the same year that Chuck Riley passed away), when parent company Emmis Communications re-aligned its Indianapolis properties. The WIBC format moved to the FM dial and the 1070 AM frequency became WFNI and went to full-time sports talk.

When 1070 AM went dark on August 2nd, 2021, it played its signature station ID one more time: "Radio Indiana! W-I-B-C Indianapolis", followed by the familiar musical sting. Only this time, no news headlines followed. Just static. Listeners were left to write their own headlines, and remember the powerful voice that once provided the background to the lives of generations of Hoosiers. On June 13, Indianapolis-based Emmis Communications announced an agreement to sell the radio stations in its home market (including WIBC-FM) to Urban One, which already owns several local stations.

IN MEMORIAM

Linda Kelley (known professionally as Linda Kay), 66, died from respiratory failure in Henderson, KY on August 1st, 2021. Linda's radio career started in 1977 at WROZ-AM in Evansville. She later moved to WKKR-AM, where she had a successful run in afternoon drive as well as program director (the first female to hold that position in the market). For more: <https://www.dignitymemorial.com/obituaries/evansville-in/linda-kelley-10293349>

Bob Jenkins, 73, died on August 9th, 2021 in Indianapolis after an 8-month battle with brain cancer. The Liberty, Indiana, native was heard globally over five decades on the Indianapolis Motor Speedway Radio Network. He was the lead play-by-play television announcer (the "Voice of the 500") from 1990 through 1998. He retired from broadcasting in 2012. More on Bob's career here: <https://www.indystar.com/story/sports/motor/indy-500/2021/08/09/bob-jenkins-iconic-voice-indy-500-dies-after-battle-cancer/5125722001/>

Leroy Seats, 69, died on August 10th, 2021 in Indianapolis. After graduating from Arsenal Tech High School, Leroy had a 30-year career at WTHR in Indianapolis before retiring in the early 2000's. He began as a photographer, and moved into engineering, where he was one of the first to operate a live truck in the market. More here: http://www.ellismortuary.com/obituaries_testimonials

Brian Bondus, 31, died from anaphylactic shock due to a severe peanut allergy, in Carmel on August 20th, 2021. The Carmel native worked at WXIN-WTTV in Indianapolis between 2015 and 2018, before leaving the stations to work in commercial real estate in Central Indiana. The 2009 Carmel High School graduate also worked in media in Dayton, Ohio. More information: <https://www.indystar.com/obituaries/ins125846>

Marlene Renate Campbell, 74, died in Bellingham, WA on August 22nd, 2021 after a third battle with cancer. Marlene rose to General Sales Manager at WTHR

in Indianapolis during the 1980's, where she met and married the station's News Director Bob Campbell. She also sold time at several television stations in Eugene, OR. The Indianapolis native graduated from Manual High School and Indiana University. For more on her life: <https://www.sigsfuneralservices.com/obituary/Marlene-Campbell>

Jerry Harkness, 81, died August 24th, 2021 in Indianapolis. The Harlem, NY native was a standout college basketball player at Loyola University of Chicago, and had a 6-year professional basketball career, which included being a member of the first Indiana Pacers team in 1967. After he retired as a player, he anchored sports reports at WTHR in Indianapolis for a few years in the 1970's. He was also known for his community work, most notably as one of the founders of the 100 Black Men mentoring organization. More on his life here: <https://www.laveniasummers.com/obits/jerry-harkness/>

Robin Miller, 71, died August 25th, 2021 in Indianapolis after a four-year battle with bone cancer. Known primarily as a print journalist, Robin started covering sports at the Indianapolis Star newspaper in 1969. The Southport, IN native became the paper's lead auto racing reporter in the early 1970's, a position he held until 2001. He commented on racing for several Indianapolis radio and television stations, and also appeared on ESPN, Speed, and NBC Sports. More on his career here: <https://www.indystar.com/story/sports/motor/indy-500/2021/08/25/robin-miller-who-captivated-race-fans-worldwide-dies-71/5194352001/>

David Young, 68, passed away September 16th, 2021 in Vincennes. His career in broadcasting spanned 48 years, and included stints at Vincennes University Broadcasting, to WCBK FM in Martinsville, followed by a move back to Vincennes in 1988 where he helped to start up a new station and soon became a regular voice on the morning airwaves of WZDM FM. Dave also did play-by-play for several Lincoln High School teams,

more than 3000 games over his career. For more information, go to: <https://morrisfamilyservices.com/obits/david-bruce-young/>

Vicki Buchanan, 67, died unexpectedly in Indianapolis on October 4th, 2021. After graduating from Eastern Kentucky State University, Vicki brought her degree in Communications to WTLC radio, where she was the first female on-air personality. She did morning and midday shifts and was program director. She was known, affectionately, as the "Original First Lady of WTLC". More information here: <https://indianapolisrecorder.com/legendary-wtlc-personality-vicki-buchanan-dies/>

James McDowell (known professionally as Jimmy Mack), 99, passed away October 13th, 2021 in Indianapolis. The Nebraska native got his start in broadcasting in Michigan after serving in WWII, but moved to WISH-TV-Radio in Indianapolis in 1958. He also worked in radio at WIRE, WXLW, and WBRI; before moving to WLWI (now WTHR) in 1965. He retired from television in 1973 and became well-known as a Disc Jockey/photographer/videographer for local events in Central Indiana. Jimmy was inducted into the Indiana Broadcaster's Hall of Fame in 2009. For more: <https://www.indianafuneralcare.com/obituaries/James-Jimmy-Mack-McDowell?obId=22680924#/celebrationWall>

Martin Plascak, Jr., 92, died on October 30th, 2021 in Terre Haute. He began his broadcasting career at WBOW-AM in 1951, where he worked for 25 years and served as news director from 1954 through 1975. He moved to WTHI radio/TV in 1976, where he stayed until his retirement in 1995. Martin also taught broadcast journalism at St. Mary of the Woods College. Governor Evan Bayh awarded him the "Sagamore of the Wabash" in 1996, and he was inducted into the Indiana Broadcasters Hall of Fame in 2014. More information here: <https://obituaries.tribstar.com/obituary/martin-plascak-1083658394>

IN MEMORIAM CONTINUED

Robert Brandon, 74, died December 7th, 2021 at his home in Butler, Pennsylvania. Bob began his radio career while still in high school, broadcasting local football games at WBUT in Butler. He moved to Fort Wayne in the early 1970's, where he worked as an engineer WOWO radio. In 1975, He bought WPGW AM and FM in Portland, before selling the stations and moving back to Pennsylvania in 1980. More on Bob's interesting life here: <https://t.e2ma.net/click/uch5le/eobokdo/eorovj>

Barbara Wigham, 87, died January 5th in Fishers. A true pioneering woman in broadcasting, Barbara spent time at WTUL-TV in Tulsa and WFAA in Dallas before joining WPTA in Fort Wayne as General Manager in the 1970's. She later retired from Granite Broadcasting where she oversaw operations for thirteen TV stations across the country. More about her life here: <https://www.legacy.com/us/obituaries/fortwayne/name/barbara-wigham-obituary?id=32258997>

Bill Jackson, 86, died January 17th, 2022 in Paso Robles, California. After beginning his broadcast career in Iowa, Bill enlisted in the military and worked for the Armed Forces Network in the late 1950's. After leaving the Army, he created and starred in the children's program "Popeye and the Little Rascals" at WPTA in Fort Wayne in 1960. He

moved the show to WLWI (now WTHR) in Indianapolis in 1962. WBBM in Chicago lured him away in 1965, and he worked at various Chicago stations doing children's programming until he retired from television performance in 1980. More here: <https://chicago.suntimes.com/obituaries/2022/1/18/22890200/bill-jackson-childrens-television-blob-dirty-dragon-bj-chicago>

Ron Raver, 82, passed away on February 20, 2022 in Batesville after a short illness. Ron was a long-time teacher and coach at Indiana High Schools, who did color commentary for local football and basketball broadcasts on WRBI radio in Indianapolis. He was also host of the "Coaches Corner" broadcast until his recent illness. More on Ron's life here: <https://wrbiradio.com/2022/02/22/ronald-g-raver/?epik=1645804361515>

Seymour Brodsky (known professionally as Brod Seymour), 99, died March 4th, 2022 in Henderson, Kentucky. The Brooklyn native served in World War II before starting his radio career in Chicago. He joined WEHT-TV in the Evansville market in 1953. Over the years, he worked as news anchor, weatherman, program director, director, and public affairs commentator before retiring in 2002 at age 79. Learn more about his remarkable life here: <https://www.thegleaner.com/story/news/>

[local/2022/03/05/brod-seymour-longtime-evansville-henderson-tv-icon-dies-age-99/9387233002/](https://www.local/2022/03/05/brod-seymour-longtime-evansville-henderson-tv-icon-dies-age-99/9387233002/)

Bob Ramsey, 65, died March 8th, 2022 in Rancho Mirage, California while awaiting a liver transplant. Bob began his television career in the late 1970's as a sports anchor in Terre Haute. He later switched to management, and led stations in Chicago, San Diego, Sacramento, Milwaukee, and South Bend. Here is how a Chicago columnist remembered him: <https://www.robertfeder.com/2022/03/11/bob-ramsey-1957-2022/>

Carl Finchum, 69, died in Indianapolis March 9, 2022 after a battle with cancer. Carl retired from WISH-TV in Indianapolis in 2014, after a 36-year career in the news department as a photographer and operations manager. More on his journey here: <https://www.legacy.com/us/obituaries/name/carl-finchum-obituary?id=33596923>

Special thanks to Blaine Thompson of Indiana RadioWatch, which is an online publication that reveals what's new at Indiana radio and TV stations: Format changes, personnel, ownership, engineering, etc. Indiana RadioWatch subscriptions are free. To subscribe, send an e-mail to irw@well.com. You can follow Blaine on twitter at @irwradio.

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