



INDIANA BROADCAST PIONEERS

BROADCAST BEAT

Winter 2023

Riding the
Rollercoaster with
Jeff Smulyan

PLUS
INSIDE THIS EDITION

Hall of Fame
Celebration

Our Pioneers
History

Hoosier Families
in Broadcasting



BROADCAST BEAT

Letter from the Editor

by **Bill Shirk**

INDIANA BROADCAST PIONEERS BROADCAST BEAT EDITOR

First I want to thank all the Pioneer board members for allowing me to be the editor of the *Indiana Broadcast Pioneers Broadcast Beat*, I consider it an honor.

I owned and operated most of the 10 radio and TV stations in the Indianapolis metro with my financial partner, Bill Mays. But the 10 radio stations in Hawaii that Bill and I owned were run by our partner George Hochman. We sold all our stations between 2000 and 2018.

I would like to thank all our *Indiana Broadcast Pioneers Broadcast Beat*, contributors today, Jeff Smulyan, Dave White, Dale Ogden, Mike Piggott, and Dave Arland. My goal for the magazine is to help raise the number of Pioneer members. Also, we want to bring you a wide range of articles that broadcasters would be interested in reading. Email me with story ideas: Houdini96@aol.com



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Indiana Broadcast Pioneer President

Dale Ogden

Former Chief Curator Indiana State Museum

Jim Culbertson

Programs Director

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).



Indiana Broadcast Pioneers,
P.O. Box 902, Carmel IN 46082
indianabroadcastpioneers.org



Each year, the Indiana Broadcasters Association inducts a new class of broadcasters into the Indiana Broadcast Pioneers Hall of Fame. Honorees represent the highest level of professional broadcasting in Indiana and are recognized each fall.

Honoring Our 2023 Hall of Fame Inductees



Clayton Taylor

Clayton served as Vice President of Television Production at WFYI for 20 years. Under his direction, WFYI became a major producer of documentaries, arts, public affairs and cultural programs, winning more than 100 Emmys including four consecutive Emmys for Station Excellence.



Mark Boyle

Mark has been the play-by-play broadcaster for the Indiana Pacers for 35 Seasons. He is one of a handful of broadcasters to have called over 3,000 NBA games. He's been named Sportscaster of the Year five times by the National Sportswriters and Sportscasters Association.



Deb Miles

For the last 23 years, Deb Miles has shared her love of life and country music on WBYT. She has used her platform to generate millions of dollars for charity including Saint Jude's and Saint Margaret's House. 15 years ago, she helped create the Drink Pink Campaign to support women battling breast cancer.



Mark Patrick

Mark got his start in broadcasting while still a student at Ball State at WNAP. He went on to be the creative director at WRTV, before starting a 17 year run on The Bob and Tom Show. "Mark Patrick on Sports" debuted on WNDE in 1987, and two years later was named host of "Hoosier Millionaire". After 40 years in the business, Mark is most proud of his giving and volunteer efforts.



Marcia York

Marcia started her career in the U.S Weather Bureau, before embarking on a 35 year career in broadcast meteorology. She began a three year stint at WFIE in 1953 before moving on to WTVW in 1956. She returned to WFIE in 1971 until she retired in 1988.



Robin Miller

In addition to his career in print, Robin has had a distinguished career in broadcasting. Robin worked at the Indianapolis Star for 33 years, but meanwhile did side work for WIBC, WNAP, WTHR and WISH. Robin was not shy about calling it the way he saw and it and was a respected voice in the racing community.



Nominations are now open for the 2024 Indiana Broadcast Pioneers Hall of Fame. Nominations will close at the end of February 2024:

indianabroadcasters.org/recognition/hall-of-fame/



Smulyan Reflects on Storied Career

Most of us in Indiana know Jeff Smulyan for his broadcasting leadership – starting small in Indiana and building a company that had an impact from coast to coast. Smulyan has shifted his focus away from local radio, with Emmis Corporation now offering sound masking solutions. While they are branching out into digital advertising, Emmis also continues to operate an AM and FM station in New York City.

Jeff's interests and hobbies are as wide as his impact. A one-time professional baseball team owner, he is also considered the father of the Sports Talk radio format. A graduate of the University of Southern California with a degree in history and communications, Smulyan is also a law graduate from USC. He is a father of three, and a grandfather of two.

When the Emmis station sales in Indianapolis were announced, Smulyan told his team that "this news may come as a surprise given our track record in radio and commitment to the Indianapolis community. Urban One approached us and made us an offer we felt was worth exploring, and after much conversation – worth accepting. The sale provides Emmis additional financial resources to continue to explore new, high growth business opportunities, but also comes with all the emotions of letting go of something you love."



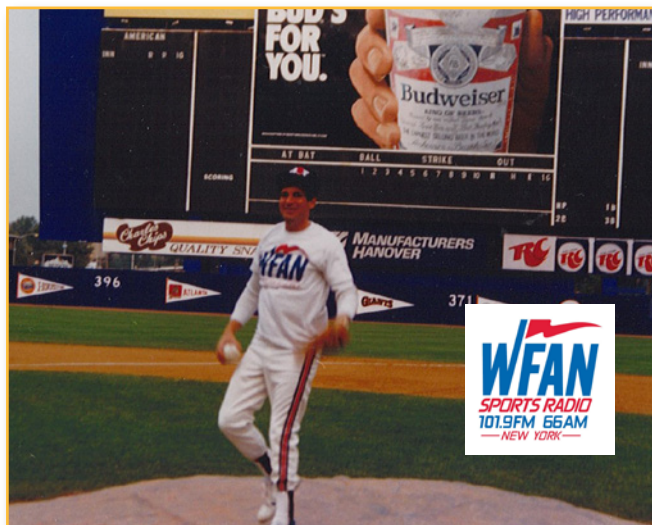
Jeff Smulyan and Rick Cummings, former Emmis President of Radio Programming



High Fives: Jeff Smulyan and Pat Walsh, President and Chief Operating Officer, Emmis Corporation



Baseball Icons: Willie Mays, Ken Griffey Sr., Jeff Smulyan, and Ken Griffey Jr.



For readers of Indiana Broadcast Pioneers Broadcast Beat, Smulyan penned this short essay:

WHAT BROADCASTING HAS MEANT TO ME

It's hard to believe that I started my career as an Indiana Broadcaster 50 years ago. I'm not sure where the years went, but it's been a long, fun, sometimes very strange ride. As we decided to sell our stations and embark on new businesses, I decided to write down my thoughts in what became a book, *Never Ride a Rollercoaster Upside Down*. The book gave me a chance to recollect my thoughts about the amazing experiences and people I have encountered in all of years I've been in business.

I tried to make the stories interesting and some of them were remarkably fun to retell. Beyond the funny stories, my goal in the book was to impart the lessons I've learned in all these years, some of them very painful, but all of them fascinating.

When people ask me the most important lessons that I've learned, I always start with creating the right culture. More than any economic success I've had, I'm proudest of the culture at Emmis, one of collaboration and mutual trust and respect. I can't believe the kind words I've had from so many people who have worked with us over the years and how much they value the culture.

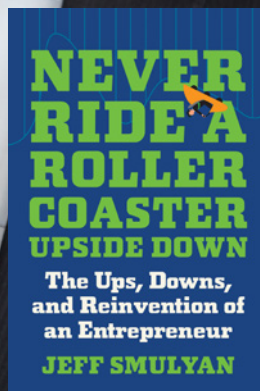
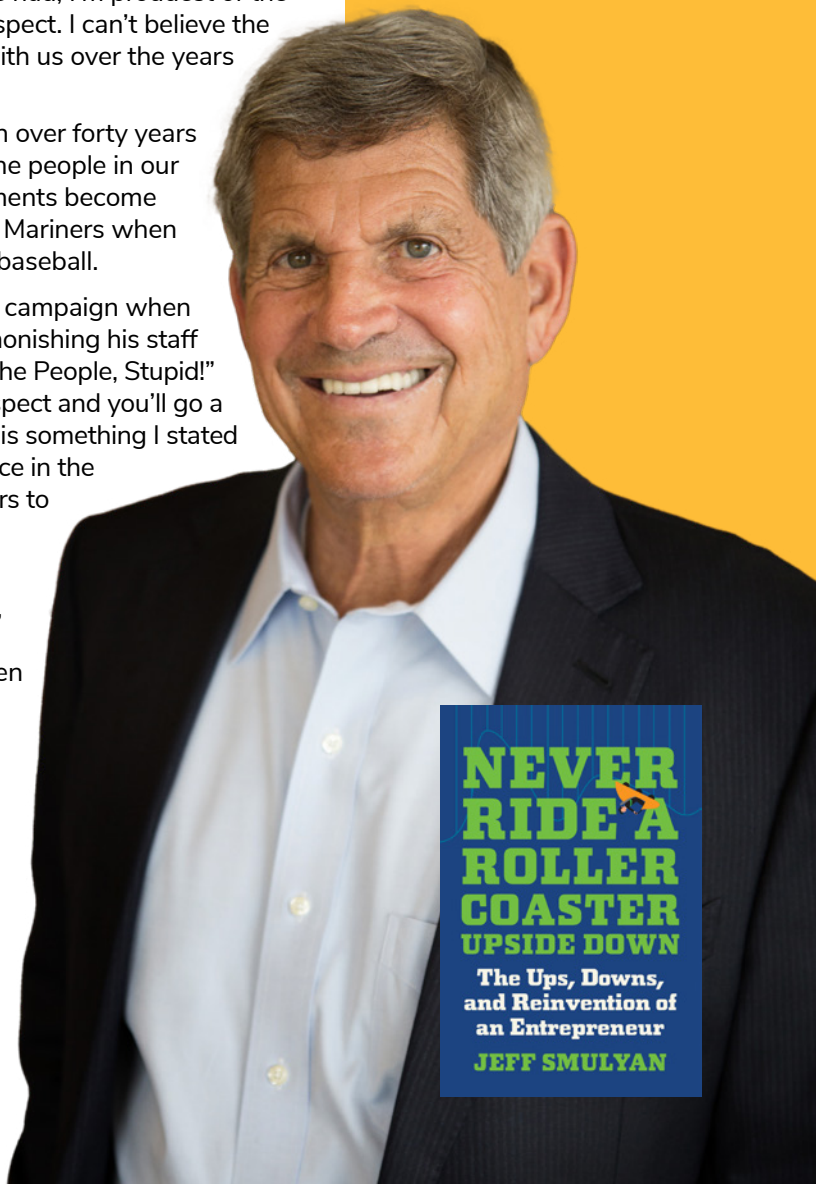
When I wrote the "Ten Commandments of Emmis" on a napkin over forty years ago, I never imagined how much impact they would have on the people in our company for so many decades. Of course, the Ten Commandments become the Eleven Commandments after our ownership of the Seattle Mariners when we added "Admit your Mistakes" after our challenging time in baseball.

There's a maxim from James Carville about President Clinton's campaign when he posted in their offices, "It's the Economy, Stupid!" when admonishing his staff what to focus on. For my career, I would counsel anyone, "It's the People, Stupid!" Take care of your people, listen to them and treat them with respect and you'll go a long way toward creating a winning culture. A corollary of that is something I stated many years ago: "I've never met anyone who came into the office in the morning and tried to screw up their job." It's the job of managers to give your people the tools they need to succeed.

I'm often asked, what's the most important Commandment of Emmis, and I always respond, "Never jeopardize your integrity, we win the right way or we don't win at all." Saying it more simply, when your word is good, nothing else matters and when your word isn't good, nothing else matters either.

I hope you'll read "Never Ride a Rollercoaster Upside Down" and that you'll have as much fun reading it as I did writing it. I've been asked countless times if the stories are all true and I assure you they are. For those who would rather listen to me, you can download the audio book. However, I must caution you. The CIA bought hundreds of copies of the audio book. They found that prisoners in Guantanamo would rather be waterboarded than have to listen to me for ten hours!

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TAKE TWO



ON AIR

YOUR SUPPORT MATTERS.

Become a Member of the Indiana Broadcast Pioneers

A renewal form for your Indiana Broadcast Pioneers Membership Dues is included with this issue. Please return your form with a check, or renew online.



I B P



From the President:

by Dave White

INDIANA BROADCAST PIONEERS PRESIDENT

In the mid 1970's I was on two Indianapolis radio stations and one TV station all at the same time. I was live on WFMS and on prerecorded programs on WIFE radio and WISH-TV. The first time I was on WISH

TV I was anxious to get feedback from my pre-school daughter, Jennifer. I came home and asked, "Did you see Daddy on TV, Jenny?" With her lower lip sticking out, she nodded slowly as a tear trickled out of her eye. "What's wrong Jenny?" "I waved at you Daddy but you didn't wave back," she said.

Some years later my first-grader son and I were riding in the car listening to the radio. A commercial with my voice came on the radio. My son Josh said, "That sounds like you, Daddy." "It is," I answered. He looked surprised.

While my work in broadcasting was mentioned at home, for my young children work was just something their father went away and did.

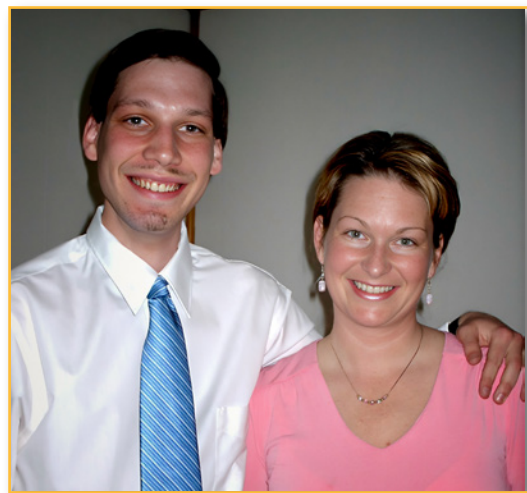
I had not taken the time to discuss the details of what I did and how it worked.

A few months later, Phil Foley and I started cohosting our prerecorded music videos program, Power Source. I was anxious to show off for my son so I sat him down in front of the TV as the program began. After a couple of minutes, he picked up his toy airplane and with buzzing noises began to "fly" out of the room. I was devastated and responded rather childishly, "Josh, do know how many children in your class at school have daddies on TV?" He shook his head no. "You're the only one." He sat down and watched the rest of the show.

Many of us in broadcasting probably have stories to tell about our children and their responses to our work. Today, with Zoom and various forms of social media, mom or dad on the screen or coming out of a speaker have lost their novelty. However, the long-term impact of having a parent in media is still significant, especially for those who choose to follow in their parent's footsteps.

My daughter didn't go into broadcasting but she did follow me in my other career as a rehabilitation administrator. Meanwhile, Josh's television production skills acquired at Franklin College resulted in us partnering to form DreamVision Media Partners. For over 20 years our company served mostly not-for-profits including producing the video biographies of Indiana Broadcast Pioneers Hall of Fame inductees which are on display at the Indiana State Museum.

Elsewhere in this newsletter, you will find the first of a two-part series by Mike Piggott the son of Indiana Broadcast Hall of Famer Joe Pickett. Mike shares about how he and other broadcasters followed their parents into the business. Don't miss it.



Dave's Children, Josh and Jennifer, Grown Up



A Brief History of the Indiana Broadcast Pioneers Hall of Fame (Part 1, 1981-2000)

By R. Dale Ogden

FORMER CURATOR AT THE INDIANA STATE MUSEUM, RETIRED ARCHIVIST, INDIANA BROADCAST PIONEERS

In 1981, a small group of Hoosier broadcasters founded the Indiana Broadcast Pioneers Hall of Fame (IBPHF) to recognize individuals associated with broadcasting in the state who had made a significant contribution to the industry.

During the first years of that society's existence, the IBPHF was essentially a paper entity. Less than 2-dozen, mostly retired, broadcasters gathered at one Indiana hotel or another to share memories and induct a new class of honorees at what attendees lovingly referred to as their annual "prune breakfast."

That limited purpose changed in 1985 when veteran broadcaster, Reid "Chuckles" Chapman and the chairman of Butler University's department of radio and television, Jim Phillippe, approached the Indiana State Museum (ISM) about providing a home for the Hall of Fame.

Initially, ISM leadership was reluctant to install what they envisioned as "a wall of plaques." After a lively debate, it was decided the museum could provide a venue for the Hall provided it was part of an exhibit that presented a broader examination of a TBD aspect of Indiana broadcasting. The ISM's curator of history at the time was charged with inventing that exhibit.

In 1985, the Indiana State Museum was little more than a puffed-up Marion County Historical Society. The institution was housed in what not too many years before had been Indianapolis's abandoned city hall at Ohio and Alabama streets. Its collections were mainly limited to quilts, old clothing, fossils and "arrowheads." The rookie curator located the ISM's radio "collection" hiding under sheets of visqueen in a room used for mixing paint. There was little else that related to broadcasting to be found. Prospects for a credible exhibit were not ideal.

With the invaluable assistance of a phalanx of dedicated Pioneers, a collection, and an exhibit, began to take shape. After updating their station, WBAA, Purdue University donated equipment from an entire 1940s control room. Hezzie Trietsch's "Wabash Washboard" and other items from Arcadia, Indiana's Hoosier Hot Shots were donated by Trietsch's widow, Bessie.

Muncie's, Don Burton, founded WLBC in 1926 in his parent's parlor. Burton donated several of his early microphones to help the ISM recreate his first performance



Reid Chapman got his start at WAOV, Vincennes in 1943 and was soon hosting "Breakfast with Chuckles" (after his sponsor, chuckles candy), telling jokes and performing skits on Indy's WISH-AM. In 1956, he became GM of WANE-AM, Ft. Wayne and in 1958, VP and GM of WANE-TV. Chuckles Chapman was president of both the Indiana and national Broadcast Pioneers and co-founder of the IBPHF.

studio, complete with a piano for his girlfriend and a wooden floor for his most colorful entertainers – tap dancers.

The ISM's radio collection was restored and clips from Superman, the Lone Ranger, the '49 Indy 500 and many other classics were piped into the gallery.

Most notably, scores of photos to accompany brief bios of the 39 broadcasters who had been inducted into the Hall by 1986 were reproduced and placed in an alcove where the Indiana Broadcast Pioneers Hall of Fame was presented to the public for the first time.

On October 16, 1986, Bippus, Indiana's IBPHF honoree, Chris Schenkel, cut the ribbon and guests streamed into On The Air; Indiana Radio, 1920-1950. Sitting at the WBAA console, Shenkel reminisced wistfully, "This is where I learned to be a broadcaster." Gabe Ward, the then last surviving member of the Hoosier Hot Shots played "I like Bananas Cause They Have No Bones" on his clarinet before donating the "licorice stick" to the ISM.

In 1958, WTHI Terre Haute's, Betty Chadwick-Sullivan, became the nation's first female TV photojournalist. She was the first female photographer allowed in the pits at the Indianapolis 500 and in 1979 became executive producer of WTHI-TV News.



Once On the Air debuted, collecting artifacts from IBPHF members became a simpler task. WRTV-6 (formerly WFBM-TV) chief engineer, Bob Flanders, donated Indiana's first TV camera. In 1948, with the help of technicians sent from CBS in New York, Flanders and his engineers built the camera in the WFBM lab. Its first use was to broadcast the 1949 Indy 500 to the few hundred local homes that possessed a TV. It was the first time The Race had been aired.

In 1930, WFBM chief engineer, Martin Williams of Cambridge City, built Indy's first two-way radio mobile news unit. In 1957, Williams founded WFMS, Indianapolis's first permanent commercial FM station. Two of Williams' personal radios replaced generic models in On the Air.

Perhaps the most important legacy from the early days of the IBPHF is the volume "In The Public Interest; Oral Histories of Hoosier Broadcasters," which was published by the Indiana Historical Society in 1999. Largely the work of historians Linda Weintraut and Jane Nolan, with the assistance of this writer and IBPHF members Darrell Wible and Reid Chapman, the heavily illustrated

coffee-table book is a compilation of conversations conducted over several years with 27 Indiana Pioneers who were instrumental in the establishment and/or growth of radio and TV broadcasting in the state.

In addition to Burton, Chapman and Phillippe, Pioneers like Marthabel Geisler, who had been with WFBM founder, Frank Sharp, since 1930, Luke Walton who recreated baseball games from teletype in the '40s, Indiana's first female DJ, Ann Wagner, and the NBA Ft. Wayne Pistons' play-by-play man, Hilliard Gates, participated. More recent radio/TV legends like Howard Caldwell, Tom Carnegie, Jeff Smulyan and Indy's first female African American TV news reporter and later anchor, Barbara Boyd, were included.

The first 20 years of the Indiana Broadcast Pioneers Hall of Fame marked a beginning, but only a beginning. Messrs. Bill Shirk and Dave White recently created a fund to upgrade the technology used to present the IBPHF at the Indiana State Museum. In addition to these Pioneers, Jeff Smulyan, Ken Beckley, Ken Speck and the Bob Ross Foundation contributed assets.



In the early 1930s, WLBC was one of the first Indiana stations to broadcast high school games. Over the next four-plus decades, station founder, Don Burton, called nearly 1,000 Muncie football and basketball contests.



The voice of the Pro Bowlers Assoc. and the New York football Giants, in 1956, Chris Schenkel, was first to cover The Masters on TV and in 1968, the first to anchor live Olympic coverage. He's pictured interviewing basketball great, Bill Russell, in the blazer he donated to the ISM.



In the 1930s, WFBM Indianapolis chief engineer, Martin Williams, did the original engineering for the Indiana State Police communication network. In 1940, he became a consulting engineer, helping to put several Indiana radio stations on the air.

For an update on the Hall's last two decades, see the next issue of "Indiana Broadcast Pioneers Broadcast Beat." The ISM continues to collect memorabilia from Indiana Broadcast Pioneers. Contact this writer for more information. Rdogden53@gmail.com 317-699-0534





Family Ties by Mike Piggott

In 1980 I was lucky enough to land a job at WIBC radio as a reporter and evening news anchor. I had to use the name Jim Vincent because my dad was a morning anchor along with Fred Heckman and you just couldn't have two Piggotts at the same station. Working with my dad was the proudest time of my life.



Roy Rogers became a legend after being part of the group Sons of the Pioneers. More than a dozen Indiana broadcasters followed their pioneer dads into meaningful broadcast careers.

Kevin Gregory is part of what is certainly the best-known father-son duo in Indianapolis television. Bob forecast the weather on WTHR from 1972 until retiring in 2000. Son Kevin has an even longer tenure on WRTV. Kevin says, "I was in second grade when my father arrived at WTHR Channel 13 in 1972. Almost every Friday night I followed in his footsteps to watch the late newscast. I could help move magnetic weather symbols, temperatures, and cold fronts on the old magnetic weather map. That's assuming I could reach the proper location. I was geographically limited to helping in Indiana since I wasn't tall enough to reach Wisconsin or Michigan. He never could have predicted that those trips to the station would spark a journey that continues today. I'm in my 35th year of forecasting at WRTV!"

My life in radio and television was due to my dad, Joe Pickett, who worked at several Indiana radio and television stations, notably WFBM, WXLW and WIBC. I've told anyone who asks that he couldn't teach me how to hammer a nail straight, but he taught me how to read.

Before getting his own show on WFBM in the mid-1960s, he was the morning traffic reporter. The news vehicle was often my morning ride to high school, and I got an early education on how to concentrate on the police radio. I'm guessing the traffic situation at 16th and Emerson near the high school was the most over-reported in Indy. Those rides helped inspire me toward a 30-year radio and television career in Lafayette.

One of the proudest moments of my life was introducing my dad at his induction into the Hall of Fame and another was the time Joe and WIBC won an annual award for best large market newscast, and I won the award for the small market at the same ceremony.



I'm not the only Piggott kid to follow in Joe's footsteps. Jim Piggott is a television reporter in Jacksonville but started in radio. In 1980 I was lucky enough to land a job at WIBC radio as a reporter and evening news anchor. I had to use the name Jim Vincent because my dad was a morning anchor along with Fred Heckman and you just couldn't have two Piggotts at the same station. Working with my dad was the proudest time of my life.

Wally Baker was one of early WIFE "Good Guys", on the air as Troy Summers. He also preceded two sons in the business. Son Scott was on the air at WZPL and WENS and spent 14 years with Metro Traffic before moving into a marketing position with the Indiana Pacers. Brian Baker spent 15 years in Los Angeles radio before becoming a digital content creator at WIBC.

Not all the pioneer broadcast legacies are sons. Steve Sweitzer's 30 years of photojournalism at WISH inspired daughter Erin to a career in television, now as a late news producer in Philadelphia. Erin tells of the times she accompanied her dad to several "bring your daughter to work days." She says, "I fell in love with the atmosphere in the newsroom and being allowed to tag along with reporters as they covered stories." The annual National Press Photographers Association conventions served as family vacations and she says, "I was always taken by the tremendous storytelling in the winning contest pieces."

Another three-decade WISH photographer, Jim Hester, had a similar effect on his son. Trey Hester is now employed by Indiana's Department of Workforce Development, but covered news as a photographer at WANE and WXIN.

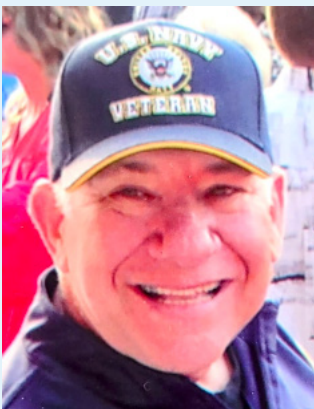
There are many similar stories and in a future edition of this newsletter I'll tell you about the sons who followed Bob Kiley, Vince Welch, Joe Boyle, Jerry Chapman and Dennis Goins into Indiana broadcasting,

If there are others, let me know at piggott@purdue.edu



Ruth Steele Reed, 89, became the company treasurer for her dad Vincent Steele's Owensboro on the Air, Inc., after he started 1420AM WVJS in Owensboro, Kentucky, and in 1948, he started 96.1FM WSTO in Owensboro, Kentucky. Ruth worked at WVJS/WSTO until they sold the stations and other entities in 1983. Obituary link: <https://obits.glennfuneralhome.com/ruth-reed>

Ron Sexton, 52, was a comedic voice on The Bob and Tom Show. Ron tragically who died in July at age 52. He played a host of characters on the popular Indianapolis-based syndicated morning show, but he was overwhelmingly known as Donnie Baker. Ron attended an Franklin Central High School and learned the broadcasting craft on their WRFT radio station. Obituary link: <https://www.legacy.com/us/obituaries/legacyremembers/ron-sexton-obituary?pid=204964276>



Bill Collins, 51, was a former Fort Wayne broadcaster that died in a dump truck accident. His Indiana broadcasting career included stops in mornings ('Collins in the Morning with Annette Roy') at what was then 1380am WQHK in Fort Wayne, and mornings at 93.3fm WBTU in Fort Wayne, and then into station management at the then-Kovas Communications-owned radio stations in Fort Wayne. Obituary link: <https://memorials.fairhavenfortwayne.com/william-collins/5263660/>

Larry Battson, 71, died September 1 in Greencastle. Larry was a wildlife expert, educator, and entertainer as well as a Bigfoot authority. He appeared on many national television shows with his animals including "Mutual of Omaha's Wild Kingdom", "The Tonight Show" and "Oprah Winfrey Show," among many others. He was a regular guest through the 1980's on WISH-TV Channel 8's "Cowboy Bob Show", "The Jim Gerrard Show," and most recently he appeared on Patty Spitler's "Pet Pals" TV program. Larry was a broadcaster on 91.1fm WIRE (Radio Mom) in Lebanon for 10 years. He had 3 national podcasts "Blog Talk Radio", "Animal Stories" and "Talking Bigfoot". Obituary link: <https://www.indystar.com/obituaries/ins153518>



TAKE SIX



IBA INDIANA
BROADCASTERS
ASSOCIATION



Renew and Remember!

The Indiana Broadcasters Association is delighted to have the active engagement of an entire committee of Indiana Broadcast Pioneers who help our organization by recommending honorees for the annual Hall of Fame and also edit the "Broadcast Beat" magazine. **We're grateful for their support, but also the annual membership dues paid by all Indiana Broadcast Pioneers.**

Your annual \$25 dues invoice is enclosed with this issue, and we hope you'll take a moment to either pay online or send a check.

This is also a tremendous opportunity to make a difference in the life of a young person by sending a separate check made out to the Indiana Broadcasters Foundation to support the annual Scholarship Program. For the past several years, **we've awarded ten \$5,000 scholarships each year to deserving students enrolled in Indiana broadcasting, journalism, and production programs at Hoosier institutions.** Our Pioneers contribute annually to the Reid Chapman Scholarship, with contributions matched directly by the IBA to insure that one of those scholarships is issued each year.

I hope you'll consider making a contribution to the Indiana Broadcasters Foundation when you also renew your Pioneers Membership with the Indiana Broadcasters Association.

Dave Arland

Executive Director, Indiana Broadcasters Association



IBP



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