



Ladies of the Pioneer Board

Tina Cosby, Anne Ryder & Patty Spitler



BROADCAST BEAT

Letter from the Editor

by **Bill Shirk**

Indiana Broadcast Pioneers Broadcast Beat Editor

Here is the Pioneer Mission Statement, goals and ongoing projects as approved by the Pioneer Board in June 2022:

The Indiana Broadcast Pioneers Organization has a primary mission of recognizing outstanding career achievements by Individual, especially those demonstrating a lifetime of distinctive service in the public interest.

Our goal is to induct Broadcasters, alive or deceased, who have shown exemplary qualities and standards in their industry-related work that would make them valued members of The Indiana Broadcast Pioneer's Hall of Fame. Founded in 1974, The Indiana Broadcast Pioneers, is a non-profit organization in support of public service, diversity, education, fellowship and the preservation of our states rich broadcast history.

Current on-going projects include a webpage, a semiannual magazine (Broadcast Beat), an exhibit at the Indiana State Museum, Indiana Broadcast History Archives (IBHA) at Indiana University and a plan of expanding our outreach to other Indiana museums, universities and sites.

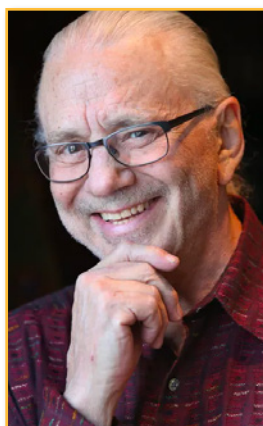


Table of Contents

In Memoriam	3
Patty Spitler: Pet Pal Pioneer.....	4
Tina Cosby: My Career At A Glance	8
Anne Ryder: War Stories	10
Indiana Broadcast Pioneers Hall of Fame.....	14
Funny How Things Happen! By Dick Wolfsie	20
Television's "Golden Age" - Then & Now By Lee Giles.....	24
IBA Scholarships	Back Cover

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



<https://www.schmidtfuneralhomeerie.com/obituaries/Paul-A-Strater?obId=31645247>

Paul A. Strater, 56, passed away Saturday, May 25, 2024. He was a Fort Wayne broadcaster in the 1990s, doing talk shows on WGL 1250am, WQHK 1380am, and WOWO 1190am. He also did some radio engineering work. <https://www.schmidtfuneralhomeerie.com/obituaries/Paul-A-Strater?obId=31645247>



James Clifford Hutson Jr., 55, of Columbus, died Saturday, January 6, 2024 at Our Hospice of South-Central Indiana Inpatient Facility. He was born in Lawrenceburg, IN, on July 22, 1968. Jim was Vice President of Good Shepherd Radio in Columbus, Indiana (WYGS, WKJD, etc.), and CMA/Wheels of Faith. He received the Singing News Golden Mic Award. <https://www.jewellrittman.com/obituaries/James-Hutson-8/#!/TributeWall>.

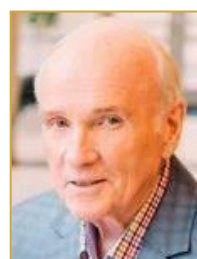
James Clifford Hutson Jr., 55, of Columbus, died Saturday, January 6, 2024 at Our Hospice of South-Central Indiana Inpatient Facility. He was born in Lawrenceburg, IN, on July 22, 1968. Jim was Vice President of Good Shepherd Radio in Columbus, Indiana (WYGS, WKJD, etc.), and CMA/Wheels of Faith. He received the Singing News Golden Mic Award. <https://www.jewellrittman.com/obituaries/James-Hutson-8/#!/TributeWall>.



Raymond Albert Roth, 78, who was well known in northern Indiana for his lengthy career as a television reporter and videographer, died on June 25, 2024. He had battled cancer for several years. In July 1967, Ray began his 38-year career at WSBT Channel 22, in South Bend, first as a cameraman and chief cameraman, carrying a heavy film camera on his shoulder before broadcast technology evolved to videography. Ray was promoted to assignment editor then named Elkhart Bureau chief and later Plymouth Bureau chief. Ray's investigative reporting of the Four County Landfill's illegal disposal of hazardous waste that polluted ground water and the Tippecanoe River resulted in Federal charges which shut down the facility.

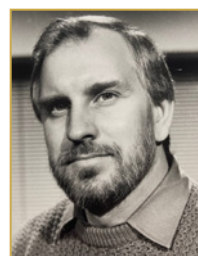
Raymond Albert Roth, 78, who was well known in northern Indiana for his lengthy career as a television reporter and videographer, died on June 25, 2024. He had battled cancer for several years. In July 1967, Ray began his 38-year career at WSBT Channel 22, in South Bend, first as a cameraman and chief cameraman, carrying a heavy film camera on his shoulder before broadcast technology evolved to videography. Ray was promoted to assignment editor then named Elkhart Bureau chief and later Plymouth Bureau chief. Ray's investigative reporting of the Four County Landfill's illegal disposal of hazardous waste that polluted ground water and the Tippecanoe River resulted in Federal charges which shut down the facility.

In 1988, Ray earned an Associated Press award for "Indiana Best TV Documentary of the Year" for his documentary on the 25th anniversary of the closing of the Studebaker automobile manufacturing plant. He also earned a state Associated Press award in 1989 for his 25th anniversary coverage of the 1964 Palm Sunday tornadoes. Ray retired from WSBT on November 30, 2005. <https://www.palmerfuneralhomes.com/obituary/Raymond-Roth>



Philip H. Jones, 87, passed away on August 24, 2024. He was born in Fairmount, Indiana and graduated from Fairmount High School before completing his college studies at Indiana University. Phil landed his first professional job at WTHI-TV/ Terre Haute, Indiana. After six years at WCCO-TV/Minneapolis-St. Paul, Phil received a call from CBS News. His 32-year career at the network included stops in Atlanta, Vietnam, Hong Kong and Washington, D.C. In 2001 Phil and his wife retired to Naples, Florida. Phil is an Indiana Broadcast Hall of Fame Member. <https://www.shikanyfuneralhome.com/obituaries/Philip-Jones-17/#!/TributeWall>

Philip H. Jones, 87, passed away on August 24, 2024. He was born in Fairmount, Indiana and graduated from Fairmount High School before completing his college studies at Indiana University. Phil landed his first professional job at WTHI-TV/ Terre Haute, Indiana. After six years at WCCO-TV/Minneapolis-St. Paul, Phil received a call from CBS News. His 32-year career at the network included stops in Atlanta, Vietnam, Hong Kong and Washington, D.C. In 2001 Phil and his wife retired to Naples, Florida. Phil is an Indiana Broadcast Hall of Fame Member. <https://www.shikanyfuneralhome.com/obituaries/Philip-Jones-17/#!/TributeWall>



Michael Charles "Mike" Eckstein, 71, passed away on July 9, 2024, after a valiant battle with cancer. After college at Indiana University, Mike became a Photojournalist at WKJG-TV/ Fort Wayne, where he was a multi-year winner of Photographer of the Year. He continued his career at WTHR-TV/Indianapolis for over 26 years, where he also received many awards for his outstanding work. <https://www.dignitymemorial.com/obituaries/fort-wayne-in/michael-eckstein-11892666>

Michael Charles "Mike" Eckstein, 71, passed away on July 9, 2024, after a valiant battle with cancer. After college at Indiana University, Mike became a Photojournalist at WKJG-TV/ Fort Wayne, where he was a multi-year winner of Photographer of the Year. He continued his career at WTHR-TV/Indianapolis for over 26 years, where he also received many awards for his outstanding work. <https://www.dignitymemorial.com/obituaries/fort-wayne-in/michael-eckstein-11892666>



Pet Pal Pioneer

by Patty Spitler

When I pulled into the WISH-TV parking lot in 1982, I had no idea that what I was about to do would shape my entire career in broadcasting. After several years and several cities in radio, I was at WISH to audition for co-host of the TV show *Indianapolis Afternoon*. I had done some TV in the past, and with my theater background I thought it would be a great change of pace to do it full time.

I got the job, but nine months later the show was canceled. I was under contract to the station, so I then became the “weather girl,” which was laughable since I was clueless about what I was doing. But then I was asked to be co-anchor of the noon news, and that’s where I stayed until 2004. Along the way I started interviewing celebrities and reviewing movies for the station, creating a side job as an entertainment reporter, and even won an Emmy for a TV special I did on game shows. Yes, TV was a good fit!

Most people didn’t know it, but in 1987 I was diagnosed with Meniere’s Disease, a hearing loss which affects the inner ear. It causes dizziness, tinnitus and other debilitating symptoms. Sometimes it was hard to hear instructions from the control room through my IFD. Someone once told me I was probably the only news anchor to keep working for 17 years with progressive hearing loss! When I walked out of the newsroom for the last time on Christmas Eve 2004, I had no idea where life would take me. I had just retired from what I loved most – work. It’s what drives me.

I spent the next few years in a depression,

Pictured right: Patty, Mabel and Stewie



“One of my biggest honors was being inducted into the Indiana Broadcast Pioneers Hall of Fame in 2018, which never would have been possible without my second chance at broadcasting.”

fueled with alcohol and trips to a psychiatrist. One day I was going through family photos and saw Duke, my childhood dog, and remembered how much joy he brought me. I researched dog breeds and soon I was the owner of Louie, a Bernese Mountain Dog, who became my dog park buddy.

One thing that has always been a constant in my life is animals. I grew up with cats, dogs, a bunny and many other critters that I considered my friends. A house full of pets has always made me happy. Adding Louie to the kitties I had at the time made my house feel whole. And yes, I feed critters on my porch, too.



Patty Spitler and Dick Wolfie first teamed up together on WISH-TV

**PET
PALS^{TV}**





By luck or serendipity, in 2009 a former producer at WISH-TV knocked on my door and asked if I'd like to do a pet show. It would be independent programming and I would be a host, reporter and producer, telling positive stories about the relationships between people and animals. Pet Pals TV was born and still going strong after 15 years, unheard of in independent programming. In 2014 our company, INDY Audio-Visual Productions, launched Great Day TV, which covers interesting people and places.

With hearing aids, I was able to do one-on-one interviews. And in 2019 I underwent a cochlear implant, a device that has improved my hearing tremendously. Several days a week I appear on WISH-TV news or its lifestyle show, bringing in guests and doing movie reviews as a contributor. I am back in business, doing what I love!

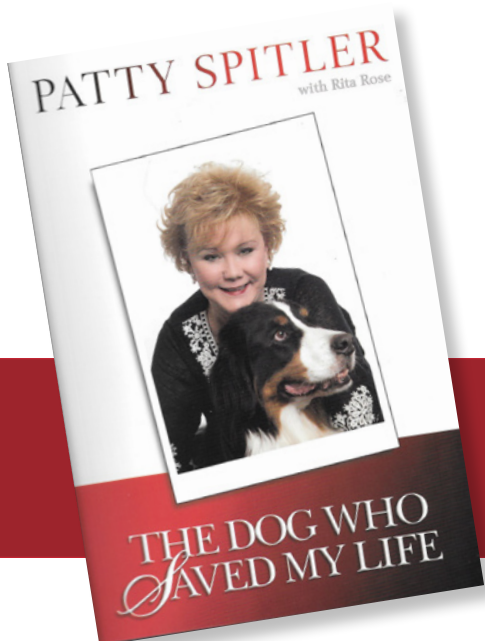
Among Patty's favorite interviews was done with Hollywood actor Kevin Costner



One of my biggest honors was being inducted into the Indiana Broadcast Pioneers Hall of Fame in 2018, which never would have been possible without my second chance at broadcasting. To be in the same class as some of my longtime, respected colleagues is humbling.

My life as a broadcaster has been an incredible ride. I have met some wonderful people and a few crazies. I have traveled to Hollywood, New York and overseas in pursuit of the good stories we like to tell as journalists. I have learned so much along the way, and I wouldn't trade my experiences – good or bad – for anything. I have always said that I'm a lucky old broad!

In 2021, along with my assistant Rita Rose, I wrote my autobiography, *The Dog Who Saved My Life*. It not only tells the story of my life, it also pays homage to Louie, who helped me live again after thinking I had no career options, at least not in broadcasting. But here I am. And I am most grateful.



Get Patty's book at www.petpalstv.com/shop



My Career At A Glance

by Tina Cosby

When you've been in the field of broadcast journalism for nearly 40 years, you've seen a lot, experienced a lot, and hopefully, learned a lot. I count myself among those who have been fortunate enough to be able to check all of the above.

The majority of my career has been in television. After my graduation from Indiana University, things began in Chattanooga, Tennessee, at WTVN-Channel 9, and then continued for the next several years at WISH-TV in Indianapolis. In Chattanooga, I was first in news as a reporter and part-time anchor.



Shortly after, I spent the next 30-plus years at WISH-TV in Indianapolis, fulfilling roles as a reporter, an anchor/reporter, an anchor, and in management as a community affairs director.

My latest chapter is radio, at Radio One in Indianapolis, where I host a daily radio talk show and assist with community affairs. I've always been curious about radio and thought I might like it if the right situation came along, which, ironically, it did.

I was asked recently, of all the positions I've held, which did I like best? The answer, of course, was—and is—all of them. That's because every job has been a season, and every season has been a life-affirming journey.

The awards and special recognition along the way have been nice. But, if I were to say broadcasting is something I've wanted to do all my life, nothing could be further from the truth. I did not choose this career; as the old saying goes, it chose me. But I'm glad it did. Among other things, it's allowed for my natural curiosity, my long-held love of storytelling, my never-ending interest in robust conversation, and every now and then, an opportunity to do some good.

When I was first asked to join the Broadcast Pioneers, I have to admit, I was surprised.

“The Pioneers are about people, and I have had the pleasure of working with some of the best you’ll ever want to know.”



It wasn't that I hadn't spent 40-some years in the business and didn't know about the trailblazers. It was more like, what could I possibly add? But then I had to look at it another way. When you've been in this as long as I have, sometimes you forget that broadcasting is not an everyday occupation. So therefore, someone like me, who's been around it for a while, just might have something to add. From that perspective, it was easy to jump on board.

The Pioneers are about people, and I have had the pleasure of working with some of the best you'll ever want to know. I can't count how many good, kind, devoted, and generous folks I've come to know over the years—not to mention several who have become lifelong friends.

To be able to help in preserving their stories and accomplishments through the Pioneers is an honor. Being a member of the Indiana Broadcast Pioneers is as much about the future as it is the past. And in this business, take it from someone who knows: those are great places to be.





War Stories

by Anne Ryder



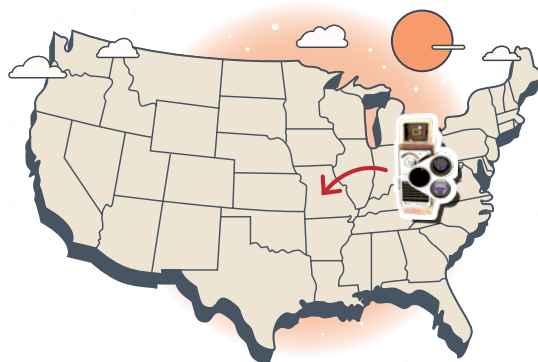
I knew at 14 that I wanted to be a broadcast journalist. The moment of “knowing” was visceral. It was 1973 and I accompanied my father to the WTHR studio where he was being interviewed for his community work to further peaceful desegregation. I walked into the newsroom and my spidey sense triggered. Chills. The good kind.

Even then, I was aware that my strengths lie in writing, speaking and my natural curiosity about people, things and news of the day. It was not lost on me that television stations across the country were under pressure to

get women on the air in high-profile reporting and anchoring roles. Nationally, trailblazers like Cassie Mackin, Nancy Dickerson, Barbara Walters, Jessica Savich, Leslie Stahl, Connie Chung and even our own Jane Pauley were “making news” by virtue of not just their skill set but their gender, and their confidence in fronting the nightly news.

At my father’s urging, I called the general managers of several of the Indianapolis stations and asked their recommendations for the best broadcast

journalism schools. I settled on The University of Missouri in Columbia. I showed up on campus not knowing a soul, and left four years later with life-long friends who have scaled the heights of local and national journalism. Ours was the last broadcast news class at Mizzou to learn how to shoot and edit





film. I remember toting the Bell and Howell camera all the way to Kansas City to ride along with a guy who repossessed cars. I captured some great footage but promptly ruined it in editing. Back to Kansas City I went to shoot the whole thing all over again.

I graduated in 1981. Remember double-digit inflation and hiring freezes? It was a dreadful year to try to find a job. As I waitressed on the side, I drew a wide radius around Indianapolis and called news directors across the region, telling them I was going to “be in the area” and asking if they had 15 minutes

“ IN 1996, I INTERVIEWED BOTH THE DALAI LAMA AND MOTHER TERESA. THE INTERVIEW WITH MOTHER TERESA IN CALCUTTA IN APRIL, A YEAR BEFORE SHE DIED, CHANGED BOTH MY LIFE AND MY CAREER-- A STORY IN AND OF ITSELF. ”

to meet with me and watch my tape. Whether or not they had an opening—and most did not-- I made appointments to visit with those willing to give me the time.

My prized possession was a pale yellow 1964 yellow F-85 Oldsmobile I had purchased for \$100 at a garage sale. It was a tank of a vehicle with no air conditioning and it consumed transmission fluid like oil. (I once backed into a brick wall. It damaged the wall but the bumper did not have a scratch.) That car was my conduit to a new life on my own. I spent a sweltering summer driving to Lafayette, Terre Haute, Ft Wayne, South Bend, Evansville, Louisville, Dayton and Columbus, Ohio, meeting with news directors. One of them told me to seek out a speech therapist because my soft lisp might hold me back. I took his advice.

After a brief stint working a vacation relief job in Lafayette Indiana and living with my grandparents, I got a call from Terre Haute. The then-news director at WTHI said he had been impressed that I made the trip to see him even when they had no openings. He had good news and bad news. His new opening was an anchor spot. The bad news?

It was a weeknight job doing the weather. Could I do the weather? Well, maybe. Umm, yes. Sure. I can try.

After a few months on the job, anchoring weather at night and reporting news in the afternoon, it became apparent the answer was a resounding no. But they liked my reporting and kept me on in that capacity. I eventually moved up the ranks to the news anchor desk.

Two years later a spot opened up at WTHR, where I had interned in college. Once again, it was not the full-time reporting job I wanted but they needed a community affairs host and a weekend producer. I dug into my backpack of Mizzou skills and went to work as the 24-year-old producer for Tom Cochrun and Karen Dillon, our then-weekend anchors. When a full time reporting spot opened up, it was mine, and I spent more than twenty years at





WTHR, rising through the ranks from weekend to morning to weeknight anchor—reporting all the while. Reporting was, and is, my first love. But anchoring gave me the cache to get approval for the stories I loved to tell.

Frustrated by the “if it bleeds it leads” mentality, I pitched what eventually became a franchise I called “Hope to Tell”: stories of hope, faith and resilience of the human spirit. They were the ultimate follow-up stories to the breaking but often negative news that so often dominated the broadcast. Months after a news-worthy event or incident, I would write a letter to the people or families involved who had endured great difficulty, asking how their faith, their friends, or just the spirit of grace pulled them through. I wanted

to capture what they learned in darkness that could bring light to other people in pain. The idea for Hope to Tell had sprung from prayer following personal frustration with the state of broadcast news.

Hope to Tell resonated with Indiana viewers, and WTHR, which back then was family-owned, put some money behind it. They funded my travel for several big “Hope to Tell” stories that had an Indiana connection. I was in Belfast Northern Ireland the Easter of the Good Friday Peace accord for a story on an Indianapolis man working with Catholic and Protestant children before they could learn to hate one another. I traveled to the refugee camps in Albania during the Kosovo war to follow food and medicine donated by Hoosiers, and to war-time

Bosnia to follow a group from Indiana making a pilgrimage to a tiny village (despite State Department warnings not to go) where many Catholics believe is an ongoing miracle involving five then-children and the Virgin Mary.

Scott O’Grady the Air Force pilot shot down over Bosnia, hunted for 5 days and rescued in dramatic fashion by the US, granted me his first interview, even before appearing with Jane Pauly on national television. Why? I told the public relations person from the hospital where he was recovering that I wanted to know what happened to him from a spiritual standpoint. As it turns out—plenty.

I went inside the Wishard Hospital level-one burn unit for a year-long shoot of the recovery of four critically-

burned painters who were in a box truck on the interstate when it exploded in a fireball. The documentary became the centerpiece of a training video sent to fire stations across North America, funded by a Homeland Security grant by the People's Burn Foundation.

In 1996, I interviewed both the Dalai Lama and Mother Teresa. The interview with Mother Teresa in Calcutta in April, a year before she died, changed both my life and my career-- a story in and of itself. (Fun fact: my crew and I ran into then WISH-TV News Director Lee Giles in the Indianapolis airport as we were about to depart on the 10,000 mile journey. He saw all the equipment and jokingly asked where we were going. As I recall, I told him he'd find out during the May sweeps.)

It's been 50 years since I first walked into that WTHR newsroom and the hair prickled at the back of my neck. Now I help teach some of the next generation of broadcasters at Indiana University in Bloomington. The business has undergone wholesale change, and Artificial Intelligence is a daunting prospect as we look ahead. There's a lot of fear around, so I'll end where I began, at the apex of the adventure, deferring to someone much wiser than me.



✧ Kahil Gilbran ✧

“FEAR”

“It is said that before entering the sea
a river trembles with fear.
She looks back at the path she has traveled,
from the peaks of the mountains,
the long winding road crossing forests and villages.
And in front of her, she sees an ocean so vast
that to enter there seems nothing more than to disappear forever.
But there is no other way.
The river cannot go back.
Nobody can go back.
To go back is impossible in existence.
The river needs to take the risk
of entering the ocean
because only then will fear disappear,
because that's where the river will know
it's not about disappearing into the ocean,
but of becoming the ocean.”



CONGRATULATIONS

**Dennis Jon Bailey**

Dennis Jon Bailey, WIKY Radio Evansville radio personality. For more than 20 years, Bailey has led the Morning Show at 104.1FM WIKY in Evansville, following on-air work in Indianapolis, Cincinnati, Dayton, and Boston.

**Ardath Burkhart**

Ardath Burkhart, civic leader and founder of Indianapolis Public TV broadcaster WFYI. Remembered as WFYI's "founding mother," Burkhart led a coalition of thousands of women in Indianapolis who went door-to-door to collect the funds needed to start a public television station in central Indiana.

**Debby Knox**

Debby Knox, WTTV and WISH Indianapolis TV news anchor. A three-time Emmy winner, Knox is a familiar face to Indianapolis viewers as an iconic anchor for news broadcasts at Channel 8 for 33 years and Channel 4 for 8 years.

Indiana Broadcast Pioneers Hall of Fame 2024 Inductees



Tony Lamont

Tony Lamont, WTLC Radio Indianapolis radio personality. Lamont's career began in gospel radio and he is long remembered as the morning man on WTLC. He is well known for his efforts to empower young people, through motivational speaking and community action.



Paul Page

Paul Page, Indianapolis Motor Speedway Radio Network. A longtime Indiana broadcaster who has worked at radio and TV stations throughout central Indiana, Page is best known for his local and network television and radio broadcast roles on race day.



Dave White

David White, Indianapolis WBRI / WXIR Radio personality and WISH-TV religion news anchor. Best known for his long service in Christian radio, White was the anchor of a weekly religious news program on television. White is immediate past president of the Indiana Broadcast Pioneers.

TAKE FIVE Indiana Broadcast Pioneers Hall of Fame Luncheon 2024





TAKE FIVE Indiana Broadcast Pioneers Hall of Fame Luncheon 2024







Funny, How Things Happen!

by Dick Wolfsie



In 1968, Dick Wolfsie, a student at George Washington University, interviews Art Buchwald, legendary humor columnist

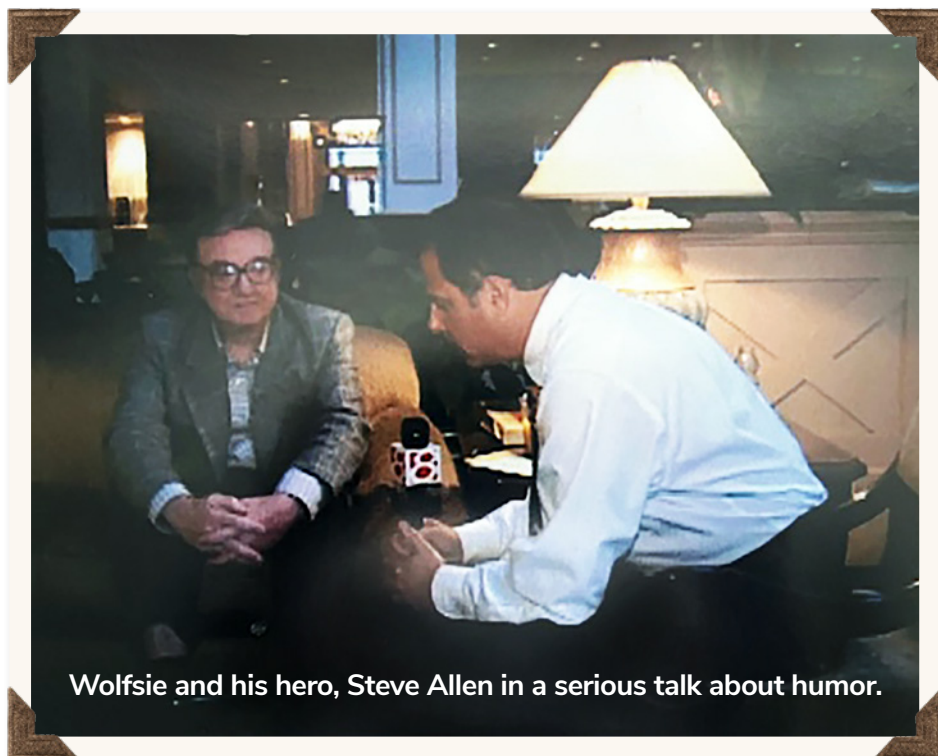
I wasn't born funny. But I was inspired in my writing and reporting by a vanishing generation of brilliant humorists. Here are three that I had a personal connection to...

In 1969, I was a student at George Washington University. My humor column, "Wolf's Whistle," was a regular feature in the school paper, The Hatchet. The name implied exactly what it

delivered: a weekly tirade not only about issues within the school but testy diatribes about the political scene in D.C.

While my college buddies on the paper wrote about racism, poverty and assorted scandals, I opted for a more humorous take on life, satirizing on topics like crummy dorm rooms, high prices at the bookstore and the sex life of a freshman. (There was none, for me, anyway.)

Dick Wolfsie's side kick for 13 years, Barney the Beagle



Wolfsie and his hero, Steve Allen in a serious talk about humor.

One afternoon back at my dorm, I decided to look up and see if the great Art Buchwald was in the phone book, knowing full well there wasn't a chance. Buchwald was the leading political humorist in the world, so zero chance of a phone number. But there it was. I called, and incredibly, he answered on the first ring. Our conversation was brief while I gushed about how great I thought his writing was and then I boldly told him that I had a column, too, in the GW newspaper. "Call my secretary and make an appointment," he grumbled, "and let's see just how funny you are." WOW!

A week later, I walked into his Pennsylvania Avenue office, just blocks from the White House. Dangling from a nail was a calendar showing a date three

months past. The floor was cluttered with newspapers going back weeks. I could smell his cigar, a fat, smelly stogie that I had first whiffed when I exited the elevator on the 12th floor. Under my arm, I had copies of *The Hatchet*.

"Let me see those," he barked as I entered his office. I watched him read my column. I stared at his face, not even a smile. There was a slight nod of the head that made me think there was a glimmer of hope that he saw some potential. Suddenly, he grabbed his pen and scribbled something atop the column. Ten minutes later his phone rang. He excused himself, exclaiming he had to run to a last-minute appointment.

I shuffled back to my dorm, a little saddened that I didn't

have more time with him. I plopped down on my bed and opened the paper to the page where Buchwald had written something. It said:

WOLFSIE, STAY OUT OF MY RACKET!

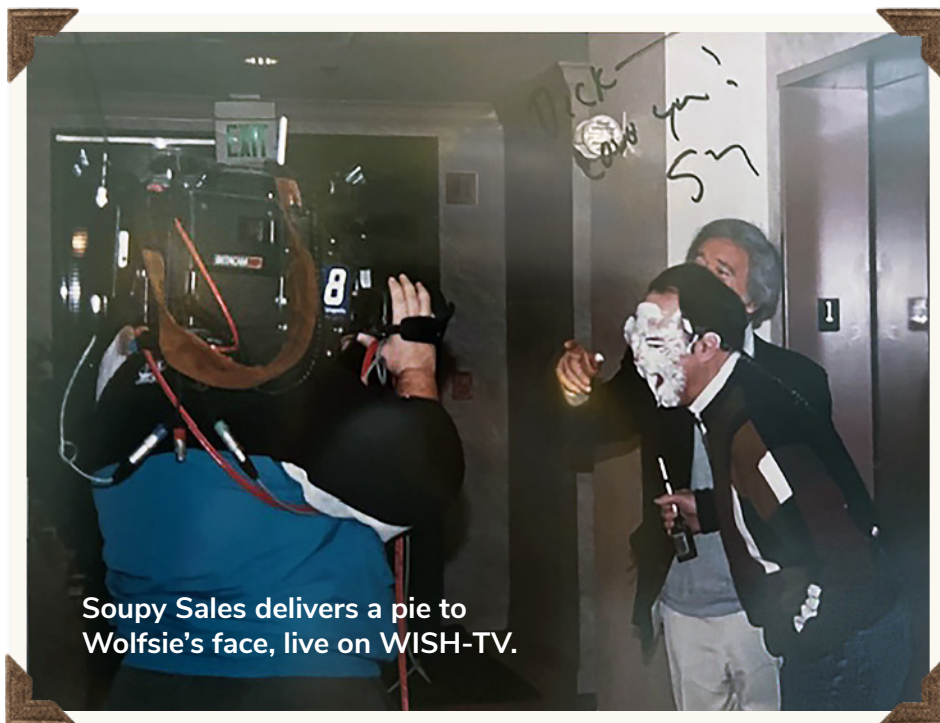
I was 21 at the time, and that was the coolest thing that had ever happened to me.

Over the years, I had casual contact with Mr. Buchwald, but when I heard he was dying several years ago, I wrote a newspaper column about his influence on me. I sent it to him at the hospice where he was spending his final days, along with a photo of the two of us in his office. Despite the thousands and thousands of letters he was probably getting, he responded to my tribute by returning the column with this note:

WOLFSIE, I TOLD YOU TO STAY OUT OF MY RACKET. I WAS SURE YOU'D END UP ROBBING 7-11 STORES

In the 50s, when my parents were glued to CBS at 8 p.m. on Sunday nights watching Ed Sullivan, I took the hipper option and retreated to the basement and watched Steve Allen on ABC.

Steve Allen would smear his body with dog food and unleash a pack of assorted dogs. He strapped a kite to his back and ran into a huge fan. Allen put a live camera on the corner of Hollywood and Vine and commented on the people who walked by. Sound familiar?



Soupy Sales delivers a pie to Wolfsie's face, live on WISH-TV.

(Continued from page 21)

Carson, Letterman and Leno have all copied that in one form or another. And have appropriately credited Allen.

Steve Allen was brilliant. He wrote about 8,000 songs and more than 50 books. But, most of all, Steve Allen was silly. And as a kid, that's what I admired about him. Fortunately, I felt the same way when I became an adult. I first met Mr. Allen during an interview when I hosted Good Morning, New York on WABC back in the early 80s. We were talking about the great comic actor Stan Laurel. "Where can you find people of that ilk anymore?" asked Mr. Allen. "You could join the Ilk's Club," I said. It was a Steve Allen kind of joke. And we both knew it. He laughed. Cackled is a better

word. Yes, I had made Steve Allen laugh. That was the second coolest thing that had ever happened to me.

Then in 1989, while hosting a local talk show here in Indy, I flew to Orlando to interview Steve Allen at the opening of MGM Theme Park in Disney World. A magazine called Us Weekly had done an article on the most influential people in the history of television. Steve Allen wasn't on the list. Incensed, I did a takeoff on Allen's old news reporter bit, slapping the magazine onto the desk in mock outrage. Jayne Meadows, his wife, who was sitting alongside, shrieked and applauded. Three weeks later I got a personal note from Steve Allen. "I watched the tape of our interview. Very funny stuff,"

“Not since the Three Stooges had anyone thrown a pie like Soupy Sales. It was an honor to get hit.”

he wrote. "You did a good job." That letter hangs on my wall. I try not to read it more than ten times a day.

If there was anyone sillier than Steve Allen, it was Soupy Sales. As a 12-year-old, I was glued to the TV while Soupy sparred with his off-camera puppet friends: White Fang, "The meanest dog in the USA," and Black Tooth, "The sweetest dog in the world." Only the paws of these puppets were shown, and White Fang did little more than grunt. Soupy would then translate the incomprehensible sounds. Soupy's other signature distinction was pie throwing. Not since the Three Stooges had anyone thrown a pie like Soupy Sales. It was an honor to get hit.

There was no studio audience for his kids' show. But you would hear the infectious laughter of the camera crew and technicians. Soupy later told me: "If you make the crew laugh, you know you're funny."

He was right. Lesson learned.

There were infamous Soupy Sales stories. And a few were urban myths. It is said that he once asked kids in the TV

audience to find “that funny green paper” in your parents’ wallets and send it to the Soupy Sales Show. That one was absolutely true.

I could never get enough Soupy Sales and when his kids’ show was finally canceled, he became a regular panelist on two classic, but banal, game shows: What’s My Line and To Tell the Truth. He was still Soupy, but so cramped by the new format that many fans lost interest in him.

In 1981, while hosting Good Morning New York, my co-host went on vacation, requiring a last-minute fill-in. “Hey, Dick, would you mind co-hosting with Soupy Sales for a week?” asked the producer. It was like winning the lottery.

In 1996, Soupy called me from his home in New York City. He wanted to do some stand-up comedy in the Midwest. “Would anyone in Indianapolis be interested?” Honestly, I wasn’t sure. A younger generation ran the comedy clubs, but fortunately Soupy’s legend had some legs.

He played Crackers Comedy Club for a week in 1996. I saw almost every show, three of them a night for almost a week. I ate lunch and dinner with Soupy for five days. “How am I doing?” he’d ask me over a big bowl of jambalaya at Dick Clark’s American Bandstand Grill. “I’m the wrong person to ask,” I told him. “I’ve seen the show eight times. Your jokes are old. I’m just laughing because you’re Soupy Sales.”

Soupy winked. “That’s why I don’t need new jokes.”

While in town, Soupy appeared on WISH TV’s Daybreak where I did four three-minute segments live on location each morning. Here was the bit we did. And we did it live, the way Soupy loved to do TV.

That morning from Soupy’s hotel, I set up this premise: Soupy Sales was staying here and I had always wanted to meet him. Throughout the show, I asked guests in the lobby if anyone had seen Soupy Sales. No one had. In the final segment, I stood by as the elevator door slid open and out walked Soupy. I have no idea how we timed this to work on live TV.

“Good morning,” I said. “Have you heard Soupy Sales is staying here?”

Soupy did his imitable take to the camera...

“I am Soupy Sales.”

“No, seriously, the real Soupy Sales is supposed to be right here in the hotel,” I said, feigning non-recognition of the star.

“I’m Soupy Sales,” he repeated, mocking frustration. Another take to the camera.

“Man, you sure got old,” I said—a planned zinger.

Suddenly (as precisely planned), a waiter walked by with a whipped cream pie in his raised hand. With pure comic grace, Soupy swept the pie from the waiter and deposited it squarely in my face. I had been hit with a pie by Soupy Sales.

And that was the third coolest thing that had ever happened to me.





Television's "Golden Age" - Then & Now

by Lee Giles

When I was hired as Editorial Director for WISH-TV in September 1963, I'm not sure that I realized the station was not yet 10-years old. But I must confess I was almost dumbfounded when a WISH employee came up to me on one of those first days in welcoming me and said, "It's too bad you missed the Golden Age of Television."

I know I expressed some great surprise at that comment, and he responded with something like (as best I can remember) "Oh, it used to be so much more exciting, even fun, when we broadcast everything LIVE." As an example he went on to say they had a complete theater auditorium in the building with a stage and seating for audiences, and had produced daily LIVE morning shows and afternoon movies with WISH hosts who generated lots of audience participation.

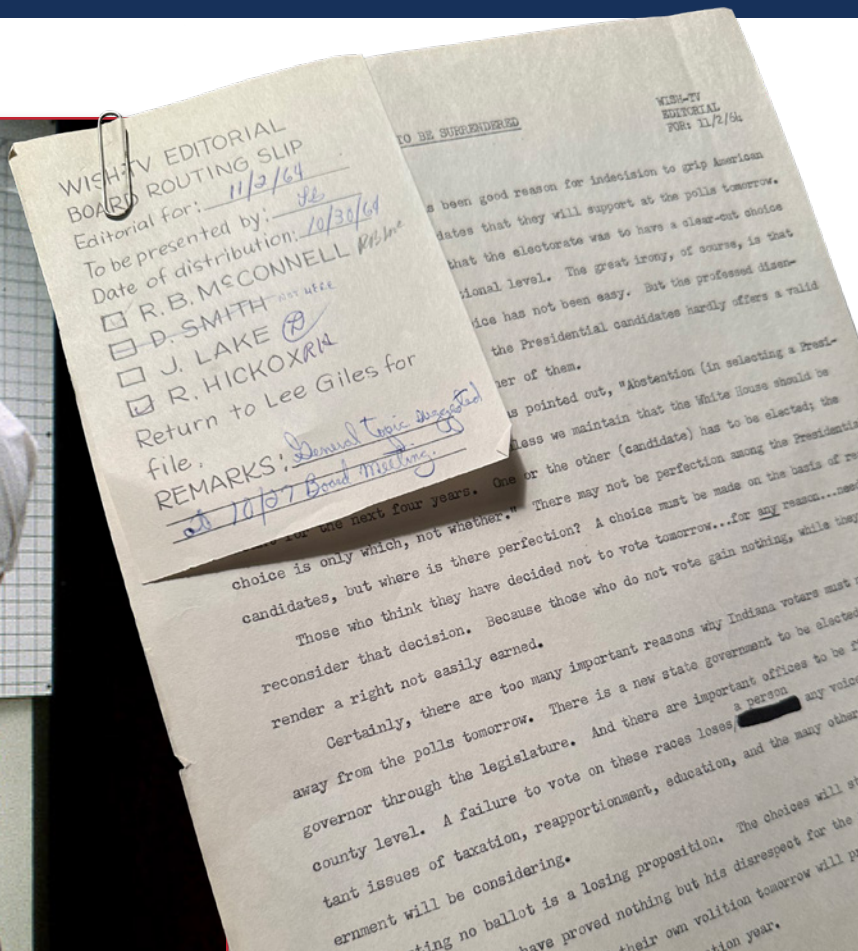
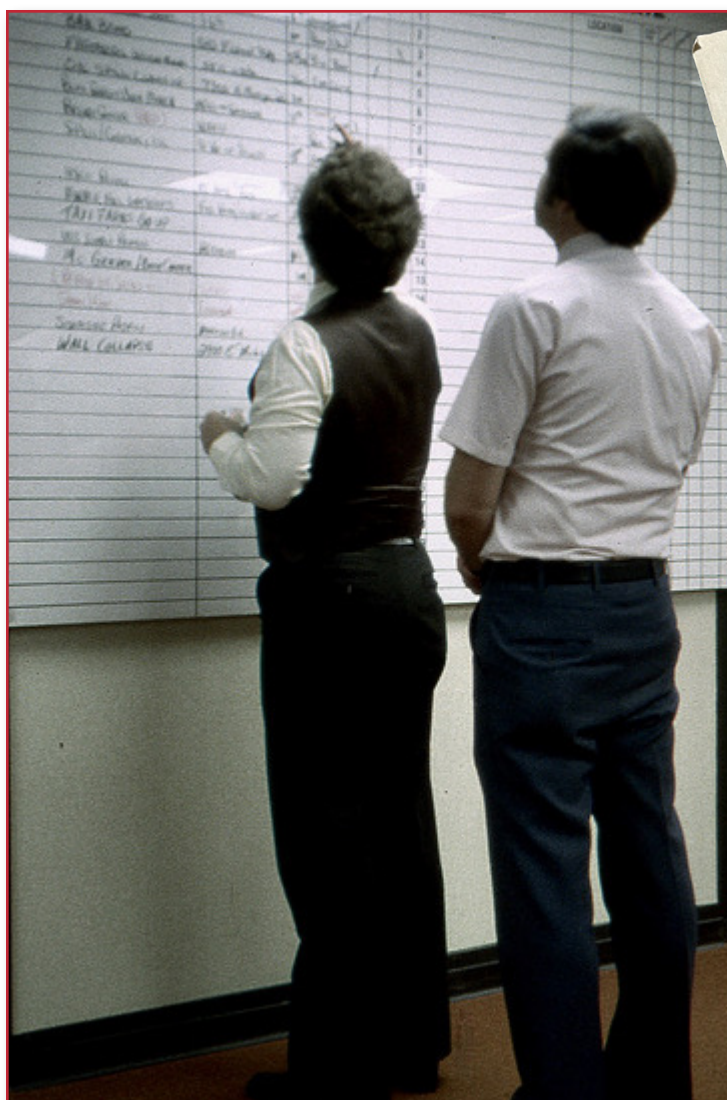
But now they had new recording machines and nearly everything was being taped in advance with a loss of spontaneity and that LIVE feeling and atmosphere that was being created with lights, cameras and activity. And he said before taping it had been great to be working in



Yes, that IS a typewriter on which (I) (Giles) spent thousand of (1960's) hours writing the daily editorials, never missing a daily broadcast (at least for the first two and more years without exception), including even when on vacation when editorials would be written, approved, and videotaped in advance of airing. This was WISH-TV's disciplined dedication to broadcasting DAILY editorials.



Lee Giles and Assistant News Director Ted Linn share a lighter moment during a staff news meeting in the WISH-TV newsroom, where news story/assignments were posted/changed/updated for the staff on an on-going basis.



An "historic" (actual) copy of a routing sheet for that day's editorial that was submitted for approval by each member of the Editorial Board before the editorial was broadcast on the evening newscast.

that way with lots more LIVE programming "...back in the beginning of local TV."

I got the picture! So I didn't expand on the business of my new job, since it was going to be both historic and impactful in Indianapolis and the state of Indiana. And the on-air presentation would be tape recorded!

WISH-TV's owner at the

time, Corinthian Broadcasting Corporation, had decided to broadcast daily editorials on its television stations nationwide beginning in that September. My job at WISH was to help identify, propose, and select possible issues for comment, and then research, write and deliver daily broadcast editorials expressing the opinions of the station management on timely matters of importance





and concern, including often controversial issues and subjects. This would be the introduction of opinions being aired within the early evening newscasts at its stations, the first daily broadcast television editorials in the state of Indiana, and Corinthian was being very careful to keep separated news and opinions so that viewers would be informed of the difference between the two.

(In Indianapolis WFBM-TV (now WRTV) occasionally aired editorials, but not on a daily basis.)

In practical arrangements, WISH-TV news and editorials would be so separated in preparation and presentation, that I would not be allowed to even have a seat or work in the station's newsroom. We established an Editorial Board chaired by the WISH general manager and any and all editorials for airing had to

be approved by the Board, and would be tape recorded in advance of airing insuring accuracy, control, and station's approval of opinions being presented. Corinthian had extensive printed procedures and practices that would validate the views being expressed to the public. And to insure fairness with views being expressed, especially with controversial issues, the public would be offered possible opportunities to reply on WISH-TV to those with legitimate differing views.

In recently reviewing printed copies of some limited files of editorials we previously aired at WISH, there is evidence that we tackled some timely issues, some of which remain very current today. Such as "The Election..." There might not be perfection among the Presidential candidates..." aired on the eve of November 2, 1963)... Abortion, "Our

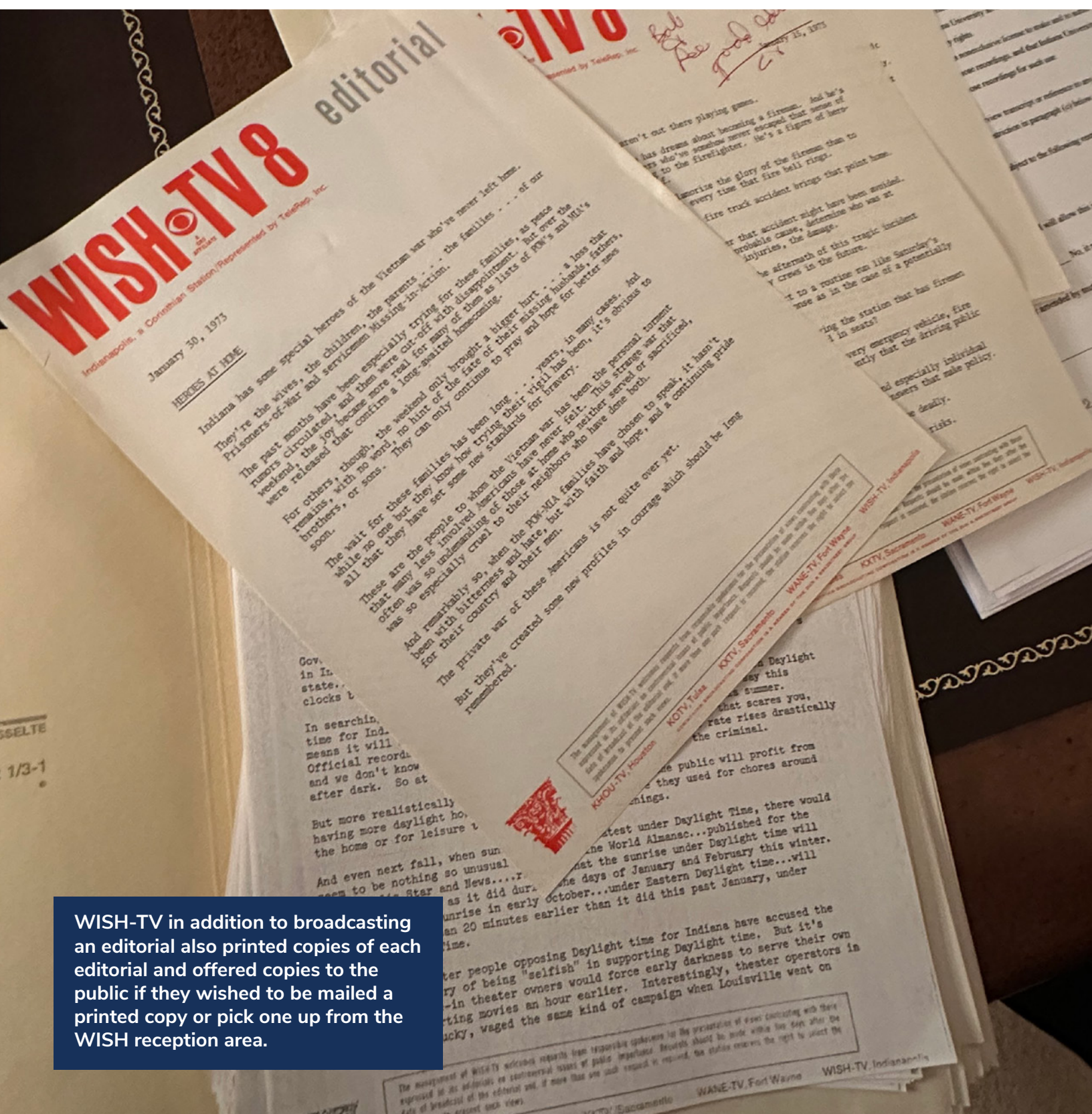
position is that Indiana must do whatever possible to safeguard the health of its people..." (March 6, 1973))...and "The War:..." The great, good news has come of the end of the Vietnam war... (January 24, 1973)... and a possible self-serving series on the nation's daylight time question, "you may be confused about what time your favorite television programs are being broadcast...(because)...Indiana is again out of step with the rest of the nation...(April 29, 1968).

On that subject of time, WISH-TV continued its daily editorial broadcasts without exception or pause, well into later decades, with more limited airing as the company created other on-air priorities. It was decided, as the public reaction seemed to prove, that the viewing public had become knowledgeable about the difference between editorials and the factual, truthful reporting of accurate, reliable, and responsible news and information.

Explanation:

And here may I add an opinion of my own. The Corinthian company and WISH-TV did it right with respect to establishing and developing the broadcasting of daily editorials. And I was privileged to be part of that pioneering journalistic experience of local television.

And so what was next: "The Golden Age of Television NEWS." But that's another story.



WISH-TV in addition to broadcasting an editorial also printed copies of each editorial and offered copies to the public if they wished to be mailed a printed copy or pick one up from the WISH reception area.

DISCLAIMER: The editorial excerpts presented above are from historic files of actual broadcast editorials presented by WISH-TV under possible different ownerships, and may not necessarily reflect the views of those of past or current ownerships and/or management.



Support the Next Generation of Broadcasting

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.

Starting this year we will no longer require dues to be an active member in the Indiana Broadcast Pioneers.

Even though we are no longer requesting dues this is a tremendous opportunity to make a difference in the life of a young person by supporting our 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.

You can contribute by sending a check made out to the Indiana Broadcasters Foundation or by making a payment on our website at the link below.

<https://tinyurl.com/futurepioneers>

