

December, 2016



TRHOF E-Waves NEWSLETTER

est 2010



[ENTER THE TENNESSEE RADIO HALL OF FAME WEBSITE](#)

OFF MIC

by TRHOF President Doug Combs



As we go to the “digital” press for the December edition of *E-Waves*, I am thrilled to tell you about two great opportunities to get together with your fellow members of the TRHOF. But you must act fast, because the first is on January 10. **The Nashville Predators have set**



aside 50 free tickets for the January 10 home game against Vancouver for members of our organization. The event is extra special, because it’s also Pete Weber’s 2,000th NHL broadcast! So if you’re a member in good standing, and you can commit to attending the Preds game on January 10, email board member Melissa McDonald no later than January 5 at starmagic@comcast.net. She’ll get your name on the list for the game. Remember though, that tickets are limited and may run out before the deadline!

We’re hosting our first TRHOF meet ‘n greet of the new year on January 14. It’s in the Tri-Cities at Machiavelli’s. Join us at 8 Fifth Street in Bristol at noon Eastern time for a dutch treat lunch, tour of the Birthplace of Country Music Museum and a board of directors meeting. We look forward to visiting with you!

This issue of our newsletter was delayed so we could introduce the Career Class for 2017. However, the class (one of the most diverse in our history) proved to be one of the most difficult to track down for our “ambush” announcements. We have now reached each member of our newest class, and their names are being announced in this issue. See page 2 for their names and brief bios.

For those of you who have nominated someone for induction and that person was one of the top

six vote getters, were you able to be part of the surprise squad? I have had that opportunity on three occasions. Planning, making sure no one spills the beans early and making sure some one has a working video camera are all part of making the ambush great fun!

The Career Class of 2017 honors individuals in areas of radio achievement that we have never recognized before. The diversity of our inductees has us expanding into new areas of the industry, and as we grow as an organization, that’s certainly a good thing.

Your board is working to make 2017 a great year for the Tennessee Radio Hall of Fame and we would love to have your input! On behalf of all of us, the best to you and yours during this holiday season!

Doug



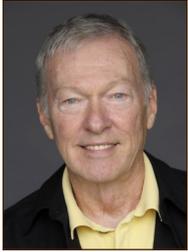
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Webber Parrish
Tom Prestigiacomio
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Dallas (Todd) Rogers
Rich Schoedel
Jared Stehney
Larry Stone
Joel Upton
Ray Walker
Scott Walker
John (Chip) Walters
Jeffery Wix
Jenni Wylie

The TRHOF's Career Class of 2017!

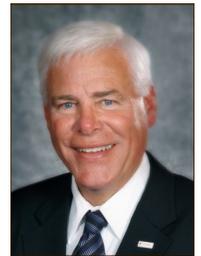


The news can finally be released! Thank you for your patience as we “ambushed” the Career Class of 2017 with the good news that each had been named an inductee to the Tennessee Radio Hall of Fame! All of the nominees were worthy ones, making this year’s choices very difficult. Below, you can refresh your memory on those who were ultimately chosen for induction. Make plans now to be in Murfreesboro on Saturday, May 6, 2017, for the next induction banquet. Ticket information will be released in February.



Gary Beaty: Best known for his 24 years at WSM-AM/FM in Nashville, Beaty started his career at WCLC in his native Jamestown. He also worked at WBIR and WKGN in Knoxville, as well as WGNS and WMTS in Murfreesboro, WBSR in Pensacola, Florida and WAAY in Huntsville, Alabama. He was co-host of *Video PM* on TNN, as well as the fill-in host for *Nashville Now*. His voice has been heard nationally as announcer for *The Academy of Country Music Awards*, *The Dove Awards*, *The TNN-Music City News Awards* and *The CMA Awards*. He was a founding member of the Tennessee Radio Hall of Fame and is the group’s immediate past-president.

Dave Brown: A native of Trenton, Brown started his career at WKBJ in Milan, and also worked at WIRJ in Humboldt and WHBQ in Memphis before becoming co-host of *Studio Wrestling* at WHBQ-TV for 25 years. It’s still popular on YouTube. He hosted the *Dialing for Dollars Movie*, was a staff announcer and audio engineer and was audio engineer on the first-ever *Bill Dance Fishing Show*. He became a weathercaster in 1973, and for 37 years, was Chief Meteorologist for WMC-TV5. Brown is also well-known for his dedicated work as an advocate against drunk driving, which began following the loss of three members of his family in an alcohol-related crash in 1997.



Elinor “Lin” Folk: A veteran of World War II, Folk enlisted in the WAVES, and was one of the first female soldiers to serve at the Pensacola Naval Air Station. After the war, she became a storyteller for the Nashville Public Library, and appeared in that role on WPLN in Nashville the day it went on the air: December 17, 1962. She continued at the station as host, storyteller, producer, interviewer and narrator, and was named *FM Broadcaster of the Year* by American Women in Radio and Television in 1972. She later produced *Tennessee Kaleidoscope*, a syndicated radio show, and served as both producer and host. She also worked in volunteer positions to serve Nashville.

Eddie Fritts: This Union City native is best known for his 24 years of service to broadcasters as President of the National Association of Broadcasters. Fritts began his career at WENK in Union City as a disc jockey and salesman. He later founded the Fritts Broadcasting Group with the purchase of WNLA in Indianola, Mississippi. The group grew to include four more AMs and five FMs in four states. Fritts was the 2011 recipient of the highest honor in broadcasting, *NAB’s Distinguished Service Award*. The Broadcasters Foundation of America presented him with the *2016 Excellence in Broadcasting Award* this year. He has received numerous other accolades for his service.



Herb Howard: Howard’s first job in radio was as an announcer at WJHL in his hometown of Johnson City. By the time he was a college senior, he was full-time manager of the station. But it was only the start. After earning his B.S. and M.S., he became a faculty member at the University of Tennessee in 1959. Over the next 40 years, as the school grew, he is estimated to have taught 6,000 undergrad students, 900 masters degree students and 250 doctoral students. He also was recognized countless times for his work. But the greatest testament to his career are his students, who now work in colleges, newsrooms and other broadcast positions all over the world.

Jim Reynolds: Since 1980, Jim Reynolds has worked at WGOW in Chattanooga. He is the voice of University of Tennessee/Chattanooga athletics, broadcasting both home and road games for the school. Estimates indicate he has broadcast almost 400 football games for the school, and more than 1,100 basketball games. Reynolds is a member of the UTC Hall of Fame and the Greater Chattanooga Sports Hall of Fame. Additionally, for almost 30 years, he has donated his time and talents to announcing the Area 4 Special Olympics Track & Field Meet held each May.



East Tennessee Radio History: Tri-Cities



by George DeVault
TRHOF Board Member



Broadcasting in the Tri-City area of northeast Tennessee and southwest Virginia began with the inaugural broadcast of WOPI in Bristol on June 15, 1929, at 6:30 p.m. The initial broadcast from the Hotel Bristol featured a lavish banquet, live music supplied by the Kingsport Concert Band, remarks by civic and community leaders, and entertainment by various artists from around the region. The licensee, "Radiophone Company WOPI," was founded by its president, W.A. Wilson, a commercial telegrapher and radio enthusiast. The station's call letters stood for "Watch Our Popularity Increase." WOPI was the first station between Knoxville, Tennessee, and Roanoke, Virginia, and it was known for many years as "The Pioneer Voice of the Appalachians." Wilson owned the station until 1959, when a succession of subsequent owners began culminating in the station's acquisition by Holston Valley Broadcasting Corporation of Kingsport in 1996.

Originally operated on 1500 kilocycles per second (today called kiloHertz), the station moved to 1490 on the dial following the Havana Radio Conference of 1940. Hundreds of stations around the U.S. were directed to new frequencies in 1941 as a result of that conference.



Left: An early photo of WOPI.

The station is now an affiliate of ESPN Radio, ABC Radio and the UT "Vol" Network, and for many decades has broadcast local Tennessee High School football and basketball games. WOPI, like most radio stations prior to World War II, did not have a "format" in the sense that radio stations have formats today. Instead, stations were usually "block programmed" with a certain kind of music forming one block and other genres of music, drama, or talk filling other hours. Non-network newscasts were largely obtained from a wire service.

During the 1930's, WOPI broadcast a live music program on both Saturday afternoons and Saturday nights featuring "hillbilly" talent from the region. Two prominent groups of area performers were the Carter Sisters and "Lula Belle and Scotty." WOPI is perhaps best known as the original radio home of Bristol's Tennessee Ernie Ford of "Sixteen Tons" fame. In keeping with Bristol's fame as "The Birthplace of Country Music," WOPI returns to its old time country, bluegrass, and gospel roots with block programming for a few hours every Saturday and Sunday morning.

A little known fact is that the Tri-City area's second broadcast station signed on later in 1929. It was WEHC, owned and operated by Emory & Henry College in Emory, Virginia, just a few miles up Lee Highway from Bristol. The original WEHC was short-lived, however, as the college sold it to raise funds shortly after the Great Depression began. WEHC operated on 1200 kHz. The buyer moved the station to Charlottesville, Virginia, and the new non-commercial Emory & Henry station, WEHC (FM), did not emerge until 1994.

The next town in the Tri-Cities to boast a local radio station was Johnson City, where Hanes Lancaster, Sr., and W.J. "Jay" Birdwell put WJHL on the air in 1938 on the same frequency that had been WEHC's — 1200. The call letters stood for Birdwell's name "W.J." and Lancaster's name "Hanes Lancaster;" however, after Birdwell's departure for Knoxville, most people assumed WJHL stood for "Johnson City, Hanes Lancaster." In Knoxville in 1941, Birdwell started WBIR radio. The call letters are still alive on NBC-TV affiliate WBIR-TV.

With a power increase, WJHL moved to 880 on the dial with a nighttime directional pattern. After the Havana Conference, it was reassigned to its current frequency, 910. Lancaster and his son, Hanes, Jr., started the Tri-Cities' first television station, WJHL-TV, in 1953. WJHL Radio was an affiliate of the NBC Blue Network (which eventually became ABC) until 1957, when it became an affiliate of the CBS Radio Network. In the early 1960s, WJHL radio was sold to the son of WOPI founder

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East Tennessee Radio History: Tri-Cities *(continued from page 2)*



W.A. Wilson. James C. "Jim" Wilson operated the station for many years before selling it in what became a succession of new owners. Jim changed the call to WJCW (J.C. Wilson). WJCW is now owned by Cumulus.

The Tri-Cities' next new station was WKPT in Kingsport, which began broadcasting on 1370 kHz in July of 1940. WKPT's copyrighted slogan was "The Nation's Model Station." With WKPT came the first national network affiliation in the Tri-Cities. Its principal owner, C.P. Edwards, working with WOPI's W.A. Wilson, brought NBC affiliations to both WKPT and WOPI. In those days, these stations were affiliates of the NBC Red Network. WOPI and WKPT formed "The Sister City Network," an occasional linkup between the stations to broadcast local programs of general interest to listeners in both Kingsport and Bristol. WKPT remained an NBC affiliate until well into the 1970's when NBC was dropped in favor of ABC, a move motivated by the popularity of ABC's Paul Harvey and the fact that WKPT-TV was an ABC affiliate.



Right: WKPT's original transmitter building and tower.

One of the station's regular features was the *Saturday Night Barn Dance* on which local musicians performed live from Kingsport's civic auditorium. One featured performer was hillbilly musician, "Little Willy," whose real name was Doug Mays. Mays later moved to Charlotte, North Carolina, where he became WBTV television's "Esso Reporter" and after retiring from WBTV, did commentary for rival WSOC-TV ("We're Sold on Charlotte").

One of WKPT's most popular personalities was Martin Karant, who joined the station in the early 1940's. At various times he was program director, news director, and also announced play-by-play sports on games played by

Kingsport's Dobyns-Bennett High School Indians. Karant and the station gained notoriety as a training ground for high school students interested in radio. Among the alumni of WKPT's student announcer program were NBC's John Palmer and well-known TV anchor man George Sells. (Among the "lesser lights" was yours truly.) After leaving the station for a few years to become a public relations executive in his native Chicago area, Karant returned to WKPT as a morning radio personality, a position from which he finally retired at age 80.



Above: Martin Karant with some of his student announcers.

After World War II a flurry of new AM stations began broadcasting in the Tri-Cities area --- most of them daytimers. WCYB (the call sign stood for "City of Bristol") debuted in 1946 as did WBEJ in Elizabethton. WCYB's principals included two alumni of WOPI, Bob Smith, who had been WOPI's chief engineer, and former WOPI program director Fey Rogers. One of WCYB's most popular programs was the daily *Farm & Fun Time*. Many popular blue grass and country and western artists appeared on the show, including regulars Lester Flatt & Earl Scruggs. One of WCYB's most colorful personalities was Eddie Cowell, an alumnus of WJHL and WBEJ. Eddie was famous for some of the hoaxes he perpetrated. For example, he caused a near riot when he announced that a Nazi submarine had been spotted in South Holston Lake.

In 1956, WCYB licensee Appalachian Broadcasting Corporation put WCYB-TV on the air after a series of expensive FCC hearings in which another firm, Tri-Cities Television Corporation, fought for the same channel. Tri-Cities Television was controlled by the Edwards family, which also owned WKPT radio and the daily *Kingsport News* and *Kingsport Times* publications and by the Wilson interests, owners of WOPI. Rogers and Smith

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East Tennessee Radio History: Tri-Cities *(continued from page 3)*



were principal executives at the TV station for decades as general manager and general sales manager respectively. Appalachian divested itself of WCYB radio around 1970 when WCYB-TV was sold. The call letters under its new owner became WZAP.

WFHG in Bristol hit the air on January 1, 1947, as a Mutual Broadcasting System affiliate at 860 on the dial, as did WETB in Johnson City at 790, which was co-owned with the *Johnson City Press Chronicle*. Originally licensed to Blanfox Radio Company, Inc., WFHG left the air for months not long after its initial sign-on in order to reorganize. With two other Bristol stations already on the air, the competition for advertising dollars was getting tough in "The Twin City." It later emerged with broadcast entrepreneur Pete Nininger at the helm. Late in 1949, WFHG moved to 980 on the dial and added nighttime service. As the flagship station of Nininger's Bristol Broadcasting, Inc., the station was often number one in the Tri-Cities market in the rock and roll 1960s.

As one might imagine, WETB debuted with much promotion in the *Press Chronicle*. It was initially affiliated with the Texas-based Liberty Network, which featured music, news, and recreated play-by-play of major league baseball games. When the Liberty Network ceased operations, WETB became affiliated with the Mutual Broadcasting System. WETB quickly hired WJHL program director Bernie Burlison and former WJHL engineer, "Jeep" Jones. Well-known WETB personalities included newsmen Ray Moore and Meryl Moore (not related), who later became the principal anchorman at WCYB-TV. Ray Moore later became news director at WSB ("Welcome South Brother") in Atlanta.

Before Mutual affiliated with WETB, it was the network of Elizabethton's WBEJ ("Bristol-Elizabethton-Johnson City"), which was first licensed to Robert W. Rounsaville, who also owned a number of other stations in the southeast. In those days, Mutual featured many dramas and adventure programs, including westerns and mysteries, as well as noted news commentator Gabriel Heater. Another popular Mutual show was *Pool's Paradise* featuring WKPT veteran Bob Pool, as disc jockey/host. WBEJ's early on air staff included program director Bill Lowery, who became known in music and programming circles in Atlanta, Terry Sams, who later spent a few years at WJHL, and finally served as general manager of WJBF-TV ("J. B. Fuqua"), the ABC-TV affiliate in Augusta, Georgia, and Berlin Benfield. Benfield later served as a news anchor at WJHL-TV where as "Pecos Ben," he also hosted the popular kids' show *The Foremost Round-up Club*. He spent much of his later career at WSB in Atlanta.

The author of this article, George DeVault, is president of Holston Valley Broadcasting Corporation based in Kingsport, Tennessee. The company owns four AM stations, four FM stations, one full power TV station, and seven Class A TV stations all located in northeastern Tennessee and southwest Virginia. Much credit is also due to Dr. Herb Howard, retired dean of the Graduate School of the University of Tennessee College of Communications, whose excellent recollections of the history of radio and TV in the Tri-Cities region were invaluable.

Happy Holidays!



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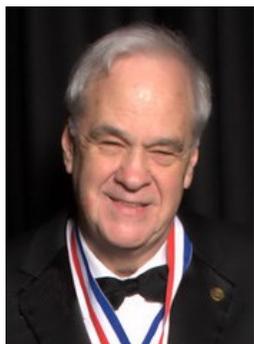
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A Christmas Gift from a Hall of Fame Legend



Editor's Note: The following column arrived in my inbox this week, and it was too good not to share. Tennessee Radio Hall of Fame Inductee John Young is a radio legend who is also one of the best coaches I ever had. His lessons on getting better at what you do are always valuable. Here's this one:



Melissa,

I am sending this to you knowing it probably doesn't have a place on our sites or in a newsletter. But I'm going to copy a few who might pass it around. A friend sent it to me, and for years I've ached over some good naturally talented radio folks who had the goods but weren't motivated, led,

coached or had the opportunity to grow their talent and skill.

A 'jock meeting with the pd' was mostly a, 'You're sounding great...you da man...you're the coolest,' etc. And for some, that's what they wanted to hear and for the lazy pd, that was about all he could think of.

But from this football story, it reminds us a teacher can only teach if a student is willing to be a student...to listen...want to learn...and doesn't get his/her feelings hurt. And that's a skill because many in radio are insecure from day one.

If you use it...great. If you just read it...think of somebody who might nod and say, "Yeah, i wish somebody had told me more of this rather than just hammering me for doing the weather in under 10 seconds..." But as usual, and is often the case, I could be wrong. I spent a lot of time in my world thinking and sometimes, I've been told, i just flat out think it to death.

Merry Christmas,

From Coach John Young, who couldn't play a lick in sports but could do a mean talk up to a Mitch Ryder record years ago.

Subject: From a Coach

This was on a football site. It explains why some highly rated players don't make it. I suspect that on a roster of 85 players you would have at least one player that had each of these or even multiples of these. If you think of highly rated kids that blew you away on not reaching potential, it very likely was something here that did it.

One of the most frustrating things that coaches encounter is having players on the roster with so much potential, but they fall woefully short of that potential. And it hurts the most when – regardless of the time, love, and energy that you pour into it – there is next to nothing that we can do to prevent it from happening.

Just like in life, there's a fair amount of personal responsibility that falls on reaching your full potential, and there are a number of reasons why talented people fail to realize their ceiling.

Here are five reasons that come to mind as to why players fail to reach their full potential.

1 – Work Ethic

This one is the most obvious, and maybe the most common as well. Whether it's the kid that's so talented that he doesn't think he need the weight room, or that he doesn't need to practice hard because he can just flip the switch on game day, these types of very talented players seem to come along every few years. They know they're really good, and that is reflected in the way they work, especially when no one is watching, or when the weather is less than ideal.

2 – Motor

I prefer to call this area "want to," and I consider it completely separate from work ethic. If a player's proverbial cup isn't constantly overflowing with an unquenchable want to – whether that's chasing down a ball carrier, blocking on a screen, or fighting through a double team – the road to reaching their full potential is going to be a massive uphill battle. This is often the area that separates the incredibly average players, and the ones you can't do without when the game is on the line.

3 – Being Coachable

There are countless occasions and stories when players have played beyond their given talents because they do as they're coached to do in practice, and then on game day. However, this also tends to be one of the pitfalls of talented players that don't reach their potential. They think they know best.

4 – Being Selfish

If you've been around the game long enough, there always happens to be a kid that isn't open to change, until he's out

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A Christmas Gift from a Hall of Fame Legend



from under the watch of you and your staff's watchful eye. We've all been rebellious teenagers before, only to see the light years later, and talented players that fail to reach their potential fall victim to the same train of thought. One great example of this that comes to mind is pushing hard against, and even refusing, a position change that would be in the best interest of the program, but would require some personal sacrifice.

5 – They Buy Into the Negativity

Whether it's on the sidelines questioning the play calling by the coordinators, or the head coach's fourth down decision, or the logic behind the workout on the board, there can be plenty of negativity in your program that you may not always hear. Guys that don't reach their potential are the ones that continue to add fuel to that negative fire, and allow it to manifest itself in their heart and mind, which

makes it impossible for them to reach (and exceed) their ceiling.

On the same token, and a more positive note, we've all had players on our roster that do the exact opposite of those five things listed above, and end up playing better than anyone expected because they worked their tail off, they were coach-able, they had a great motor and "want to" they were open to change, and they approached everything with a positive outlook.



Join us at the Predators game on Tuesday, January 10.
Free tickets available for the first 50 TRHOF members
who email starmagic@comcast.net
Hurry! Tickets going fast!

Holidays Past



Left: TRHOF Board Member Chip Chapman and inductee Luther Masingill ringing bells for the Salvation Army.



Right: Tennessee Radio Hall of Fame Inductee Drue Smith (second from left) celebrating the holidays with other members of Nashville chapter of American Women in Radio and Television in the sixties.



Don't forget — (nudge, nudge)

REMINDERS



What's Your Radio Story?

Do you have a radio story you'd like to share? It can be anything that is part of your radio history.

We love radio stories. Please, tell us yours.

Just email it to starmagic@comcast.net.

Keeping Up With the Hall

Our newsletter is published the first of every month. Back issues may be viewed on our official website: www.tennradiohalloffame.org

Let Treasurer Cindy Arnold know of any change in your email address so you don't miss an issue!

Collecting Our History

The Hall has a committee to collect and purchase Tennessee radio memorabilia, including old microphones, on-air signage, transmitter parts, promotional items and anything else related to radio stations in our state.

If you have items to donate (or purchase on Ebay, Craigslist, etc.) please contact Nick Archer via a message on the TRHOF Facebook page.

Our Facebook page now boasts almost 1,200 members, and our YouTube Page includes air checks, inductions and other audio/video memories.



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Check Your Calendar

January 10, 2017, 7:00 p.m.

Free tix to the Predators for TRHOF members!
Vancouver vs. Nashville - Bridgestone Arena

Free tickets to the first 50 members who email Melissa McDonald at

starmagic@comcast.net

Sign-up deadline: January 5

(Tickets may run out before deadline!)

January 14, 2017

Tri-Cities Meet n' Greet

Lunch: 12-noon, EST

Machiavelli's Restaurant

8 Fifth Street, Bristol

Board of Directors Meeting: 2:00 p.m., EST
520 Birthplace of Country Music Way

May 6, 2017

Induction Banquet & Ceremony

Details: TBA

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