



Catching Up with our Friend Bryant Gumbel



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Marilyn's Page



The summer of 2016 will go down in the annals of history as one of turbulence and accomplishment.

The accomplishment certainly goes to Rio for pulling off the Olympics. The controversy and calamity extended right to the opening days of the Summer Games, with much of the Russian team in disarray due to allegations of doping. And yet, on August 5th the opening ceremonies went off as planned, full of all the hope and beauty of an Olympics. **Kudos** to all of those from NBC for a job extremely well done. The incredible planning was put to several tests but the execution went off beautifully. Between the Zika virus, the meltdown of the Brazilian government, and exploding toilets, there was a lot going on. Not only did NBC Sports have groundbreaking coverage, especially in the digital platforms, but NBC News and Entertainment also originated a variety of programs on location and did an amazing job. Articles to follow in subsequent editions of PN..

The turbulence goes to the political conventions and all of the "strangeness" which ensued. It is my first time sitting out a political cycle since 1980 and WOW, what a sight. Kudos to all those dedicated broadcasters, in front of and behind the cameras, who endured this very unusual political summer. And it is not over. The good news is that I believe many more people watched the Conventions than in past years and will also be closely watching the upcoming Presidential Debates.

This edition goes to print on the heels of the first debate with our friend and colleague Lester Holt as moderator. It was a hot seat extremely scrutinized and one worthy of his expertise. If anyone could help raise the bar on this political slugfest it would be Lester.

Just a reminder that all members will be receiving a DUES POSTCARD in the mail soon. Please pay your dues on time. We depend on those dues to keep this organization afloat.

Now on to the good stuff, the rest of the magazine...

Luncheon Guests



Your Editor regrets that this lovely photo of Les and Toby Crystal was inadvertently omitted from our Spring Luncheon pictorial. Les was president of NBC News from 1977 to 1979 and executive producer of *NBC Nightly News* from 1973 to 1976. Crystal joined NBC in 1963 to produce its Chicago affiliate's nightly news and its Emmy®-winning documentary series, *Dateline Chicago*. In 1965, he joined *The Huntley-Brinkley Report* as Chicago regional manager, moving from there to New York in 1967 to serve as the program's news editor, then as associate producer. He was the program's producer from 1968 to 1970.

After his time at NBC, he was president of MacNeil Lehrer Productions until his retirement in 2010. Hired in 1983 to lead the transition from the half-hour *MacNeil/Lehrer Report* to the debut of the *MacNeil/Lehrer NewsHour*, Crystal created the nation's first hour-long evening newscast.

Current E-mail Addresses

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and Our Correspondents
in Harm's Way**

*What's Now!***NBC will stream the debates and other election coverage in VR**

Facebook is live-streaming the presidential debates with help from ABC News, and Twitter this morning announced it will host its own live streams, courtesy of a Bloomberg partnership. NBC, however, in an effort out-tech them all, will instead stream the debates in virtual reality. Welcome to the future, where watching TV is that weird thing that only grandma still does. NBC says it's working in partnership with AltspaceVR to launch a number of election-themed virtual reality events, starting September 21st. At 6 PM ET, you'll be able to "tune in" (can we still call it that?) to meet NBC's Al Roker – well, his VR avatar – where he will debut NBC's "Virtual Democracy Plaza."

This is the VR version of the real "Democracy Plaza" at Rockefeller Center that NBC News runs during presidential election season, which includes a national map projected on the ice skating rink. Roker will be there to chat about his favorite moments from the plaza and to answer viewer questions, says the network.

Leading up to Election Night, NBC will host a variety of different VR events, including debate watch parties, Q&A's with political experts, political comedy shows, and more. The current lineup also includes MSNBC's Steve Kornacki, who will join on Sept. 29 at 12:30 p.m. ET to analyze the state of the election, as well as CNBC's Sharon Epperson, host of "Your Money, Your Future" and the digital video series "Retire Well." She will arrive on Oct. 11 to answer visitors' personal finance questions about the election. Viewers can attend using the AltspaceVR app on the Oculus Rift, HTC Vive, or Samsung Gear VR. However, for those who are curious but lacking equipment, a 2D version of these events will be offered via Mac and PC at altvr.com/nbcnews.

Founded in 2013 and backed by over \$15 million in funding, AltspaceVR officially launched its VR chat room platform in June 2015. It has since hosted a number of VR events, including film screenings, e-sports events, gamer gatherings, meetups, live concerts, comedy specials, and more.

A May event with Reggie Watts in VR may have helped to prepare the startup for this forthcoming election coverage, as it drew in the largest crowd ever and saw peak usage of over 1,200 simultaneous viewers. The company admitted technical difficulties prevented some users from getting in, and the event also helped it to uncover scaling issues it still needed to address. Hopefully, those have been resolved in time for NBC's election coverage. But we'll find out tonight, it seems.

by Sarah Perez, © TechCrunch.com, September 21, 2016

What's Now!
1.28 Billion Olympics Minutes Streamed (and NBC Is Still Counting)


STAMFORD, Conn. — NBC Sports' promise to stream every sport live at the Summer Olympics in Rio de Janeiro is fulfilled at its Stamford, CT headquarters — a former Clairol factory — where the digital feeds from every event are sent to tablets, computers, smartphones and other connected devices. They are visible on flat screens throughout the vast broadcast operations center — mosaics of sports that are being played simultaneously. Streaming is a part of NBC's Olympic future — an extension and repudiation of a history in which the prime-time broadcast was not to be trifled with. But the new model is unfolding in Rio: unfettered live streaming of all events and live Olympic programming on NBCUniversal's cable networks, combined with NBC's traditional prime-time broadcast, which has live and taped elements.

Through August 11th, NBC's live streaming had reached 1.28 billion minutes — more than in all of the 2012 London Olympics. The minutes have helped NBC add the equivalent of a few hundred thousand viewers to a prime-time broadcast audience that has fallen since 2012. Still, NBC's streaming is less than halfway to the 2.6 billion live minutes that ESPN streamed during the 2014 World Cup. "Going past one billion minutes — I'm impressed, excited and overjoyed," said Eric Black, the chief technology officer of NBC Sports Group Digital, who has watched Olympic streaming advance, sometimes fitfully, over several Olympics. He recalled an unexpectedly large surge of streaming during the 2014 Winter Games in Sochi, Russia, for the men's United States-Russia preliminary-round game in hockey, at 7:30 a.m. Eastern. "We expected an O.K. crowd, but it went viral, and went to a shootout," he said. "The numbers rose dramatically, and we had to add more video sources to back it up." Nearly 600,000 unique users streamed the game, the most in Olympic hockey's short online viewing history. So far in Rio, that number has been eclipsed by five streams: two from swimming, the opening ceremony (which was not shown live), and the women's gymnastics all-around final (1.16 million) and team final (1.35 million). By comparison, the average World Cup game on ESPN two years ago averaged about 900,000 unique users.

Streaming has become an essential way to view sports and entertainment as people change the way they consume media: cutting the cords to their subscriptions with satellite, cable and telephone companies; binge-watching new series on internet services like Netflix and Amazon; and choosing mobile devices for watching the sports that they (or their parents) once tuned in to their televisions for. The NBC building is in full Olympics mode, and not only for streaming. It is a bustling northern outpost of the International Broadcast Center in Rio. One of its large studios is filled with portable announcing and production booths where announcers call many of the sports NBC is showing, from archery and badminton to rugby and weight lifting. They describe the action using video feeds from Rio with the ambient sounds of the venues piped to their headsets. In one quirk of the setup, Mary Carillo calls tennis from the broadcast center in Brazil; one of her partners, Rennae Stubbs, speaks from one of the booths in Stamford; and a reporter works on site at the tennis arena.

Black and his staff spend much of their time making sure the live streams run without serious glitches, a task that was largely unheard-of when he began working in the early 2000s as the webmaster at WNBC-TV's website in New York. "We pointed a camera at the Rockefeller Center Christmas tree — it was like Yule log — and people watched it," he said. "If you think about it, that was pretty advanced for 2002." The 2016 peak was reached last Saturday when about 50 feeds were live simultaneously, 40 of them streams produced by the Olympics' world broadcaster.

By Richard Sandomir, © The New York Times, August 12, 2016

What's Now!

With Audience Shrinking, NBC Looks Cautiously to Olympics in Asia

NBCUniversal heads into the next three Olympics — all of them in Asia — faced with a critical question: Was the lower-than-expected prime-time viewership for the just-completed Summer Games in Rio de Janeiro a fluke or a harbinger of fraying audiences over the next six years? The answer, for now, is unknown, as NBC prepares for the 2018 Winter Games in Pyeongchang, South Korea, the 2020 Summer Games in Tokyo and the 2022 Winter Games in Beijing (which hosted the Summer Olympics eight years ago). No one is certain how much further consumers will alter their media habits, how much further television viewing will be diminished, or what new technologies will emerge during that time.

A further challenge to carrying an Olympics in Asia: the 13- to 14-hour time differences between the host cities and New York. “You’d be a lot less concerned if you were in the United States or in Continental Europe,” said Rich Greenfield, an analyst at BTIG Research. “Ninety percent of the content from Asia will be happening when we’re asleep — and when we wake up we’ll see our Twitter feeds and news stories telling us what has already happened.”

NBC works with the international federations that govern Olympic sports and the International Olympic Committee to get the most favorable scheduling. For games in Asian locations, NBC’s goal is to have as many marquee sports as possible — swimming, diving, track and field and gymnastics in the summer; figure skating and skiing in the winter — taking place at times when they will be live in prime time on the East Coast. NBC would not necessarily need to cover gymnastics live; in Brazil, it showed the events on a delay of several hours.

Still, scheduling audience-grabbing events in prime time can be a tight squeeze. Events that start at noon in Korea in 2018 would be seen at 10 p.m. the prior day in the Eastern time zone. And NBC cannot get everything it desires in scheduling despite the enormous rights fees it pays; other countries’ networks, including those in Europe, for example, push for favorable scheduling of their own to televise their popular sports.

Still, even a favorable time zone like Brazil’s did not deliver for NBC as the network had expected. NBC thought that the greater number of live prime-time broadcasts from Rio would produce audiences larger than those amassed for London four years ago. But at 25.4 million, NBC’s broadcast audience fell 18 percent from the 31 million that watched the London Games. It added 2.1 million more viewers from live streaming and Olympic events on the NBCSN and Bravo cable networks. In all, the three sources of viewership did not combine to match London’s broadcast-only performance. “Television is in a secular decline,” Mr. Greenfield said, adding that viewers increasingly accustomed to binge-watching online series are likely to grow increasingly dissatisfied with NBC’s prime-time model that compels viewers to wait for their favorite sport to be shown.

Still, even with decreased viewership, NBC dominated prime time during the Rio Games and boosted 18- to 34-year-old viewership on other company programming like the *Today* show, *NBC Nightly News*, *Access Hollywood* and late local newscasts. In addition, 3.3 billion minutes of Olympic events, replays and highlights were streamed on NBC’s Olympic website and the NBC Sports app. “The Olympics are the only events of its kind, dominating prime time for 17 straight nights, 118 Summer Olympic nights in a row,” Mark Lazarus, chairman of the NBC Sports Group, said in a statement, referring to the past Summer Olympics NBC had televised.

With billions of dollars invested in the Olympics, NBC hopes it can somehow increase those dominating audiences as it goes to Korea, Japan and China.

By Richard Sandomir, © The New York Times, August 22, 2016



What's Now!

Semper Costas

1996



2004



2010



2000



2006



2012



2002



2008



2014



© NBC Sports Screen Shots from YouTube

Of all the variations that each Olympics bring, there is one thing that always remains the same: Bob Costas.

There is something about the Olympics and time. It's not just that we obsessively measure, right down to the microsecond, the times of every athlete in every race. It's not just that the Olympic Games are a powerful public clock that marks off four-year intervals — roughly 5 percent of an American life expectancy — in all our lives. It's not even that the tournament connects us, ritually, to deep time: the ancient Greeks, archaic naked oil-wrestling, the birth of Western Civilization.

What gives the Olympics its special, precise energy is the tension among all of these orders of time: Everything hinges on a crucial millisecond during the two weeks that we waited for four years (and several millennia) to see. The Olympics are a global pageant of time swirls, a tiny window that opens, at regular intervals, onto eternity.

The face staring out of that window is always the same: Bob Costas. He has presided over the Olympics for so long, nearly 30 years, that he may as well have broadcast the first ceremony from ancient Greece. Although Costas is not particularly athletic-seeming, he has outlasted all the athletes. In his mid-60s, he remains the same boyish, affable elf that he was in the beginning. He is blessed with the American ability to seem perpetually fresh out of the box.

Costas is a master of all the classic broadcast-network moves. He can read schmaltzy clichés over soaring trumpets (“they look to reach ... new heights”) as if he actually believes them. He is so smooth and faultless that he sometimes seems like a sentient teleprompter.

In 2014, when a wretched eye infection temporarily knocked Costas out of hosting the Winter Olympics, it felt like seeing George Washington catch a cold and start sneezing on Mount Rushmore. We didn't know he could do that, didn't know he had the flesh and glands and fluids. His replacements — Matt Lauer, Meredith Vieira — did fine; they are pros. But they didn't carry the same existential gravitas, the sense of having been flung out of the Big Bang and directly into the host's chair.

In recent months, Costas has spoken of his eventual retirement, of NBC's succession plan, but it all seems entirely hypothetical, like when astrophysicists talk about the inevitable implosion of the sun: It will happen in a time beyond time, past the reach of mere eons and weeks and milliseconds and years.

By Sam Anderson © The New York Times, July 31, 2016

What's Now!

That's a Wrap in Rio!

That's a Wrap in Rio! Congratulations on a Job Well Done! To all our many friends who have been behind the cameras, in the trucks, or here at home, thank you for a flawless presentation! Many hundreds of you made hundreds of hours of Olympic coverage another milestone in quality production. Welcome home!

Thanks to Todd Palladino for the photo of him and Bob Costas in the NBC Primetime Studio in Rio on closing night. If turnabout is fair play, Todd, and you get a turn at the anchor chair, see makeup first, to take a little shine off that dome.

-Bobby Ellerbee © www.eyesofageneration.com



Eric Brown Revisited

In 2012 Eric Brown was a college student serving as an intern at NBC's Wimbledon coverage. He was keenly interested in audio production and he described his learning experience in a Peacock North article. Here is a message your editor received from him in August 2016...

Hi Joel,

It's been a while, but I have some news about my work that it felt only appropriate to share, as you were always someone who pushed me to move forward in the film and TV space. Since starting my own company a couple years ago, I've been lucky to take part in some great work here in NYC. And recently, it seems much of my past work has culminated in the form of a very large and challenging project - sound designing all the graphic elements of the 2016 Olympic Games! You can hear them on any live stream or prime time broadcast on NBC or NBC Sports Network! "Creating the sound of Rio" for the world to hear is something that I am extremely proud of and especially excited to share with people, like you, who have taken time with me and helped me so much along the way. I can't wait to dive into whatever the next project is, but right now felt like the perfect time to pause and say thank you... So, *thank you!*

Eric Brown



Eric with John McEnroe in 2012

*Peacock Profiles***Bryant Gumbel interviewed by Antoinette Machiaverna**

Bryant Gumbel remains one of the most talented and revered journalists and on-camera talents on television, and he rarely grants personal interviews. Lucky for us he agreed to this one, in no small measure because it was his friend, our colleague, Antoinette Machiaverna, making the request on Peacock North's behalf.

Following is the unedited version of that interview. Enjoy the conversation. - Marilyn Altman

How difficult was it for you to make the decision to leave Sports and go over to the *Today* Show? Actually, surprisingly difficult. When they first came to me about it, I was 32 years old and was the face of NBC Sports. And I had what many guys would consider to be a dream job. I mean, I hosted everything we did: Super Bowls, World Series, NCAA Championships, whatever. Was supposed to have hosted the '80 Olympics. So, I had a dream job. And at that time I was financially making more money than they were offering to be the host of the *Today* program. So it was not an easy decision at all.

What was your favorite event to cover when you were in sports? I've always been a big baseball fan. I mean-- to me-- I would say baseball and you could get rid of all the other and I'd be happy. I just think it, for me, fits what I enjoy about sports.

Did you feel you were taking on more than just a change of divisions but something bigger? I didn't at the time. I came to appreciate that. I think it seems like a no-brainer now but at the time it wasn't. Perhaps because it was steeped in so much internal politics. I mean, people have long since forgotten that when I took the job, as a result of my taking the job, two division presidents quit. And so it was a little more complicated than just my personal wishes. And there was a lot more going on that made the leap secondary, in my mind, at the time.

Did you ever feel because you were a black journalist stepping into this anchor spot that it would bring more scrutiny to you? You know, I was used to being scrutinized. I think what you ask is correct. But I think the bigger scrutiny at the time was that I was coming from sports. It won't surprise anybody to learn that the *Today* Show job was viewed as a plum within the news division. And there were or had been a lot of people in line waiting for it. When it became available, I'm sure those people thought they were going to be moved up. And when NBC decided to reach outside the division to tab me, it was, as you might expect, not popular. So unpopular, in fact, that the president of the news division quit. And when the president of the sports division came to realize how the decision had been reached, he was also gone. So it was fairly complicated at the time.



Did you talk to anybody that would clarify what was the right thing to do -- for YOU? Part of the difficulty was that when Bob Mulholland first approached me about it, he basically asked that I not tell anyone, which kind of made my fact-finding or seeking other opinions, very difficult and very limited.

The only one that I ever cited that I talked to about it at length, because he had some footing in both the *Today* program and in Sports, was Joe Garagiola, who was a dear friend and with whom I've worked for a lot of years. And I asked Joe about it. And, among many conversations, the thing I most recall was that Joe said that if I were to take on the job as host of the *Today* program, I would go places, meet people, and see and hear things that I could not possibly imagine. And it turned out to be true. It was easily the right decision and one I'm glad I made.

Peacock Profiles

Did you feel like you were facing some very big challenges when you first started? There were a lot of challenges. I mean, I don't want to overstate any of them. But there were challenges. Everything from correspondents within NBC who were bitter, who didn't want to work with a sports guy to affiliates that didn't want the picture of a black man sitting next to a white woman and had threatened to not air the program. To the public, some of them, that didn't see a black guy in this position. And there was just a lot on the plate. And there was a lot to overcome. I remember-- in the early stages-- having dinner with Grant Tinker. And Grant saying that he was not disappointed in the program. He was disappointed in the audience, which I thought was an interesting perspective.

Do you think that today's young TV journalists of color have a lack of understanding of what pioneers had to go through to bring diversity into television? I think they do, but I don't hold that against them. I think young people face so many challenges now that are so very difficult, it's hard for them, and maybe unrealistic of them, to stop for a moment and think about the difficulties of those who went before. They've got a lot on their plate. They've got a lot that's challenging them. And I don't expect them to stop and go, "Oh, boy. You know, Bryant Gumbel made this possible for me." No, I don't expect that at all. And maybe -- later in life, as most of us do -- we all step back, and take a look at things from a different perspective. But while you're going through it, I don't think it's realistic of them to do that. And I don't feel bad that they don't.

What's your most memorable road trip or interview from those Today Show days? I've never been one to rank things in terms of "this is the best or this is the worst." I always said that the good interviews were those that featured somebody who had something to say and said it well. And the bad interviews were those who had nothing to say and said it poorly. And to the extent that the good ones were better than one or the other, I don't know. That's really not for me to judge. Or the bad ones were this or that. That's also not for me to judge. I was always most excited about the next interview as opposed to ranking the last one.

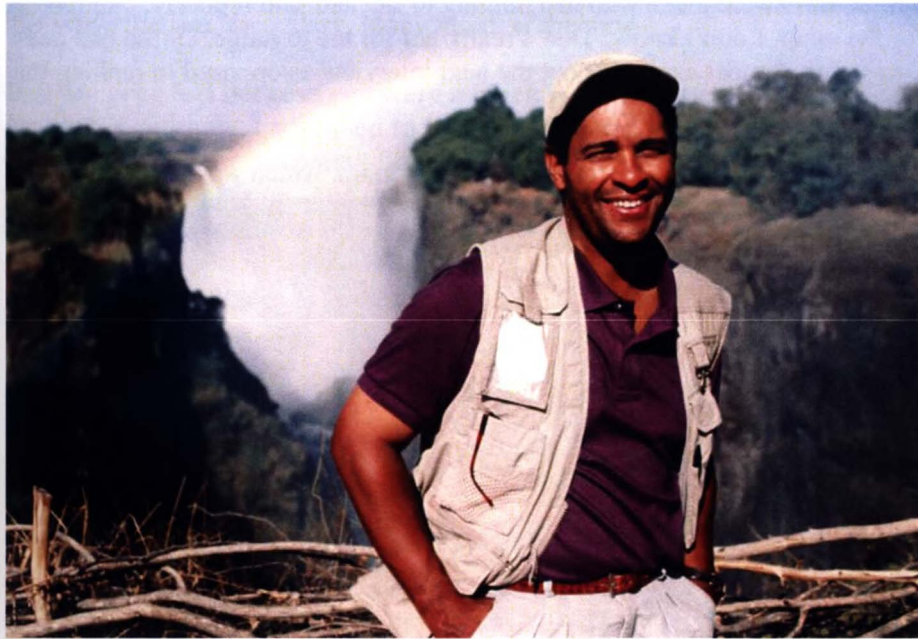
In terms of personal trips and impact, three stand out: Number one was our trip to the Soviet Union, which was in September of '84. Back at that time, we were still in the midst of the Cold War. The Russians and the U.S. weren't even talking about-- weren't even having missile talks. And no program had ever originated from inside the Soviet Union. And we went over there with what seemed two impossible options. Number one was to be the dupes of the Soviet Union and air whatever they wanted. Or number two, to be ungracious guests and just trash the place, and walking a fine line between those two seemed difficult, if not impossible. And yet, we somehow managed to do it.



And as a result, I came home and people had a different view of me. Even people within NBC had a different view of me. They felt that I had done a job that made them proud. And, to a certain degree, it engendered a certain amount of respect that I didn't have before that trip. That's number one.

I think number two was the trip to the Vatican because it's very unusual to have a pope do a promo for you. Which he did, you know, and he said "Watch the *Today* program next week on NBC." I mean, it's pretty, pretty big stuff. And then from inside the Vatican and it was my first encounter, personally, with a pope. And so, it was meaningful.

And the third one would be our trip to Africa. I guess because that became such a personal mission for me. That it was something that I took to NBC and that I made the case for, and that I researched, and that I worked with our financial people and with the embassies of various nations to make happen. And when we realized it, and became the first program to originate from the South Sahara in Africa on American TV, it was something that meant a lot to me.



No one can forget that farewell of you saying, "Peace" in front of Victoria Falls. It was so emotional. Yeah, it was. It really was a difficult thing to get done. You know, as opposed to every other trip NBC had undertaken where you had infrastructure and where you could get people on the ground or who were already there, and use camera facilities and use lighting facilities and this and that. We were talking about going to a nation that involved over four dozen different countries, and trying to find a way to represent all of them in a limited timeframe. And, in many cases, where there was no infrastructure, where there were financial impediments, where there were electronic impediments, where there were infrastructure impediments. And to finally manage to resolve all those sufficiently to get NBC to greenlight it was a challenge that I took personally. And it consumed roughly about two years of my life

getting it done. And so, it meant a lot to me, that when I signed off, it was the culmination of an awful lot of work by a lot of people. And it meant the world to me.

Do you still watch morning television? How do I answer this? Do I make it a point to? No. My dear wife, Hilary, controls the TV in the morning. And we do sit and watch something as we're having our coffee. But I'm not the one who gets up and turns the TV on in order to watch it.

Do you think it's still relevant, given how fast people get news today? That's a really good question. I don't know. Certainly, it still delivers-- although fewer eyeballs than it did before -- it still delivers a massive amount of eyeballs. Now, what those people expect and how they consume it is a question that is fairly complicated.

I mean, is it still relevant? I don't know. I would like to think it still fleshes out stories to an audience that is basically getting only headlines. On the other hand, are they the right stories? I'm not the one to say. I think every generation that does the program believes that the program they did was more serious than the one that followed. And so I'm no different than anyone else. But it's not for me to judge whether that is better or worse-- or more or less relevant.

What is it you remember most about your last day on *Today* and the surprise visitors that day -- Maya Angelou, Muhammad Ali, and Prince? A lot of it is a blur, surprisingly. You know me very well, so you know how what a preparedness freak I am. It was the only time I ever went to host a program in which I had no idea what was going to happen. And that made me decidedly uncomfortable.

I also think it, in retrospect, it seems frighteningly coincidental that within the span of the last 18 months we've lost all three of those icons. We've lost Maya Angelou. We then lost Prince. And then we lost the Champ. And it weighs on my mind.

I guess if pushed to the edge, the thing I remember most is Prince's appearance. Not just because he was there, but because he came dressed as me. And because when I heard him rehearsing prior to going on the air, the last thing that occurred to me was that he was there. (LAUGH) No, seriously. At the time, he was famous for saying that he would not perform old stuff. And so when I heard it, I just assumed it was a cover band that was there doing his old stuff. So when he came out and dressed as me, to say I was stunned is the understatement of all time.

And Prince arranged to have Saks open at 7:00 AM to buy a suit to look like you? Yeah, he had on a suit. He had on glasses. The dark suit, a conservative tie. I mean, the only thing missing was, you know, the other 150 pounds.

Which you don't have anymore. Well, I'm fortunate.



When you were asked to speak at the funeral of Muhammad Ali, how difficult was it for you to write your eulogy? Well, a little background. I had been asked about four years ago. So I knew this date was coming. That said, it is not the kind of thing you can write in advance because obviously, you know, things you say are different depending upon how he dies and when he dies. And what's going on in the world when he dies.



So I had about roughly a week to write. And I confess to you, for someone who rarely lacks for confidence, I was somewhat intimidated by the task. That it is very difficult to try to find something of relevance to say about someone who's the most famous person on earth. And who, no matter what you say, everyone in the audience already knows. And you are preceded by a variety of speakers who are touching on various points of it. So it was a terribly intimidating task. That said, I was just privileged to be a part of it and privileged to have been selected. And hope, HOPE, that I said something meaningful. I know I said something personal to me, and something of which I was very proud. I hope I did a great man justice.

Let's talk a little bit about *Real Sports With Bryant Gumbel*. You got a truckload of Emmys somewhere in the house? We're very lucky. At the risk of bragging, we're now at well over 30 Emmys and counting. We have two Peabody Awards. We have several Columbia DuPont Journalism awards. We have an Overseas Press Club Award. We have a Trans-Africa, an NAACP Image Award. We are blessed. We are a very honored program.

Some people say that sports journalism is dead? Well, I can see why they'd say it because much of what passes for sports coverage now is so sycophantic. It's so sycophantic, it's frightening. But that's okay. It leaves a lot of opportunity for those of us who are interested in doing serious looks at sports. The problem we have now at *Real Sports* is to a certain extent one of our own making. Which is our reputation precedes us. And those with something to hide are loathe to sit across from us. Number one.

And number two, what's happened in this, as I said sycophantic world, is all of the leagues now have their own networks. And so when they have something, they would rather put it on, be it the NFL Network or MLB Network or NBA Network or whatever. Rather than sit across from somebody with a certain degree of objectivity. You add to that the Players Tribune and other outlets and there are so many ways in which an athlete, a team, a league can put its message out there unfiltered, unchallenged and its own version, that it makes it difficult.

You add to that the fact that increasingly you have a public that can't differentiate between an objective journalistic report and a self-indulgent first-person narrative. It makes, makes the job increasingly difficult.

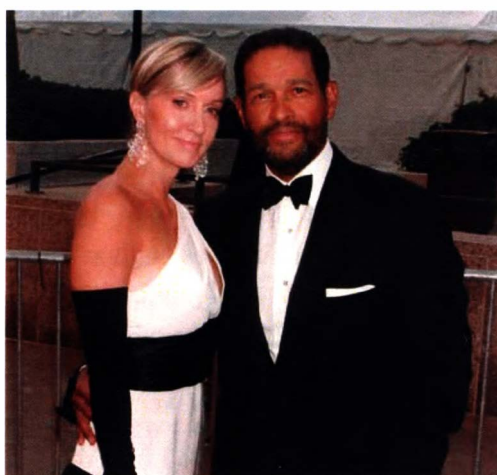
A lot of us watch it every month, for you and your team of correspondents, including some NBCer's? I'm fortunate. I have a great group of people who really like their work, and who are really supportive of each other, which is unusual, as you know, in this business. I've always said, it's the best program in which I've ever worked. And I'm enormously proud of it. We're now in our 22nd year, which makes us an oddity on HBO, oddly enough, because HBO likes to be cutting edge. And 22 years on HBO is something I'm not sure any other program's ever been able to say.



Since you've interviewed so many U.S. Presidents, and Presidential candidates, what question would you ask Hillary Clinton? And then, what question would you ask Donald Trump? I guess I'd ask Hillary, "How does it feel to be the last best hope of civilized society?" (LAUGH) The last potential savior. As for the other guy, whose name shall not be mentioned, I will recuse myself. He is the joke that deserves no serious consideration.

What's your advice to young people who want a career in TV News or Sports? Well, my advice for young people has remained surprisingly unchanged since the day I got in the business. Number one, make sure this is a business you want to be involved with because it is one that does not necessarily reward the best and/or the brightest. Instead, it rewards those people who do good work, and are fortunate enough to get noticed for it, and get an opportunity to show what they can do. And number two, I would tell anyone who's interested in it, that the basics-- for all the complications and all the outlets and everything else -- the basic stuff, it hasn't changed. We're in the business of communication. And that means learning as best you can, how to write, how to speak, how to listen, how to engage. Those things haven't changed, and I doubt they ever will, if you're going to do this job well.

And, as you would say, "Final thoughts?" Nah. I'm the most boring person on the planet. I can't believe anybody would want to hear of this stuff.



About the interviewer...

The interview was conducted by Antoinette Machiaverna, who worked with Bryant at both NBC Sports and *Today*. Now doing freelance production and media consulting, Antoinette continues to oversee the annual *Today* Toy Drive, currently taking donations for its 23rd year.

*Peacock Profiles***Heartland Road Trip
By Bob Dotson**

My grandkids wanted to see where their mommy lived when she was little. All those smiling faces in the picture are blocking NBC's first Dallas news bureau, also known as our home in 1977. The office was in our Laundry room. We took conference calls in the bathroom while I was potty-training my daughter. "Dallas?" FLUSH. "Dallas is here!"

For nearly half a century, I crisscrossed America on NBC's nickel, more than 4 million miles, spent an average of 200 nights a year on the road, around 8,000 nights in total, or the equivalent of nearly 22 years away from home. Fortunately, at the beginning of that odyssey, I married a wise woman who taught me to treat my family like breaking news. Do whatever it takes to be part of their lives. That's why I found myself on a thousand mile driving trip from Dallas to Chicago with our two grandchildren -- Aden, 6, and Zoe, 3. Those big city grandkids got to see the America beyond their subways. My wife Linda and I got to see them.

The first day that we drove away from tall buildings was beautiful and breezy.

"Mom," said our 6-year-old grandson, "do you hear that wind?"

"Yes."

"We ought to record that and take it home."

Aden was learning that the best and most beautiful things in life cannot be seen or smelled or tasted. They must be felt.

"Do we have enough gas to get to Oklahoma City?" I wondered.

Aden looked out the car window at prairie as far as he could see.

"You don't need gas for walking," he said.

His 3-year-old sister's smile was as bright as the sun. Zoe was excited. We were passing ponies in cowgirl country. At a rest stop she pleaded for a plastic one. Her mom, our daughter Amy, pointed out that the toy may cost more than Zoe had saved from her allowance.

"Don't worry, mommy. This is a GIFT shop."

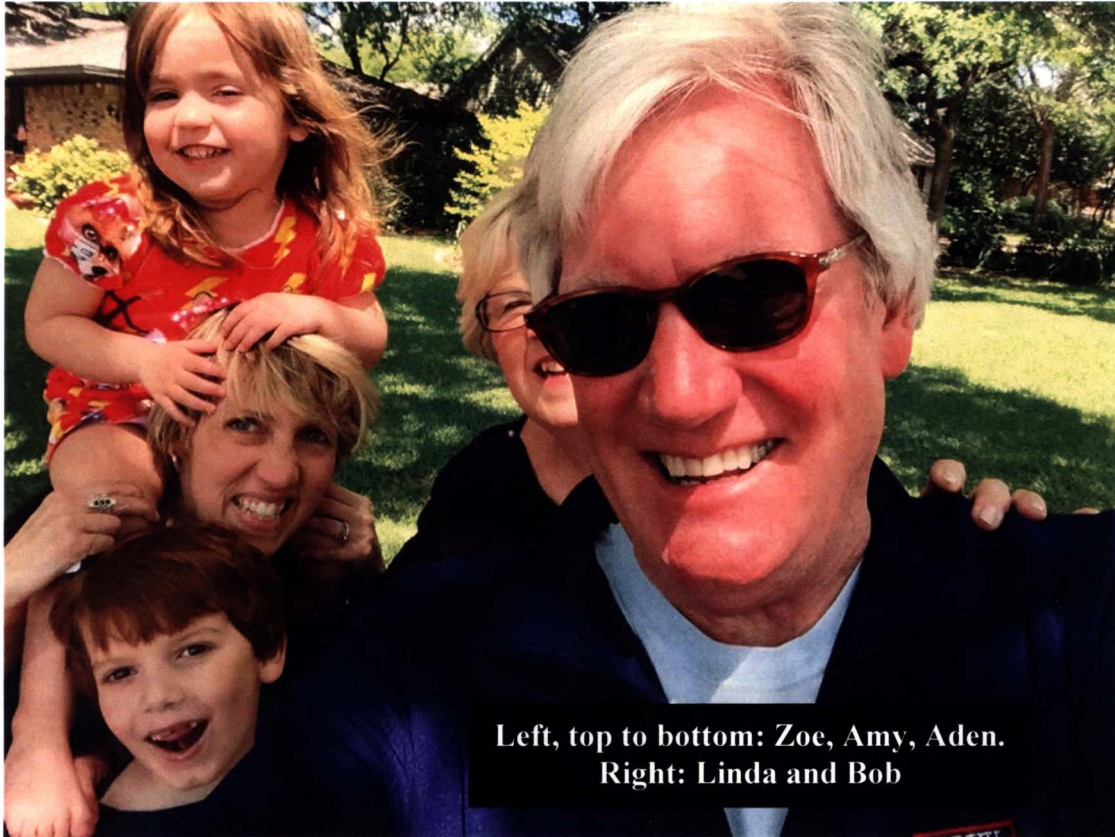
Our SUV was already stuffed. Brought back memories of all the crews who once shared the road with me. In the days before cell phones and satellite radios, we sometimes linked our caravan of cars with a wireless microphone and speakers so I could read them "nap time" stories while the producer drove. Fortunately, no one fell asleep as we bounced down all those back roads. Shunning superhighways, chain restaurants, and crowds of reporters, we chatted with the locals and listened carefully to people who are practically invisible, the ones who change our lives but don't take time to tweet and tell us about it.

NBC once hired a red-headed kid with a different approach to news. While most correspondents focused on life's flat tires, I started looking for something far more difficult to find -- what kept the other tires rolling. This was no solitary pursuit. My little band of storytellers worked the neglected streets of our cities, the small towns and dirt roads, searching for names we don't know, but should, people with thoughtful solutions to problems we all face. Firm in the belief that Wisdom doesn't always wear a suit.

I was thinking about that as we crossed the falls of the Verdigris River in Oklahoma. "To the left," I pointed to a high knoll, "is the location of Chouteau's fort. He was an old French trader. There were nine thousand Native Americans at his fort. Three thousand trappers and something like five thousand traders."

Zoe clapped her hands and spread them wide. "As big as Brooklyn?"

"Probably felt that way. Every spring they built flatboats out of beautiful wood to carry their furs down to New Orleans. Once they got the stuff to New Orleans, they had an empty flatboat and they couldn't bring it back upriver. So they'd sell the wood to a woodcarver and he would turn it into a fine piece of furniture. It would stay around New Orleans for a couple of hundred years, and then someone from Oklahoma, who was down there visiting the Mardi Gras, would see this beautiful piece and bring it back as an antique. Kids, there are few monuments to common people, but traces remain right in someone's living room."

Peacock Profiles

Left, top to bottom: Zoe, Amy, Aden.
Right: Linda and Bob

"Why is there a big ship in that parking lot?" Aden asked.

We were in Branson, Missouri, which boasts a full size replica of the Titanic, complete with an iceberg. Aden is always curious. At one stop he asked a woman from Turkey, "What is your country like? Is it a lot like chicken?"

His sister, Zoe, was first to spot the Gateway Arch that marks my boyhood home - St. Louis.

"This is the place where the ice cream cone was introduced at a World's Fair." That got their attention. "The Olympics and a National political convention were also held that same year in the same city. 1904. Only time that's ever happened."

"Were you a little boy then?" Zoe asked.

"No, but your great grandfather was born a year later. And your great grandmother met him in St. Louis after appearing on NBC long before the company offered me a job."

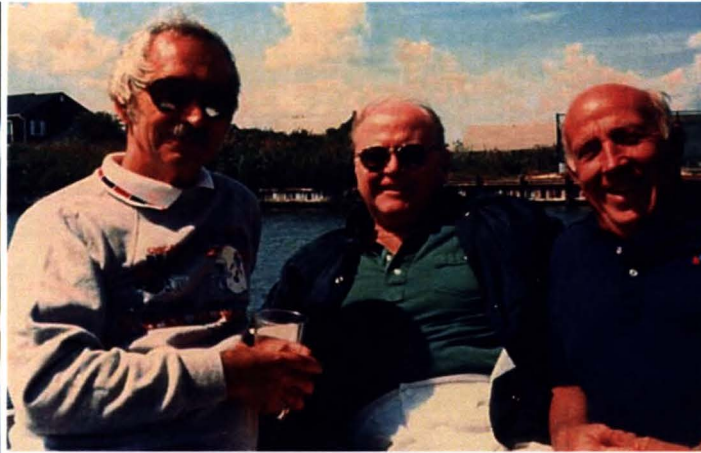
"Was she on TV too?" asked Aden.

"Radio. When Eddie Cantor's popular NBC radio show came to Missouri during World War II, my mom drove a hundred miles from her hometown to audition. Like any hopeful on *The Voice* today, she wanted the country to hear her beautiful singing. Later, your Great Grammy performed at the summer opera in St. Louis, filling in for the lead actress in a musical called *Show Boat*. She sang one of its best-known numbers, *Bill*. Your Great Grand Dad, Bill Dotson, was in the audience. He thought she was singing directly to him, so he waited for her at the stage door. Came back four nights in a row with roses. Great Grammy finally went out with him because, she joked, 'I liked his mustache, his black wavy hair, and his green Packard convertible, not necessarily in that order.' That was the beginning of my brother, Bill; my sister, Suzi; and me."

One thing I've learned as I grow older. All those memories do not flow back into the past. They gather invisibly around, waiting to be told. You'd think all of those postcard places I've visited would be foremost in my memory, but I cherish people more than landscapes. Places have little meaning apart from people. Beautiful sunsets are best when shared, especially with grand kids who see the world as if it were new.

Tributes to Silent Microphones

Mahlon Fox



Jerry Caruso, Mahlon, Eddie Band



Mahlon H. Fox, 90, of Manasquan, passed away Monday, August 9th, 2016 at home with his family in Peachtree City, GA. He was born in Summit, attended Asbury Park H.S and graduated from Blair Academy. He was a World War II veteran, proudly serving in the U.S. Army Air Corps. He attended Dartmouth College and graduated from RCA Institute in New York City. He worked at NBC from 1949 until his retirement in 1986. He was an Audio Director, balancing the sound on many shows including *The Bell Telephone Hour* and *Kraft Music Hall*. In 1973 he won an Emmy® for *Much Ado About Nothing*.

He raised his family with his wife, Gloria in Closter. They retired to Manasquan and were members at the Manasquan River Golf Club. He was an avid golfer and enjoyed boating with his family and friends on the Manasquan River. In 2011 he moved Peachtree City, Georgia to live with his daughter.

He is predeceased by his wife, Gloria W. Fox of 62 years and his son, Mark H. Fox. Surviving are his daughter, Gail W. Fox and his two granddaughters, Kelsey and Hayley.

A private ceremony will be held at Monmouth Memorial Park in Tinton Falls, where he will be laid to rest next to his wife.

Condolences may be sent to

Gloria Fox
401 Blue Smoke Trail
Peachtree City, GA 30269

Published in Asbury Park Press on August 12, 2016

I remember this from 1975, at the Firestone Country Club in Akron, Ohio.

On Monday, after NBC telecast the golf match, the crew was to fly back to NY, on a late flight. Mahlon had somehow had gotten permission to play the course. Mahlon picked up Murray Vecchio and me in a golf cart with clubs, a bucket full of golf balls, and three half cantaloupes, filled to the brim with red wine, and a six-pack of beer. Off we went for our great adventure. We teed off and started down the course. We never found our balls, but who cared. We had plenty in the bucket. We stopped frequently to savor the cantaloupes. On the third hole, I hit the ball over a small rise, and watched a plume of water rise. We then discovered that we had started playing the back nine instead of the front nine. We finished the cantaloupes, wine and beer, and headed back to the club house, howling all the way. We were still howling on the plane home.

God bless you, Mahlon. Rest in peace.

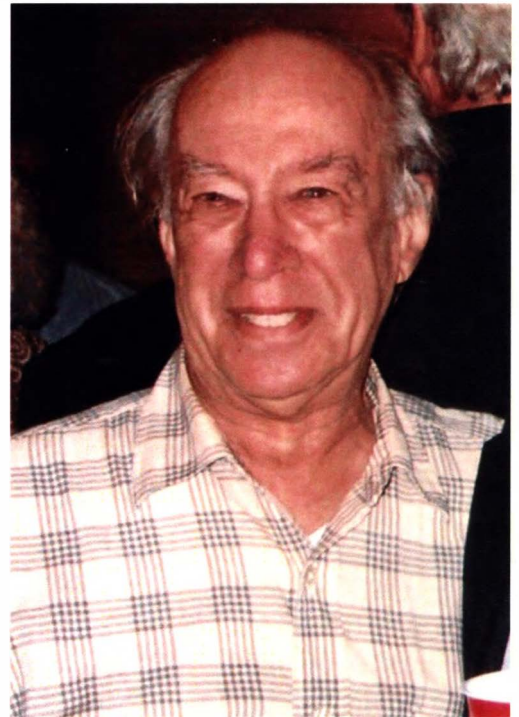
Frank Kennedy

*Tributes to Silent Microphones***Bernie Brown Remembered by Richard Berman**

After a storied career as an Associated Press journalist and a Producer for the NBC *Today* Show and *Nightly News*, Navy veteran Bernard (Bernie) Brown passed away on the 8th of July, 2016 at age 89 --- or 90, if you calculate the Chinese way as he always loved to do. As a journalist Bernie covered every story from the sinking of the Andrea Doria to the lifting of Marilyn Monroe's dress as part of a movie promotion to current events.

Three qualities best defined Bernie.

He was a brilliant thinker who was gifted with the ability to draw connections between seemingly unrelated pieces of information and, almost like a magician, make us say to ourselves, "Yes. Of course. It makes perfect sense now that you have laid it out for us." Bernie created the synapses that produced cogent thought. It was a gift than he honed and sharpened and utilized in his career as a newsman at AP and at NBC News. Bernie was a learner. Everything interested him from the Chinese language to street names. Last summer Bernie was thrilled that he had found two streets in Manhattan he had not known existed. He was twinkling with excitement at the thought of having learned the names of these two new streets. Bernie also used his intelligence and sense of justice to fight the good fight, both in his reporting and at work.



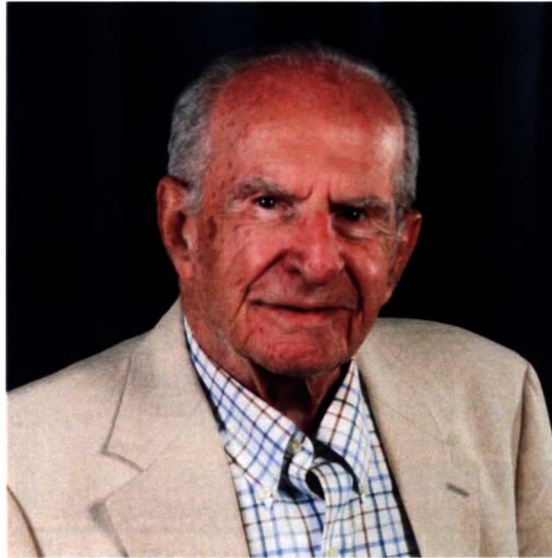
Bernie had a wonderful sense of humor. The corners of his eyes crinkled up as he smiled while he told a funny story. Bernie had either the good luck or misfortune to have a name with the first initial "B" and a middle name that began with the letter "S." Did he change his name or not use his middle name? No. Bernie joyously reveled in being B.S. Brown. What could be better than signing off on his news stories as B.S. Brown! During the past year Bernie traced the true name of his ancestors that immigrated to the United States. It took a lot of determination and hard work to track down the family name which turned out to be Kronkite. Could there be a better name for newsman? Bernie was delighted.

The third quality that defined Bernie was his innate goodness. Bernie was a mensch. He was a good guy, honorable down to the bone. He was loyal and had a sense of integrity that was unmatched. He would cross a thousand streets to help a friend. If the porter in Bernie's building had gone missing, Bernie had more than likely driven him to Newark to canvas the junkyards to find a matching tire to replace one that had gone flat. He deeply loved his family and he loved getting together with them.

One of Bernie's favorite stories was about how he met Grace Kelly while he was a student at the University of Michigan where, by the way, Bernie was proud to be the first person to introduce pizza to the city of Ann Arbor. Grace was in a play that was touring the country in the days before she was famous and she was clever enough to stop and spend some time with Bernie in the local coffee shop.

Bernie's wonderful sense of humor brought joy to him and all his friends and family. Phyllis, his wife, had decorated one of the rooms in their apartment entirely in green. Bernie said even the dinner plates were green. Bernie would have you enthralled with his story and then swoop in with the bon mot: He was colorblind. Bernie smiled and laughed and enjoyed at the joke on himself as he would do--Bernie found joy in his life and love from his family. Bernie is remembered with great love by his wife, Phyllis, his daughter, Maura, and his son Noel, his four grandchildren, and one great grandchild.

All who knew him are grateful that Bernie lived long enough to know with how much love he will be remembered.

*Tributes to Silent Microphones***Norman Hall**

Norman Hall passed away on August 15, 2016 at age 91, following an extraordinary creative and family life. World War II Veteran, Emmy®-award winning TV director, former Great Neck Estates Trustee, accomplished environmentalist, acting teacher, devoted husband to Helene for 52 years. He was still writing and directing for Long Island Public Access TV until the time of his death.

TV programs directed by Norman include nearly 400 episodes of *The Doctors* from 1968 to 1972, *Hidden Faces*, *Santa Barbara* and *One Life to Live*.

He is survived by his loving children and their spouses Andrew and Dalila Hall, Stephen Hall and Jaffa Dayan-Hall, and Eve Hall and Don Shacknai, and his beloved and adoring grandchildren, Ethan, Alex, Emily, Avery, Noah and Aaron.

Condolences may be sent to
Helene Hall
11 Amherst Road
Great Neck, NY 11021-2910

--© The New York Times, August 19, 2016

Norman Hall was one of the best directors I ever worked with. Not only was he very competent, but he was warm and caring. Furthermore, I was very touched that when he couldn't make it in due to a snow storm he expected that I, his associate director be upgraded to director. Not every director would do that!

In recent years I was happy to bump into him at the 59 East 59th St. Theater. We both had a love of theater. I am so sorry to hear that he is gone.

Marilyn Jacobs Furey

*Tributes to Silent Microphones***Suzanne Wright**

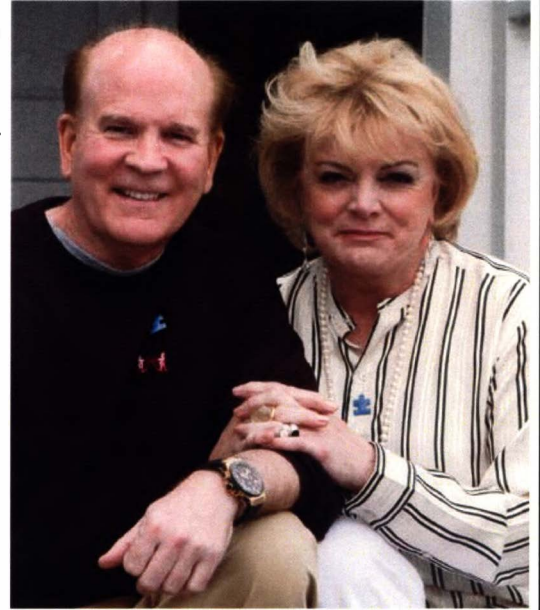
Suzanne Wright, the co-founder of the organization Autism Speaks, died at her home in Connecticut July 29th, the group announced. She was 69. "What Suzanne Wright has done to raise awareness of autism is immeasurable," Autism Speaks Chairman of the Board of Directors Brian Kelly and President and CEO Angela Geiger said in a statement. "Suzanne sparked a global conversation with one question: How can we help people with autism live their best possible lives?" they said.

Wright died following a nine-month battle with pancreatic cancer, the organization said. She was surrounded by her family at her Fairfield home when she died. Wright founded Autism Speaks with her husband, former NBC CEO Bob Wright, in 2005. The organization funds research into the causes, prevention, treatment and a cure for autism. Autism Speaks says it has committed more than \$570 million since its founding, most dedicated to science and research. Bob and Suzanne Wright founded the group after their grandson, Christian, was diagnosed with autism when he was 2 ½ years old. Suzanne Wright fought for the United Nations to establish World Autism Day, and the international body did so in 2007, marking April 2 as dedicated to awareness.

Suzanne Wright also served as board of directors for Make-A-Wish Metro New York; the Laura Pels Foundation; the Inner-City Foundation for Charity Education, and the Philadelphia-based Champions of Caring Project, Autism Speaks said. Time Magazine in 2008 named Bob and Suzanne Wright in its Time 100 list of the world's most influential people for their work advocating for autism awareness. The magazine said they raised millions and "successfully lobbied the United Nations to place autism on the global health agenda."

Wright is survived by her husband, her sister Jayne Tobin, her brothers James and Dennis Werner and three children, Catherine Anne, Christopher James, and Maggie Suzanne, and six grandchildren.

--By Phil Helsel © NBC July 29, 2016

**Jeanee von Essen**

Jeanee von Essen, age 68, died on September 18th. She was the Director of Foreign News and Development for the NBC News Channel for the last 26 years. Before that she was the Vice-President of International News at CNN. She was the twelfth person hired at CNN. She started the foreign news coverage operation when CNN launched in 1980 and ran it until 1989.

She loved news—particularly foreign news—and she loved working with the NBC affiliates and our international partners. She was an outstanding writer, producer, editor and leader. The only thing she loved more than journalism was her family—son Hugh, his fiancée Lynn, and her granddaughter Ruby, who was the joy of her life for the past six years.

She was born in Panama, spent most of her childhood in Europe, and by her high school years her family had settled in Kerrville, in the beautiful Hill Country of Texas. There will be a celebration of her life within the next few weeks in Charlotte, NC. Donations would be welcomed at Second Harvest of Metrolina, a food bank in Charlotte.



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Your contacts:

Marilyn Altman

Lenny Stucker

Joel Spector, Bambi Tascarella
(Peacock North Editors)

Sharon Stucker, John Fider
(Membership Coordinators)

E-mail: peacocknorth@yahoo.com

Mailing Address:

PO Box 112
Rowayton, CT 06853

**Helene Darvick joined NBC News in 1979
as an EJ camera and sound engineer.**

**She continues in that work, traveling around the world
to cover breaking and feature news stories.**

**During Tony Kubek's nine-years with the New York Yankees
he played in six World Series, starting in 37 World Series games.**

**For NBC television, he later broadcast twelve World Series
and fourteen League Championship Series.**

**He received the Ford C. Frick Award in 2009
presented by the National Baseball Hall of Fame**