



In This Issue



Insights on Journalism from Mark Lukasiewicz



Insights on NBC's Tokyo Olympics from Dave Mazza

INSIDE PN

Cover	1
Marilyn's Page	2
What's Now! - Lorne Micheals' Kennedy Center Honor.....	3
Peacock Profile - Mark Lukasiewicz	4-7
Looking Back - NBC Sports is Now Internet-Based (IP)	8
Looking Back - Lester Holt at Tokyo Olympics.....	9
Looking Back - NBC's Tokyo Olympics Tech World	10-11
What's Now! - A Union Forms at MSNBC.....	12
What's Now! - NBC News NOW Streaming to Expand	13
We Get Pictures - Steve Cimino's 70th Birthday	14
We Get Pictures - Gene Garnes' Special Award	15

INSIDE PN

Silent Microphones: John Dancy.....	16
Silent Microphones: Lloyd Dobyns.....	17
Silent Microphones: Ric Romo	18
Silent Microphones: Herb Schlosser	19
Silent Microphones: Jim Stricklin	20
Silent Microphones: Bill Clotworthy	21
We Get Pictures - Bob Jaeger's On the Air Retirement	22
New Members - Lauren Grant and Peter DiIorio	23
The Kicker - The NTSC Standards "Retire"	24
Peacock North Contact Info.....	24

Marilyn's Page



As we go to print, I am reminded of what a tough year and a half everyone has endured on various levels, and these events are still unfolding.

Therefore, I would like to give a huge Thank You to the NBC Olympics Team which gave us some real joy this summer, and that joy is not overrated. It was a wonderful gift given the state of other things in our world. Watching those games showed us what we are capable of. It always amazes me how we humans can pursue and capture such beautiful heights of artistry, thrilling us all with that special magic. The focus, rigor and time required to chase those dreams validate the expression "10 % inspiration, 90% perspiration."

So *Bravo* to the athletes and all associated with them who participated in the games; and *Bravo* to NBC Sports, which managed, under challenging conditions, to thrill us yet again with that show of shows, the Olympics.

Each day for some weeks now we have all watched the horrific events happening a world away in Afghanistan. They really hit home. In our last edition I thought things had calmed down enough to finally let go of this column's customary sign off:

"Support Our Troops, Our Crews, and Our Correspondents in Harm's Way."

I am painfully reinstating those words after the loss of 13 American service members, and more than 150 Afghan people in the August 27th suicide bombings in Kabul. We must continue to be mindful of all our correspondents, crews, fixers and interpreters who are also "boots on the ground", bringing those tragic stories to light.

This edition is being published in September, the 20th anniversary of 9/11. No one reading this needs another litany of what happened that day and the people who were brutally killed or helped fight off further disaster. To honor one, we honor all.

Here now, our personal choice In Memoriam.

A 9/11 Memory

For most of the 35 years that William Steckman worked for NBC, he tended the company's transmitter in 1 World Trade Center, and worked the night shift just about all that time. None of the wild weather — the lashing hailstorms, passing hurricanes or strokes of lightning — really bothered him, "because he was so confident in the strength of that building, he knew nothing could happen to it," said Jerry Vandagna, his father-in-law.

Furthermore, Mr. Steckman, a 56-year-old audio engineer, liked the night shift not only because it let him spend time during the day in West Hempstead, N.Y., with his wife, Barbara, and their five children, but also because it gave him a chance to fix everything around the house. "He could fix absolutely anything," Mr. Vandagna said. Knowing that, his boss phoned and asked if he could stay after his shift ended at 6 a.m. on the morning of September 11th, 2001. He always stayed whenever new equipment was being installed. After the first plane crashed, Mr. Steckman phoned his boss and said, "I'll power down and get out."

He did not make it...

Published by © Ann Arbor News on October 21, 2001.



*What's Now!***Lorne Michaels to be Among Kennedy Center's Honorees**

The last Kennedy Center Honors aired on television several months ago, but on July 21st, the institution announced a new batch of honorees, taking a step toward getting the program back on schedule after the upheaval of the pandemic. The recipients include the folk singer-songwriter Joni Mitchell; the stage and screen performer Bette Midler; Berry Gordy, the founder of Motown; Lorne Michaels, the creator of "Saturday Night Live"; and the opera singer Justino Díaz.



Because of the pandemic, the 2020 honors were delayed until this year and the celebration did not at all resemble the event from prior years, when artists, politicians and other prominent figures packed into the opera house. Instead, the ceremony was split over several days, and television producers stitched together a combination of recorded at-home tributes and in-person performances that aired in June.

This time, the ceremony, scheduled for December 5th, promises to look more like the Kennedy Center Honors of old, with the house at capacity and, if all goes well, President Biden in attendance. (President Trump was a no-show at the three ceremonies held during his time in office.)

Michaels, 76, who created "S.N.L." in 1975, was also forced by the pandemic to drastically rethink his show. In the spring of 2020, "S.N.L." recorded sketches at its actors' homes, allowing the audience to connect with the cast members in a new way. Now that they have returned to a live audience, they are thinking of ways to apply what they learned in quarantine.

"Those shows had a strong homemade quality, which was part of their charm," he said. "Once we went back to the audience, we kept pushing the limit of what we could do."

And from the New York Post...

As the creator and executive producer of "Saturday Night Live," 76-year-old Michaels created the most enduring "must-see television," noted Kennedy Center Chairman David M. Rubenstein, making it the most Emmy®-nominated show in history. Michaels is also known for producing a variety of comedic hits on the small screen like "30 Rock" and "The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon", movies including "Wayne's World" and "Baby Mama" as well as the stage with Broadway's "Mean Girls."

Excerpted from articles by Julia Jacobs © The New York Times,
and by Charna Flam © New York Post July 21, 2021



Peacock Profiles
Mark Lukasiewicz
Interviewed by Bob Epstein

News coverage and the state of journalism continue to be front and center in today's conversation concerning the efficacy of that coverage and its multitude of platforms. In light of NBC's historic role as a major news broadcaster for several decades, we at Peacock North thought it fitting to ask Mark Lukasiewicz, former Executive Producer of NBC News Specials and now Dean at the Lawrence Herbert School of Communications at Hofstra University, to weigh in on that conversation. Bob Epstein did the honors of leading the interview.

Please note that all the classroom photos were taken prior to the pandemic.

-Marilyn Altman

BOB EPSTEIN: We have just come through a year and a half of the pandemic, the social justice movement that arose across the country, the election, the events of January 6th. How did that change your approach to teaching journalism today?

ML: To start, as dean of a journalism school I'm an administrator, not a faculty member in the classroom every day. But I have a lot of contact with both faculty and students and certainly got a sense of how all of those events impacted teaching and learning. And as dramatic as those social and political developments were, far and away the dominant thing the past year



was the pandemic. It changed dramatically how we were able to teach. Here at Hofstra, we were able to stay in-person with social distancing and a lot of hybrid classes. But we were producing films, documentaries, television programs, newspapers, magazines and websites. All of that work continued. But looking a little more broadly at 2016 and 2020 and the Trump era I guess what I'd say about that is probably the number one thing for journalism students is a full recognition of how significant journalism is, and what an impact it can have on the world. And as we all know that waxes and wanes. I call myself a Watergate baby. Watergate and Woodward and Bernstein are what got me interested in journalism. I thought that was a tremendously impactful career where you could make a difference in the world and be at the center of things. And that's what helped motivate me to get into journalism. We've gone through other periods. This has been a very consequential period, where journalists have had a real impact on making the country aware of things going on, ferreting out the truth when you've had an administration that was set on deceiving the voters. They saw the impact of journalism. They saw the impact during the George Floyd case, during the Derek Chauvin trial, the #MeToo movement. We've had story after story, episode after episode, where journalists have turned

the page on history and really made a difference. And I think that's inspiring for students. I think one thing we have to be very proactive educating our students about is the media environment into which they're moving, which is rapidly changing and very different than it was even ten years ago. The huge power of social media, the importance of algorithms and all sorts of unseen mechanisms that drive audience to journalism is something students have to understand.

BE: When I came into the business, there was always the debate, "Do you need a journalism education?" I had bosses who said, "No, I'll hire a history major, an English major." But do you see a growing value in the definition of a journalism education and how you teach it now?

ML: I do. Look, we [at Hofstra] are a communications school and a journalism program within a liberal arts university. We're an accredited program, from the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications (ACEJMC). They require a hefty liberal arts component in our education. Learning to be broad-minded, learning to research



well, to divine facts from a variety of sources and being exposed to different points of view is really, really important. So, there are definitely skills courses we teach in that vein. And of course, writing is hugely important. One of the things I talk to students here about is how much more, in many ways, it's important to them than it was to me. When I was a young reporter starting out, nine times out of ten my first approach to a source was on the phone. It was a conversation. Today, nine times out of ten it's going to be some sort of text communication and sometimes it's only going to be 140 characters. So, you really have to know how to be a master of the written word. And all of it lives forever, so you have to be careful with it.

BE: Let me get back to sort of a bigger picture question. In recent generations, the American public used to [watch] the big three networks. They put their faith in anchors like Tom Brokaw, Bob Schieffer or Diane Sawyer. But now for the first time fewer than half of all Americans have trust in what we used to call traditional media. Axios published a survey from Edelman's, their annual trust barometer, 58% [of Americans] thought that "Most news organizations are more concerned with supporting an ideology or a political position than with informing the public." How do you think we got here in such a short period of time? What happened and how does that impact on what you're doing now?

ML: Let's start with the fact that for the last five years, there's been a concerted effort to sow mistrust in the news media, including four years when it was the president's policy during the Trump administration to call us fake news, enemy of the people, traitors. That was a concerted, well-funded, very highly-exposed drumbeat that happened day after day for four years. So, the loss of trust has to be attributed, in my view, to some extent, just to that campaign.

I think another big factor is the polarization of audiences. A generation ago when I was growing up and getting into the business, most Americans got their news from one of the big three networks. ABC, NBC, CBS. People tuned in at dinnertime and largely, day after day, the same stories were reported in different ways, the same headlines were there. So, if you were in favor of the Vietnam War in 1972 and you turned on the evening news and there was bad news from South Vietnam, you couldn't really avoid it because there were reporters in Vietnam reporting to those three networks telling you that story. Today, it's just not the case. The evening newscasts aren't watched to anywhere near the degree they used to be. And the dominant players are the cable news networks, which are dominated by their opinion programming in the evenings. And if you compare what Fox News does on a given night to what MSNBC or CNN do on a given night, they're reporting entirely different stories. One of the commentators on

this said, "We are not really living in an information world anymore. We're living in an affirmation world." You can choose to watch something that affirms your point of view. And this gets even worse with social media and algorithms, because social media platforms are built around a business model that wants me to spend more time with them. How do you get me to spend more time with you? Well, you show me things that you know I'm interested in, and that I'm likely to agree with. And

the algorithms very effectively do that. So over time, your worldview on the feed that comes in front of you on a social media platform is likely to be one that confirms the biases and the points of view you already have and reduces the risk that you're going to be exposed to something you object to.





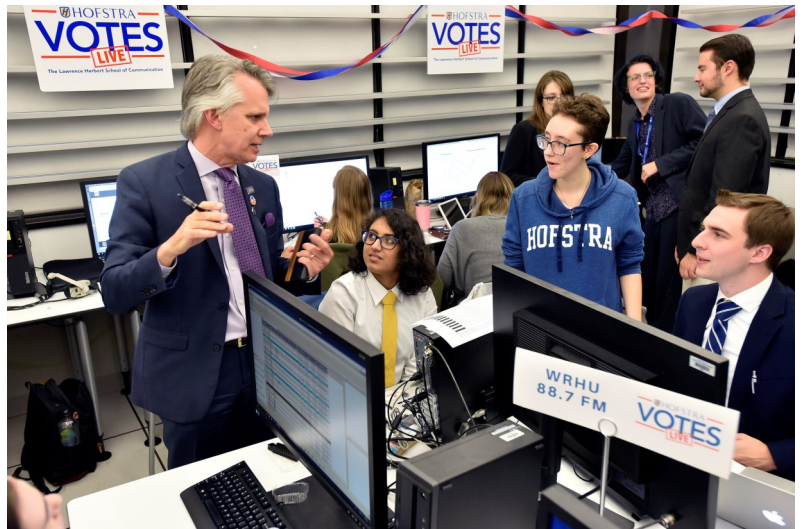
The third thing which I think has to be mentioned is what we would have described as news or news media a few years ago, now includes a whole range of things that I don't think we would have called news back then. When people talk about cable news, they tend to include the opinion programming that exists on almost all the cable news networks. OAN, Newsmax. Is Breitbart news? Is OAN news? Is The Epoch Times news? Those are not, by any traditional journalistic standard, news outlets. But they're treated that way by the platforms and the cable distribution companies, and the internet. And so they get thrown into that mix, with what I think most of us would consider news. And I think all that leads to a lot of that mistrust.

BE: A question about where your students end up working. If they came to you with opportunities at places that you previously named are these places where you can see your students wanting to work?

ML: We have students who go to work for Fox, for MSNBC, for CNN, for Newsmax, for newspapers, for local stations all over the country. What I try to do is to remind them, at the end of the day, be true to yourself. It's your personal brand that really matters here. You may well find yourself in a situation where someone, some boss, asks you to do something you feel is crossing a line. You're going to have to at some point in your career (we've all had that, I'm sure) make a decision whether that's something you can accept. And the lines are never black and white, it's always kind of gray. Let me say while we're talking about all this, I don't want to come across as painting a broad brush that all of what we call cable news is garbage. It isn't. There are some very thoughtful voices on cable including some on Fox, CNN and on MSNBC. I think Chris Wallace does a very creditable, even-handed job, often interrogating people on both sides. I think Rachel Maddow, while she clearly comes to her work with a progressive point of view, does incredibly deep dives on stories, court cases, on communities that you won't find on other platforms. But I think it's really important that we recognize what these operations are. And again, make sure that we have fidelity to facts. That's the critical thing.

Another thing that's going through a dramatic reexamination particularly in journalism schools with young people, is this notion of objectivity. There is a growing school of thought that objectivity is, to put it politely, a crock. That it's a pretense, that it was never real, and that any thinking person comes to any story with certain inherent biases and points of view. I think reporters have been confronted with the fact that traditional objectivity, as it was understood in the newsrooms I first worked in, was the broad point of view of white men. Objectivity in an African American-dominated newsroom or a female-dominated newsroom might look very different. So rather than pretending to be objective, let's admit that everybody brings certain life experiences and biases to their journalism, which is fine, as long as the product is honest and factual. It's okay to have a point of view. And I think that's an interesting difference. Most of our students feel much more that way. Another thing that I'm finding really interesting is students are very aware of the relationship between sources and journalists, and having a sensitivity towards sources, particularly sources that don't have power. People in disadvantaged communities or underrepresented communities, if it's not treated the right way, the journalist is in some ways exploiting those people to get their story, to make something splashy, without concern for the impact on that community or on those people. That's a sensitivity that I don't think I had as a young journalist.

BE: Let's bring this back to your students. In 2018, 1½ years after Trump took office, Peacock North interviewed our old colleague Rick Kaplan, former president of MSNBC, CNN, and longtime ABC executive. He said the press was going to have to figure out how to cover President Trump. He was president. The office demanded an approach with a certain level of respect. In light of every-



thing that had happened, COVID, the election last year, the social justice movement, January 6th, let's talk about your students. What lessons do you give your students or try to impart to your faculty and your team when there's not even an agreement on basic objective facts? How do you cover something when facts are even in dispute?

ML: There are a lot of lessons here. Let's start with: "Don't trust authority. Don't publish a press release. Don't take it as fact just because somebody standing behind a lectern with a seal told you it was so." The idea of respecting the [presidential] office, I think it is important. But adherence to the facts and adherence to the truth I think is the number one thing here. What I try to talk to our students about is the most important relationship you have is with your audience. That's the relationship of trust you must build, and you must keep to. And your duty is to them. Your duty is not to the person on the podium giving you a speech or giving you a factsheet. I think a lot of us [journalists] had trouble recognizing that the norms that we expected to hold were being just shattered on a daily basis in front of us. The press was still operating by a rulebook that the White House had shredded. It didn't serve our audiences well.

BE: Are the young journalists having difficulty defining the line between journalism, witnessing, and advocacy? Taking to the streets versus being on the streets and bearing witness? There's a line there.

ML: There is a line there. But I think there is a challenge being voiced about where that line should be drawn. There was an incident a few months back where a newspaper essentially told a reporter they could not report on their own community because that would bring a bias to their community. That doesn't make sense. And I think students are challenging that and saying, "Wait a minute. I can report on what's going on and as a young woman, as a person of color, stand up for my rights. I'm allowed to vote. Why am I disqualified from being a citizen in order to do my job?" I think this generation of journalists are feeling that way. And by the way, when you talk about advocacy, I think a large part of that discussion solely has to do with whether you're saying the quiet part out loud. Because journalists have always been advocates.

MA: What do you think is the most important thing that you can impart to your students?

ML: Right now, it's fidelity to facts. It's not to let yourself get dragged down that slippery slope. You have to fight to be factual. And it takes courage. I think that's important. Almost every student that comes into my school considering a career in journalism is trailed by parents who have a little or a lot to worry about that choice. And so, I have to talk to them too. What I typically say, and I say it because I believe it, is three things: number one, if your student is passionate to be a journalist, the fact that they have a passion about what they want to do with their life is half the battle. Congratulations on that. Number two, human beings have never consumed more storytelling of all kinds, including journalism, in human history. So, there is plenty of demand for what you want to do with your life and what your child wants to do with their life. The third thing is you have to have the stomach for it. You have to have the stomach for a lot of change and a lot of movement, because the industry is changing more rapidly than at any time in its history. But if you can handle that, if you're excited by that, you can have a real impact on the world and on the world around you and feel really good about what you've done with your life. Which I think is something that most journalists can say at the end of their careers, is that they made a contribution and that they had an impact in ways large and small along the way. And that's a really great thing to be able to say.



About the Interviewer



Bob Epstein was the Vice President of NBC News Specials from 2011-2020 and before that Executive Producer of NBC Nightly News with Brian Williams, and has served as Senior Broadcast Producer of Nightly, Executive Producer of Weekend Nightly, and Senior Broadcast Producer of Specials.

Bob joined NBC in 1996 as the first Executive Producer of dayside at MSNBC. He came to NBC after 18 years at CBS News.

*Tech Talk***NBC Sports Production Workflow Goes “IP” in Stamford**

NBC Sports Group has turned to Grass Valley IP-based production solutions to power workflows at its Stamford, CT headquarters, leveraging the open architecture, scalability and flexibility of IP technology. Taking advantage of Grass Valley's Dynamic IP Blueprint, NBC Sports quickly revamped its infrastructure. The cornerstone of the blueprint is Grass Valley's Dynamic System Orchestrator GV Orbit, Grass Valley said. GV Orbit combines configuration, control and monitoring designed to orchestrate broadcast media networks dynamically across SDI, hybrid and pure IP deployments, it said.

“With the return of live sports and major events, we need to ensure we have the best technology available capable of spinning up and down as sports events peak,” said Tim Canary, NBC Sports vice president of engineering. “Part of NBC's roadmap was to upgrade our routing topology at the Stamford site by 2023, and the relocation of our Golf Channel Headquarters last year accelerated that project,” he said. “We wanted to adopt a standards-based routing system that would enable us to evolve and add more functionality over time as needed.” Grass Valley impressed NBC Sports with its latest IP innovations, which made selecting the vendor for the project “easy,” he added. “The GV Orbit technology was built from the ground up for the demands of live production in an IP environment, and Grass Valley has been a true partner throughout this technology transformation,” said Canary.

The switch to IP also entailed Grass Valley's Dynamic Software Processing solutions, including the XIP-3901-UDC-IF dual-channel 4K UHD format converter, the Kaleido-IP multiviewer and Audio Live processor, all of which pair with GV Orbit, Grass Valley said. When used in conjunction with the dynamic pathfinding and dynamic resource management capabilities of GV Orbit, new production agility is brought to bear, the company said.

“Grass Valley's commitment to innovative, open-architecture has been a huge benefit for us,” said Lukas Zahas, NBC Sports manager of broadcast technology. “The Dynamic IP Blueprint empowers us to build, configure and change systems on-the-fly.”

By Phil Kurz, © TV Technology, June 15, 2021



We Get Letters and Pictures

Lester Holt at Olympics



A few of Lester's Instagram Posts:

Making the best of "soft" quarantine in Tokyo.

Using the down time to practice my bass.

As a recent arrival here I'm confined to the hotel when not working at an Olympic venue.



Team USA's Bowe Becker displaying his gold medal during our interview here in Tokyo.

He opened up to me about the struggles that caused him to quit the sport of swimming 9 months ago.

Now after the gold medal performance as part of the men's 4x100 freestyle relay team he told me there is renewed fire in his belly.

My favorite part of covering Olympics are moments like this.

Being with athletes fresh off the medal stand.

All their hard work having made a dream come true.

Arizona's Jagger Eaton mustered the skate of his life to earn a bronze medal in street skateboarding in the sport's Olympics debut.

He stopped by our set here in Tokyo for a really fun interview.



Looking Back

Inside NBC's Tokyo Olympics Operations and Technology

This article, filed two days prior to the close of the Olympics, gives an overview of the technical and logistical challenges faced by the networks of NBCU.



At this point thousands of broadcast professionals had started to head home. Others were staying for the Paralympic Games. But all of them, like Dave Mazza, SVP/CTO, NBC Sports Group and NBC Olympics, were reflecting on an Olympics experience that, for more than a year, has been unlike any other before. “We came in with a bit of trepidation because the extra year of planning saw a plethora of new, good ideas from production to enhance the coverage,” says Mazza. “And then we were also trying to make good on some very aggressive technical initiatives. It made the plan better, but, for every bit of better that it got, it was more daunting as to how we were going

to pull it off when we were not even sure how many of our crew would make it into Tokyo. Now I am very pleased with how it has all gone.

Invariably, an Olympics effort is always compared to previous ones, Mazza says. “The Tokyo efforts were about three times more complicated than the 2016 Rio Games. First, a doubling of the complexity around new technologies and workflows like IP, HDR, 1080p, and immersive audio. Another step up was due to the complications from attempting such a large-scale production during a global pandemic. The pandemic adds worries about yourself, your family, the rules, the tests. It was a Herculean effort to get it all done.”

From a production-element standpoint, Mazza notes things like the *Friends & Family* effort, which allowed athletes to see and talk to family and friends back home immediately after their event. Born out of the pandemic, it was a complicated effort, often taking a tremendous number of worker-hours to simply get a 10-second shot on the air. “It allowed for a super dramatic moment”. Another extra effort that paid off was apparent during the Opening Ceremony. NBC sought to put a camera on the bus with the U.S. team on its way to the Ceremony. A surprising number of things that we were looking to do came true for us.

From a technology standpoint, the big lift this year was to create a wide variety of video formats floating through the ecosystem in Tokyo, the U.S., and Sky in the UK. OBS provided content in 4K HDR and 1080p SDR, which NBC Olympics then intermixed with its own 1080p HDR as the primary production format. But there was also 1080i SDR, which NBC used for all the cable and digital feeds to its Stamford, CT, facility. On top of that, NBC Olympics in Tokyo handed off an HDR signal in the HLG standard to the NBC playout facility in Englewood Cliffs, NJ, where it was flipped to PQ and emitted via HEVC compression. [PN Ed. note: Does your head hurt yet?]

“We did our best to get to one format and stay there,” says Mazza. We pretty much normalized anything we had to 1080p HDR, and, once we got there, it was easy.” He notes that the work around HDR that NBC Sports undertook for Notre Dame Football for three seasons paid off big time. The team was able to develop its own set of LUTs (look-up tables) to allow color space from one format to be properly mapped to another. “It ultimately got us to a really good point. It’s one of the reasons we haven’t had trouble with HDR.”

With 16 Olympics under his belt, Mazza has seen a lot of advances. He notes a chart on the wall in the IBC from the Sydney Summer Games in 2000: “The chart shows four SD signals coming from Sydney, and we thought that was complicated. Now we have 221 HD feeds, 60 of which are HDR, and 101 feeds coming back. It’s mind-bending. If I think about it too much, it’s a bit terrifying [to be] responsible for making sure it works.” The key, he says, is a team that has been together for several games, a team that is hundreds strong and has been part of a plan that has grown a little bit each time.

“There is a lot of legacy to our workflows,” he points out. “The new piece we’re teaching is HDR or immersive audio. We didn’t reinvent everything.” That said, Mazza acknowledges that almost everything under the hood has changed: the facility is fully IP. But the goal is to ensure that the IP changes under the hood do not impact the way the production or engineering team operates. He credits not only the internal team but the freelancers with adjusting to a new world of IP, 1080p, and HDR.

“The freelancers, especially, might have been here only seven to 10 days ahead of the Games, and their heads were spinning,” he says. “But the goal with the operators was to not overwhelm them with complexity.”

The pandemic did more than just make people concerned about health issues. It also caused operations to shift out of Tokyo, most notably production facilities for beach volleyball, basketball, indoor volleyball, diving, and golf. And it’s not just COVID. The weather resulted in events’ changing times, venues, and more. And all those details need to be conveyed to multiple teams in multiple places. NEP VP, Special Projects, Errol Foremaster is key to keeping the various control rooms on different continents in sync.

“We shifted venue control rooms’ homes,” says Mazza. “That was mostly COVID-based. And those are all pretty big efforts: beach volleyball has 16 HDR feeds, golf has 16 HDR feeds, and basketball has 12 SDR feeds. Errol is hyper-aware of the relationship between the competition, production, and truck schedules.” Contingency plans had been drawn up in case production crews and executives needed to isolate and work remotely from a hotel room. Mazza says that the team also had to build out a worst-case plan in case very few people came to Tokyo. “We spun up a lot of scenarios during the year. In the end, we wanted to move as many people home as we could without impacting the primetime product, and it has worked out well. But we had to figure out how to distribute 500 people in Stamford.”

“We could not be doing this [here in Tokyo] without the incredibly hard work of the giant team in Stamford; 30 Rock; CNBC; the NOC; the team in Dry Creek, CO; and Telemundo Center in Miami,” says Mazza. “Tim Canary, NBC Sports VP, engineering, and Tom Popple, NBC Universal VP, studio operations, have been key to keeping many of the U.S. groups running smoothly. And that is no small feat, with 10 control rooms and 28 announce booths running in just the Stamford plant alone.”

As for the team in Tokyo, Mazza notes Chip Adams, VP, venue engineering, who oversees venue operations, and Todd Donovan, NBC Olympics VP, engineering, who took over from the retired Terry Adams to oversee the IBC. Terry was willing to come out of retirement to help us out. “He has been that consistent connective tissue back to all the things we used to do, and he was very instrumental in the design of the IBC. “Speaking of legacy,” Mazza continues, “I would be remiss if I did not credit our smartest and most kindhearted Senior Engineer Chris Jorgensen, who unfortunately we lost about 16 months ago. Chris could fix anything, he understood how absolutely everything works, and he was patient enough to explain to the mere mortals. We will forever miss him and his contributions.” Mazza also cites Darryl Jefferson, NBC Olympics VP, broadcast operations and technology, and his team, who handled all the file-based workflow and all the editing. Mike Drazin, director production engineering and technology, NBC Olympics, worked with Director, Advanced Content Production Technology, Chris Seeger, in championing the HDR effort.

To keep the Tokyo team connected, says Mazza, Chris Connolly, VP, transmission operations and engineering, NBC Sports Group, and his team engineered the entire transmission architecture. The team in comms, headed by John Pastore, director, broadcast communication, NBC Sports Group, kept the world’s largest trunked intercom working. And Karl Malone, director, sound design, NBC Sports and NBC Olympics, and his team worked tirelessly on every bit of sound collected and presented as the perfect immersive mix. The venue engineering team of Levi Phillippe, Tom Perley, and Doug McGee kept all of our remote-controlled venue operations running smoothly, which were “caught” at home by Dominic Torchia and the four mobile units in Stamford.

Meanwhile, Power Technical Manager Charlie Jablonski kept all of the power on, and Director of Construction John Arvelo oversaw construction of the IBC and the HVAC. “[Director, Broadcast Operations,] Ian Kuchta runs our entire BOC operation,” notes Mazza, “which is a lot like the lead air-traffic controller at the Atlanta Airport. Of course, all of what we do on the tech/ops side ultimately boils down to trying to make the vision of our incredibly talented production teams come true, and none of them are more passionate and dedicated than Mike Sheehan, our coordinating director.”

The COVID challenge, Mazza notes, made the efforts of Marsha Bird, SVP, Olympic Operations; Ryan Soucy, VP, Olympic operations; Judy Cloyd, director, HR; and Derek Ehmen, VP, technical logistics, that much more challenging and vital.

“We couldn’t have done this without those people,” Mazza adds, “and about 3,000 other very hardworking skilled people who were on their teams, getting this all done. I’m incredibly grateful for that and very lucky that we have an embarrassment of riches in talented people that happen to be as passionate as I am about doing the Games and keep coming back to do it no matter where we are.”

Excerpted by Marilyn Altman from an article by Ken Kerschbaumer,
Editorial Director © SVG Blog, August 6, 2021



*What's Now!***Some MSNBC Employees Vote to Unionize with Writers Guild**

MSNBC employees, including writers, producers and fact-checkers, voted to unionize in a government-supervised election, part of a labor-organizing push sweeping the media industry.

The mail-in ballot election, held by the National Labor Relations Board, covered about 300 staff, according to the Writers Guild of America, East. The vote was 141-to-58.

The organizing campaign went public in June, saying a majority of workers had signed a letter requesting that MSNBC, part of Comcast Corp., voluntarily recognize and negotiate with their union. The network's president, Rashida Jones, declined that request, arguing in a memo reported by the New York Times that "our employees should be able to make such an important decision through a standard election process."

In an August 24th email to employees shared with Bloomberg, Jones signaled that the network wouldn't contest the election results, writing that the guild "will now be the representative" of staff, such as segment producers and production assistants.

"I am glad we held an election, which gave everyone affected by this process the opportunity to have their voice heard," Jones wrote. "As we all move forward, we're committed to working together as one unified organization where we'll continue to respect, support and collaborate with one another, and foster a culture that makes us all proud."

If the government certifies the union, MSNBC would be required to recognize and collectively bargain with the WGAE. That would extend a wave of unionization victories in recent years in the media industry, including at NBC News' digital division, where workers voted in 2019 to unionize with the NewsGuild of New York, an affiliate of the Communications Workers of America.

"This victory is the first of its kind in cable news," the MSNBC union's organizing committee said in an emailed statement. "We now look forward to constructive, good faith negotiations with MSNBC management to make this an even better place to work -- with input from all of us."

The WGAE has swelled its ranks in recent years by successfully organizing digital journalists at HuffPost, Vox Media and Vice Media, but has been roiled by internal conflict over its organizing priorities. The group recently announced a "pause" on trying to organize new digital media targets, and some leaders have voiced concern about online workers diverting the group's budget and focus away from television and film struggles.

In an emailed statement August 24th, WGAE Executive Director Lowell Peterson emphasized the role of unity in securing success at MSNBC: "The organizing campaign at MSNBC took over a year of intense work that saw every sector of our union, from screenwriters to digital news members, join together to deliver a resounding victory."

By Josh Eidelson, © Bloomberg.com News, August 24, 2021

*What's Now!***“NBC News NOW” Streaming to Expand**

The NBCU News Group is adding hundreds of jobs to its digital organization, led by a major investment in streaming as well as in its "TODAY" show brand, executives tell Axios.

Why it matters: The move is the network's biggest investment in its streaming and digital products since it said it would hire about 70 people in October 2019. "As more consumption shifts to streaming, it's only natural that we shift more of our attention and resources to serving that audience," says Noah Oppenheim, president of NBC News. "This substantial investment in streaming and digital allows us to meet the needs of news consumers in a rapidly-changing digital media industry," says Cesar Conde, Chairman of NBCU News Group.

Details: Beginning this summer, the company will be adding several new hours of original programming to the NBC News NOW streaming service. It also plans to bring more of its star anchors and reporters on board as it expands its streaming programming globally. The new roles will also span across NBCNews.com, MSNBC.com, TODAY.com, and NBC News' video teams. The network plans to double the digital staff for its "TODAY" franchise, following its expansion into streaming last year. "Today All Day" last month announced it would be rolling out original programming for its streaming service, starring familiar names like Hoda Kotb and Jenna Bush Hager. The new staffing investments will fall under the teams of Catherine Kim, SVP of global digital news for NBC News and MSNBC; Libby Leist, SVP NBC News and "TODAY;" Janelle Rodriguez, SVP of Nightly News, NBC News NOW & Breaking News Specials and Ashley Parrish, SVP Commerce for NBCU News Group.

Timing: Most of the new programming will debut this fall. NBC News NOW plans to expand its weekday live programming throughout the fall and add to its weekend live programming and originals beginning in the first quarter of 2022. International distribution will come later this year.

Some of the new programming coming to NBC News Now:

- Tom Llamas, NBC's senior national correspondent, will host a new, daily primetime news program.
- Hallie Jackson, the network's senior Washington correspondent and anchor, will host a daily evening show and a weekly special newsmagazine series.
- Joshua Johnson, anchor of MSNBC's "The Week," will host a daily evening news analysis and explainer program.
- Llamas and Jackson will host these new streaming programs in addition to their linear TV shows.

From a business perspective, the company does not plan to put either NBC News Now or TODAY All Day behind a paywall at this time. "The north star for us is in time spent," says Chris Berend, EVP of Digital for NBCU News Group. The company says that NBC News NOW averages more than 44 million views and 14 million hours watched per month. Berend notes that any revenue, whether it be advertising, commerce, partnerships or otherwise, flows from how well the network meets consumers' expectations.

By the numbers: With the new additions, there will be nearly 300 people at NBCU News Group working on streaming across editorial, engineering, product, talent, and production. Dozens of roles have already been posted, including new roles for different types of digital reporters and producers across topics areas like health, parenting and politics.

Be smart: Executives didn't elaborate on whether there would be new streaming services planned for some of its other news properties, like MSNBC, CNBC or Telemundo, but noted that for now, NBC plans to keep its existing news streaming services distinct. "Every day, we're seeing more interplay between these streaming services and our traditional digital platforms," Oppenheim says. "We're also seeing more interaction between streaming and our mobile platforms, with shopping being a great example." NBC has launched other digital products for its news brands, including "The Choice," an extension of MSNBC's progressive programming on Peacock.

Bottom line: "As streaming platforms mature, consumers have come to expect a premium experience," says Berend. "Live news is no exception."

By Sara Fischer © Axios, July 27, 2021



We Get Letters and Pictures

Steve Cimino's 70th Birthday Surprise



Michael

On July 10th, Fran Cimino totally surprised hubby Steve, the long-time Technical Director for "SNL". Earlier that day he thought he was helping to set up a surprise party for their son, Michael. Then Fran sent him on an errand while 40 of their family, neighbors, friends and NBC colleagues gathered in their spacious back yard. When Steve returned - "Wow!"



Left: Greeting guests. Center: grandsons Aris and Triton. Right: granddaughter Eleni and Fran.



John Pinto



Lenny Stucker



Peter Caesar

Photos courtesy of Fran Cimino and Jan Kasoff.

We Get Letters and Pictures

Gene Garnes Receives Award

POUGHQUAG, NY, June 29, 2021 Press Release -- Marquis Who's Who, the world's premier publisher of biographical profiles, is proud to present Eugene Garnes with the Albert Nelson Marquis *Lifetime Achievement Award*. An accomplished listee, Mr. Garnes celebrates many years' experience in his professional network, and has been noted for achievements, leadership qualities, and the credentials and successes he has accrued in his field.

Mr. Garnes was first exposed to the technical side of broadcasting at the age of six. His father and mentor, Elmer Eugene Garnes, worked at NBC Radio as an engineer and would take his son to work with him on Saturdays. Mr. Garnes quickly developed a fascination with the equipment as well as the general atmosphere of the studio, where he was lucky enough to observe legendary radio personalities like Ted Brown, Gene Rayburn and others at work.

Mr. Garnes attended the Riverside Military Academy for three years. In 1972 Mr. Garnes earned his certification as a trained member of the Army Reserve Officer Training Corps' Junior Division. In June of 1978 Mr. Garnes graduated from the New York Institute of Technology with a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Communications (Major: Communication Radio, Minor: Television Production). He also attended and successfully completed several courses at the George Meany Center of Labor Studies in Silver Springs, MD.

In March of 1979, Mr. Garnes began his commercial radio career at NBC Radio in New York City as an engineer. In 1981 he was appointed Chief Engineer of Elizabeth Seton College's radio station WRTV and Department Advisor of Radio and Television for the College in Yonkers, New York. For the next ten years, he would maintain this role while simultaneously working in New York City as an engineer for WNBC Radio, the flagship station for the NBC Radio Division. In addition to technical responsibilities such as audio mixing, field remote work and technical operations, Mr. Garnes worked closely with a myriad of celebrities and radio icons at WNBC Radio.

Mr. Garnes will also never forget his experience working at a major radio station when President Reagan was shot in 1981. The riveting chaos of rapidly taking live feeds and relaying with correspondents made this one of the most memorable days of his life. Mr. Garnes eventually excelled as a technical operations engineer for NBC Radio from 1979 until 1988 at which point he transferred over to television operations and worked as a videotape engineer and finally as a Digital Production Services Engineer until his retirement in 2015; a career with NBC spanning almost 36 years. Shortly thereafter he assumed his current role as the vice president of the radio division at Depot Hill Media.

Mr. Garnes served as a local union official with the National Association of Broadcast Technicians and Employees, AFL-CIO, Local 11 in New York City. He served as Shop Steward for 12 years and Director of Organizing for 19 years among other titles.

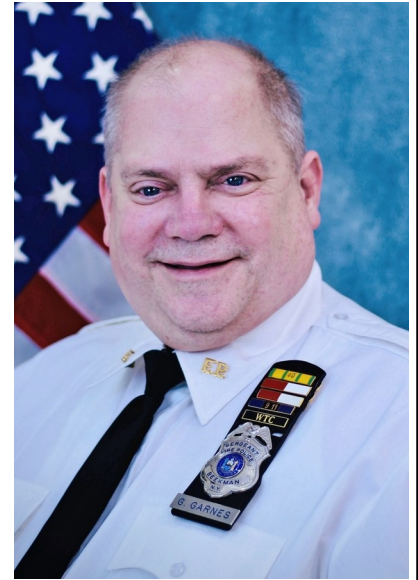
Despite the magnitude of his radio career, Mr. Garnes has always been highly dedicated to keeping his community safe as well. He has been active in the volunteer fire service as a volunteer fireman commencing in Pleasantville, New York from 1975 to 1996, then serving in the same role in the Beekman, New York Fire Department from 1996 to present. From 2014 to 2016, he served as the president of the Volunteer Fire Police Association of Dutchess County, New York.

Mr. Garnes remains a member of the aforementioned county's Fire Police Emergency Response Team.

In 2013, his devotion to public safety garnered him the Fire Police Officer of the Year Award from Dutchess County and the Chiefs Award from the Beekman Fire Department four years later. The town of Beekman has additionally awarded Mr. Garnes three citations for saving the life of another human being.

In January 2021, Mr. Garnes retired as a sergeant fire police officer in Beekman.

© Marquis Who's Who June 29, 2021



Father and Son in 2001

*Tributes to Silent Microphones***John Dancy remembered by Stan Bernard**

John "Bud" Dancy died peacefully on August 2nd, a few days before his 85th birthday, and thus we lost the quintessential NBC correspondent and a superb human being. To almost everyone he was "Bud". At one time there were newsroom rumors he wanted to sign off his pieces as "Bud", but Reuven talked him out of it.

So, he stayed John for an extraordinary award winning, globe circling career. He was as comfortable working stories in Moscow, Berlin, the Middle East, or Washington where I met Bud in the 70's, and learned that show producers, field producers, technicians, all regarded Bud as a class act who did the work flawlessly. With the exception of the rare argument over a word or two with Gil Millstein, Nitely's copy editor, ---but that was everyone doing their job, -- "Bud" got it done painlessly. He was a tough act to follow.

Tom Cheatham, working out of the London Bureau with Bud, got a late request from Nitely for a Kissinger piece that had very little edited video. He showed it to Dancy who looked at it once on a tight deadline, wrote a script, and with a lip mike read it once at the BBC feed point. Tom says Bud hit every edit. To this day, Cheatham, who became foreign editor for Nitely, recalls with wonder, Bud's professional skills and the joy of working with him.

After retirement from NBC, "Bud was still 'Bud'", even to many of his University students who would ask if I knew "Bud". He did what he always did, taught journalism.

More about John Dancy...

John was born on August 5, 1936, in Jackson, Tennessee, son of Albert Gallatin and Mabel Ann (Duck) Dancy. He attended David Lipscomb College, Nashville, 1958, and received a Bachelor in English Literature from Union University, Jackson, 1959. He was awarded the Doctor of Philosophy (honorary), from Union University in 1989.

He was a news commentator for KYW-TV, the Westinghouse station in Cleveland from 1961-1965.

He began a career in education and public service upon his retirement. In September 1996, Dancy was named a Fellow at the Joan Shorenstein Center for Press, Politics and Public Policy at the John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University. He was the J.B. and Maurice C. Shapiro Fellow in Media Studies at George Washington University in the fall semester of 2002.

Dancy won the Alfred I. DuPont-Columbia University Award for Excellence in Broadcast Journalism, the Overseas Press Club's Citation for Excellence, the Dirksen Award for coverage of Congress, the Janus Award for business reporting, and four National Emmy® Awards. He is listed as a noteworthy news correspondent by Marquis Who's Who. He became a Member of Radio-Television Correspondents Association in Washington, DC.

He leaves his wife, Ann Lewis Dancy; two sons, Christopher and John; and two daughters, Sara and Mary Katherine.

By Adeoye John, © LatestNewsSouthAfrica.Com, August 2, 2021

Tributes to Silent Microphones

Lloyd Dobyns remembered by friend and former colleague Linda Ellerbee

Lloyd Dobyns, noted NBC News correspondent and anchor during the 70s and 80s, died on August 22nd in Raleigh, North Carolina, from complications following a series of strokes. He was 85. Dobyns was an NBC News correspondent in Europe, the Middle East, and Asia, but is particularly remembered for the innovative late night news series NBC News Overnight where he was teamed with Linda Ellerbee. The program was known for the insightful writing of its two anchors as well as its sardonic attitude.

A graduate of Washington & Lee University, Dobyns was born in Newport News, Virginia on March 12, 1936. In 1957, after a stint in the army, he got his start in broadcasting as a reporter for WDBJ-TV in Roanoke, Virginia, in 1957. Three years later, he began anchoring the news at the local NBC affiliate in the Tidewater area of Virginia (WAVY-TV), then became news director, where he was responsible for several progressive changes, including hiring the area's first female TV reporter at a time when television news was primarily a man's game.

He left Virginia in 1969 for New York, first as Managing Editor of WNEW-TV, then as part of the NBC News team. At NBC, he worked as a foreign correspondent, then was brought back to New York by legendary producer Reuven Frank to anchor the groundbreaking TV news magazine, *Weekend*. When reporters asked Frank to describe "this guy Dobyns," he answered, "well, he writes like David Brinkley and looks like Charles Bronson." Dobyns set the style for *Weekend*, a writing and reporting style that continued after he was joined by Linda Ellerbee – the first time the irreverent duo were paired. "He was a friend, teacher, trouble-maker, and a world-class journalist," said Ellerbee, "I shall miss him more than I can say." After leaving the groundbreaking *NBC News Overnight*, Dobyns anchored the short-lived but critically acclaimed TV magazine *Monitor*. Later, in a documentary titled *If Japan Can, Why Can't We?*, he reported on the Japanese boom at a time when American manufacturing was faltering. The success of this documentary led him to co-write several books about Japan's economic success with NBC News producer Clare Crawford-Mason.

"I learned a lot about journalism and how to deliver it by watching Lloyd—here was an old-school journalist inventing a new school of journalism every night on NBC," said Brian Williams, of NBC and MSNBC. "Lloyd was wry without being snarky, he was smart but never pedantic, he was dry by design...but never boring. He firmly believed: he was a delivery system. The news was the star of the broadcast."

During his long career with NBC News, Dobyns won more than two dozen awards for reporting, writing, and anchoring. "Lloyd was a man ahead of his time," said Richard C. Wald, former president of NBC News and Fred Friendly Professor of Professional Practice in Media and Society at Columbia University. "He had what is now called edge. In service to that style he brought experience, intelligence and a subversive humor that made anything he did identifiably Dobyns."

When he retired from television in 1986, Dobyns occupied the Ayers Chair at Jacksonville State University in Alabama, then moved back to Virginia in 2004 where for several years he wrote and hosted award-winning podcasts for Colonial Williamsburg, interviewing historians, writers and other authorities on America's past. In 2003, Dobyns was inducted into the Virginia Hall of Fame for the body of his work over the years.

Dobyns is survived by his wife, Patti, three children: Denise, Alison and Kenneth, and six grandchildren.



*Tributes to Silent Microphones***Ric Romo****Carol and Ric**

We are mourning a treasured member of the TODAY family. West Coast producer Ric Romo, who joined NBC in 1979 and worked with TODAY for more than 30 years, died on June 26th at the age of 62.

During his tenure, Ric made his mark covering news that interested viewers all over the world, from O.J. Simpson's 1995 trial to West Coast earthquakes to perennial red carpet events. And while the subjects of his work changed, one thing remained the same — Ric loved what he did, and those around him loved him. His colleagues called him "a ray of sunshine...the most-loved person in the newsroom."

Ric's work on the red carpet earned him a warm regard from many of the celebrities he met, including one Hollywood great who also became a great friend to him, the late acting and dancing legend Fred Astaire.

As Carson Daly said on TODAY Monday: "He was a great storyteller; he was incredibly funny. Ric knew everybody on the NBC lot — they knew him — he knew the security guards and all the way up to Johnny Carson himself. He brought a smile to everybody's face, literally just when Ric walked in the door."

The sudden loss has left his colleagues in Los Angeles reeling — and remembering. To those who worked most closely with the talented writer and producer, he was known as "a ray of positivity," "light and love," "the most-loved person in the newsroom" and "always the calm in the storm."

"Our staff is just heartbroken at this loss," said TODAY co-anchor Savannah Guthrie.

He was known for his kindness and for exuding joy, and that's how he'll be remembered here.

Ric is survived by his wife of 40 years, Carol, his brothers, Jim and Dan, and his sister, Diana. We send our love and condolences to all who were touched by his life.

By Ree Hines, June 28, 2021
© Today.Com

**Ric with his West Coast TODAY family.**

*Tributes to Silent Microphones***Herb Schlosser**

Herbert Schlosser, the NBC executive who championed the groundbreaking sketch show “Rowan & Martin’s Laugh-In” and oversaw the launch of “Saturday Night Live,” died on August 6th in Manhattan. He was 95.

“We are deeply saddened by the passing of Herb Schlosser,” NBC said in a statement. “His ingenuity, creativity and integrity as president and CEO of NBC during the ’70s made an indelible mark on the network and its legacy, including bringing Johnny Carson to ‘The Tonight Show’ and helping to shape what ultimately became ‘Saturday Night Live.’”

As president of NBC in 1974, Schlosser was looking for programming that could replace reruns of “The Tonight Show” on weekends. His concept became “Saturday Night Live” — a show that would tape the same day and have a different host each week while it would “seek to develop new television personalities” — a concept that has stayed remarkably similar 46 years after its launch.

“Saturday Night Live” producer Lorne Michaels told the New York Times, “We wouldn’t have been on the air without him.” “Live” was his idea, not mine.” He also oversaw rock and pop music performance series “The Midnight Special,” which ran Friday nights from 1973 to 1981,

Schlosser was a lawyer and came out of NBC’s business affairs department, where he negotiated deals for the 1964 Summer Olympics in Tokyo and deals with talent such as Bob Hope. As vice president for programs on the West Coast, Schlosser developed some of the early shows featuring Black talent, including “Julia” and “The Flip Wilson Show.” Despite complaints about the show’s racy humor, Schlosser was a champion of “Rowan & Martin’s Laugh-In,” which premiered in 1968.



After working as an attorney, he joined the NBC fold in 1960. Among his early notable assignments was negotiating the deal to bring Johnny Carson to NBC to replace Jack Paar as “Tonight Show” host.

After becoming chief executive of NBC, he headed up entertainment operations for NBC’s parent company, RCA. He became chairman of the Museum of the Moving Image, where he remained until 2013.

Schlosser was born in Atlantic City, N.J. and graduated Princeton and Yale Law.

He is survived by his wife Judith, son Eric, an author, a daughter, Lynn, a former television executive, five grandchildren and six great-grandchildren.

By Pat Saperstein, © Variety, August 6, 2021



Tributes to Silent Microphones
Jim Stricklin

James “Jim” Stricklin, who was one of WMAQ’s first Black news photographers and had a 40-year career, died July 26 at Kindred Chicago Lakeshore Hospital of COVID-19, according to Marita Joyce Stricklin, his wife of 57 years. The Hyde Park resident, who was 88, became ill despite having been vaccinated against the coronavirus, she said. “He had been just going along and enjoying retirement,” she said. “It’s so transmissible.”

WMAQ staffers said they’ll miss his humor and gift for getting good pictures. They said that, when news happened, it seemed he always had his camera rolling and ready to shoot. They also said they’ll miss his support during labor disputes. Mr. Stricklin was a steward for NABET, according to retired WMAQ anchor Art Norman. “He represented the little guy,” Norman said. “He would fight for maternity leave, things like that. He would fight like crazy. He just looked out for everyone.” “He wasn’t cowed or impressed by any star or any politician,” former WMAQ anchor Joan Esposito said. If a fledgling reporter didn’t know the right questions, “He leaned over and told you what to ask,” WMAQ-TV political reporter Mary Ann Ahern said.

Mr. Stricklin grew up in Bronzeville. After graduating from DuSable High School, he served in the Army, assigned to work as a photographer in Paris, according to his wife. He went on to get a design degree from the Illinois Institute of Technology but was “always aiming for filmmaking,” his wife said. He hung out at the South Side Community Art Center and met Gordon Parks, the first Black photographer for Life magazine and director of the film “Shaft.”

In 1964, the Canadian Broadcasting Corp. hired Mr. Stricklin to shoot footage on the rise of Chicago street gangs. “The Blackstone Rangers and other gangs were beginning to surface on the South Side of Chicago, and the CBC needed visual records of this activity,” his wife said. His work brought him to the attention of WMAQ, for which he was an Emmy® Award-winner. In 1968, he was hospitalized for two days after being beaten by police while covering protests at the Democratic National Convention, according to a federal task force report. He’d been filming a police beating of another photographer when an officer struck him in the mouth with a nightstick, Mr. Stricklin said at the time: “The next thing I know, I was being hit on the head, and I think on the back, and I was just forced down on the ground.”

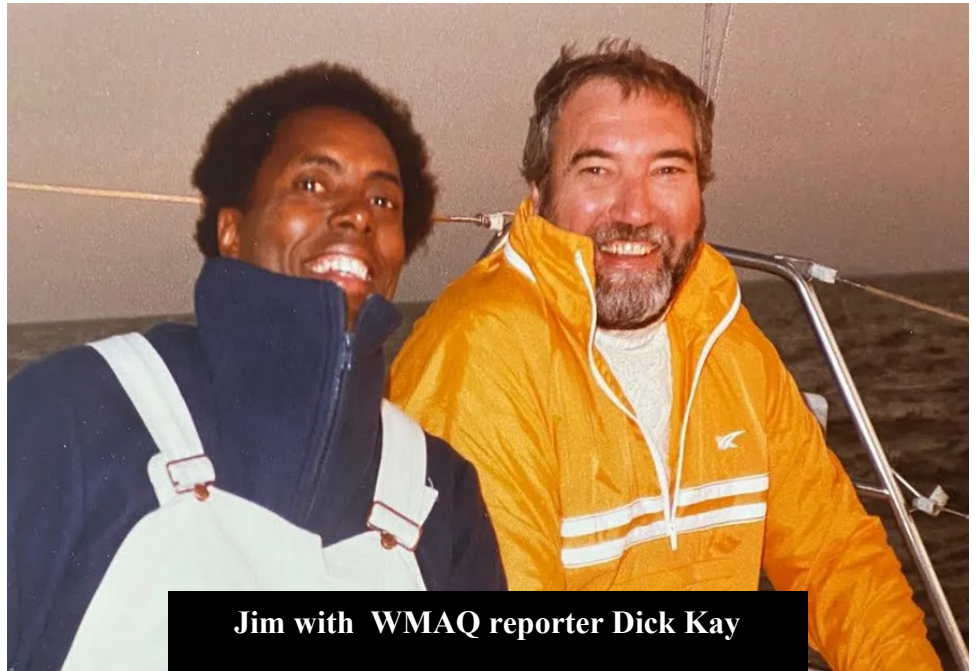
Mr. Stricklin once covered an uprising at Stateville Correctional Center with WMAQ reporter Peter Nolan. “This one inmate, all of a sudden, out of the blue, starts screaming,” Nolan said. “The only guy rolling [with his camera] was Stricklin, and we got the best stuff out of there. He had a feeling for when things were going to happen.”

“If we heard a fire engine in the middle of the night,” Mr. Stricklin’s wife said, “Jim would get out of bed and say, ‘I’ve got to call NBC.’”

And during late election nights or long days waiting for a jury verdict, “He just was one of those guys who could make you laugh,” said Carol Marin, former WMAQ-TV political editor and a director of the DePaul University Center for Journalism Integrity & Excellence.

Mr. Stricklin also is survived by his son Nicholas Christophe Stricklin and two grandchildren.

By Maureen O'Donnell, © Chicago Sun-Times, August 3, 2021



Jim with WMAQ reporter Dick Kay



*Tributes to Silent Microphones***Bill Clotworthy**

Bill Clotworthy, the in-house censor for “Saturday Night Live” from 1979 to 1990, died on August 19th in Salt Lake City. He was 95. His son Robert confirmed his death, at a hospice facility.

William Griffith Clotworthy was born on Jan. 13, 1926, in Westfield, N.J. His father, William Rice Clotworthy, worked for AT&T, and his mother, Annabelle (Griffith) Clotworthy, was a homemaker. His first two marriages ended with his wives’ deaths. Along with his son Robert, he is survived by his third wife, Jo Ann Clotworthy; another son, Donald; his daughters, Lynne and Amy Clotworthy; his stepsons, Peter Bailey and Bradford Jenkins; and a grandson.

Mr. Clotworthy entered the Navy after graduating from high school and later attended Yale and Wesleyan before enrolling at Syracuse University, where he studied theater, graduating in 1948. He headed to New York City intent on an acting career and arrived at the dawn of the television era, something he got to watch firsthand after being hired as an NBC page. The premier program at the time was “Texaco Star Theater,” hosted by Milton Berle, and among Mr. Clotworthy’s tasks was escorting Mr. Berle’s mother up to Studio 8H before every performance. He left NBC after eight months and, after a brief, unsuccessful stab at acting, took a job with the advertising agency B.B.D.O. First in New York and later in Los Angeles, he worked as an agency representative.



Mr. Clotworthy returned to New York in 1974, and five years later he went back to NBC, this time as the head of standards and practices for the East Coast. The job had him overseeing several programs, including soap operas, movies and, later, “Late Night With David Letterman,” where he would visit comics in their dressing rooms and ask them to run through their acts just minutes before going on air.

Mr. Clotworthy, who described himself as “a professional square,” had never seen an episode of “Saturday Night Live” when he arrived in 1979, coming off a career of nearly 30 years in advertising and looking for a midlife career change. His predecessors had struggled with the late-night sketch show’s limits-pushing humor and had often rejected entire skits. Mr. Clotworthy was different. A trained actor, he fell in love with the show and its brand of satire, and he worked with its writers to tweak questionable material. “A writer once asked me what was the first thing I did when I read a script, and I said, ‘I laugh,’” he wrote in his memoir, “Saturday Night Live: Equal Opportunity Offender” (2001). “After I laugh, then I go to work with the scissors and blue pencil, screaming or begging. [...] The hardest part of the job is to say ‘No’ and make them like it.”

The bulk of his time was spent on “Saturday Night Live.” Mr. Clotworthy, by then in his mid-50s, was liked and respected by the show’s anti-authoritarian young cast and writing staff. He chuckled along when they called him “Dr. No” and guffawed when one cast member, Tim Kazurinsky, took to interrupting skits as the prudish censor “Worthington Clotman.” “He was an ally,” said the former United States Senator Al Franken, who as a longtime “Saturday Night Live” writer and performer often clashed with Mr. Clotworthy — but who also considered him a friend. He would sit in on the first script read-through, on Wednesday, raising flags and suggesting edits. He would remain in and around the studio up through the broadcast, watching nervously from the control room to make sure no one let slip an obscenity. That’s just what happened in February 1981, when one of the show’s cast members, Charlie Rocket, uttered a forbidden four-letter word toward the end of a skit. “The control room went absolutely silent, then, as on swivels, every head turned to look at me,” Mr. Clotworthy wrote in his memoir. The word was deleted from the tape before it aired on the West Coast. With the show’s ratings already sinking, Mr. Rocket was let go a month later, along with two other cast members, four writers and the producer.

Mr. Clotworthy retired in 1990, after which he became an amateur historian and wrote several books, including one in which he recounted visiting every site that claimed “George Washington slept here.”

Excerpted from Clay Risen’s piece, © The New York Times, August 27, 2021

Peacock Family

Bob Jaeger's "On Air" Retirement Tribute



It's the end of an era as TODAY said farewell to beloved cameraman Bob "Rope" Jaeger, who is retiring after 37 years with the show. The anchors surprised him on August 18th with a heartfelt send-off, asking him to put his camera down and come join them on the plaza. "We're really going to miss you, Rope," Savannah Guthrie told him. "You were just the light of this place." "Rope, we adore you to the moon," Hoda Kotb said.

They also surprised him with a video montage celebrating his decades working on the show, which included sharing plenty of funny moments with the TODAY anchors. "Rope is so loved," Savannah said in a voice-over accompanying the montage. "Always the quickest with a smile – or a joke, which we happily plagiarize." ("Half my material comes from Rope!" Al Roker joked later.) "He keeps us smiling every single day," Savannah continued in her voice-over. "Even through the pandemic he has been at our side, literally."

Several of Jaeger's family members also surprised him with hugs on the plaza. "He talks about you all the time, and you've made him part of your family and it's just been such a great experience for him," his wife of 38 years, Kathy, told Hoda. His three young grandkids also surprised him with an adorable video message.

Jaeger is known for his puns on set, and Savannah wrote a pun-filled goodbye poem for him.

"So we *pulled some strings* to write you a little poem.
We are "*a-frayed*" that mornings won't be the same without you,
And frankly our hearts, they are in *knots* about it.
We're happy for your retirement but we'll miss you –
It's an emotional *tug of war*, Rope.
I know you're hanging on every word here,
So we celebrate you, we say goodbye,
And yes, we are – finally – *at the end of our Rope*."

The TODAY anchors also surprised him with an impressively detailed cake in the shape of a television camera.

"You are truly part of the show," Al said.

By Lindsay Lowe © NBC August 18, 2021

See the full tribute segment at
https://www.today.com/news/today-anchors-wish-farewell-cameraman-bob-rope-jaeger-t228580?icid=canonical_related



*New Members***Lauren Grant**

Most of my 28 NBC years were spent in the Radio Division, working first in the Radio Network Advertising and Promotion Department, then moving over the Radio Network Operations and eventually became an Associate Director and Director. Eventually, I moved back to the management side as Director of Radio Network Operations. My last position was in NBC Television Sports as Director of Operations on the 1988 Seoul Olympics.

After leaving NBC, I remained in broadcasting and was employed by Private Satellite Network, and then moved to Long Island and worked for Peconic Bay Broadcasting.

Eventually I started my own image consulting firm on LI: Impact Consulting taking me into local politics advising politicians on voter appeal, and the wine Industry giving vineyards tips on drawing people to tasting rooms. I ended my career with at the Cutchogue New Suffolk Library running adult programs and field trips.

Upon retirement, I have written several books: 2 novels and a self-help book on career enhancement. I continue to advise small business owners on better ways

to operate their businesses to improve revenues, work on several civic boards and recently, was elected to the New Suffolk School Board.

Peter Dilorio

I first joined NBC in the summer of 1977 as a vacation relief maintenance engineer in the Film Maintenance group on the 5th floor. At the time I was studying engineering at the Polytechnic Institute of New York in Brooklyn. I had gotten the phone number of Rudy Foglia in the maintenance department and, after persistent calling, finally managed to get past his secretary. Rudy asked about my broadcast electronics experience (which was thin) but when he asked if I had any computer experience and I told him about my prior summer working at IBM and apparently that was enough to “get me in the door”. I had the same position in the summer of 1978 as well, but was told that I needed to complete my degree before returning the next year. Armed with 3 years working at Regent Sound Studios and getting my newly-earned engineering degree I was hired as a permanent employee in the NBC’s Broadcast Systems Engineering department in 1982.

I greatly enjoyed my years as a Systems Design Engineer working with many great people on many great projects, interrupted only by the 1987 NABET strike. From 1994 to 1996 I was a Project Manager under Charlie Jablonski. I then took Larry Thaler’s suggestion to be a News Tech Manager in order to gain more experience with television production, as well as run

News projects and the News Maintenance Group. In 1998 I became Manager of Studio Maintenance and Engineering for all 30 Rock studios under Steve Fastook. In 2020 I moved on to a product management position with Sony Electronics Professional Products Group. Sony made the decision to finally close down what was left of its Systems Integration group, which I headed, and my career with Sony ended at the end of March, 2020, right at the start of the COVID lock-down.

I worked with many, many fine and talented people at NBC during my time there, and made many friends. Despite my 20-year absence from NBC I never stopped feeling that I was still somehow part of the NBC family!

The Kicker

End of an Era: NTSC Finally Goes Dark in America



A significant event in the history of technology happened on July 14th, and it passed so quietly that we almost missed it. The last few remaining NTSC transmitters in the USA finally came off air, marking the end of over seven decades of continuous 525-line American analog TV broadcasts. We have to admit to being sorry to see the passing of analog TV; it was an intricate and fascinating system that provided a testbed for plenty of experimentation back in the day. On July 31, 1940 the National Television System Committee convened its first meeting. Few have escaped viewing the NTSC television standard in one form or another.

The NTSC came about as a result of the FCC's reluctance to lock in a standard without full industry acceptance. Throughout 1939, NBC maintained a TV schedule of sorts and most observers thought the standard would be adopted by the FCC. At the FCC public hearing on January 15, 1940, there was a clear attack on the standard from many sides. DuMont Labs which was not a member of the RMA, urged that 441 lines was insufficient and recommended more than 600 lines at a frame rate of 15 per second. Philco opted for an 800 line standard at a frame rate of 24 per second. The lack of unanimity weighed on the FCC which agreed on February 29th to maintain television on an experimental basis but permitted a limited commercial launch on September 1, 1940. After the FCC announcement, RCA decided to step up production of their receivers and make public advertisements, essentially locking in the standard. The FCC balked and on March 22, 1940 rescinded the commercial launch until the industry could agree on a standard. Hence the NTSC was born.

The original 15 NTSC members included CBS, Don Lee Broadcasting, DuMont, Farnsworth, General Electric, Hazeltine Labs, IRE, Philco, RCA, Stromberg-Carlson, and Zenith Corp. The NTSC met regularly through 1940 and only at its last meeting on March 8, 1941 was 525 lines finally adopted. In early May 1941, the FCC formally announced adoption of the NTSC standard with commercial television permitted to begin on July 1, 1941. WNBT began commercial operations on that date with the famous Bulova Watch ad. This standard was flexible enough to accommodate compatible color and stereo audio as they were developed in subsequent years.



The actual Committee members at an early meeting.

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