



In this Issue: The Marian Porges Interview



INSIDE PN

Cover	1
Marilyn's Page	2
What's Now! NBC's "Annie Live!"	3
Peacock Profile - Marian Porges	4-7
What's Now! - Chris Wallace on Integrity	8
What's Now! - SNL's Don King and Ken Aymong Retire	9
What's Now! - The Macy's Parade Returns	10
What's Now! - Rock Plaza Tree Lighting and Skating Rink	11
Peacock Honors - Stacy Brady Special Emmy® Award	12
Peacock Honors - Al Roker Arizona State U Award	13
Peacock Honors - Steve Lucas Indiana U Alumni Award	14
Peacock Honors - SNL Lighting Directors Emmy® Award	15
What's Now! - William Shatner's "Blue Origin" Trek	16
Peacock Family - Terry Ewert's Wimbledon Badges	17
Peacock Family - Hagar Fletcher, Artist	18
Peacock Family - Noteworthy Noseworthy	19

INSIDE PN

Peacock Family - Roy Tomizawa and Frank McGee	19
Peacock Family - Ken Edmundson and Rick Stern	20
Peacock Family - Bob Riggio and John Jewczyn	20
Peacock History - Al Camoin's "GO Show" Exploits	21
Silent Microphones - Willard Scott	22-23
Silent Microphones - Mamye Smith	24
Silent Microphones - Chauncey Howell	25
Silent Microphones - Gene Walsh	26
Silent Microphones - Norm MacDonald	27
Silent Microphones - Jay Sandrich	28
Silent Microphones - Arthur Forrest	29
Silent Microphones - Mike Gargiulo	30
Grey Matters by Bill Freeda	31
The Kicker - Interactive TV Cartoon	32
Peacock North Contact Info	32

Marilyn's Page



To begin with, Happy Holidays one and all. It's that time of the year and I have decided to kick off this edition with the good news that surrounds us, beginning with *Annie Live*. Being a huge fan of live television, especially in the arts, I want to give kudos to the performance which aired live on NBC on December 3rd. Whatever your taste in musicals, it is a huge and complicated undertaking and my hat's off to the entire production/technical teams. I had the privilege of participating, via NBC Field Operations, in the live production of *Peter Pan* back in 2014. I watched in awe as it was put together on several sets at Gold Cost Studios on Long Island. Quite a choreographed effort.

Other things to feel good about (and grateful for) were the return of the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade and the live Tree Lighting at Rockefeller Center. Both are quintessential New York features of the holiday season, and they signal breaths of fresh air on the heels of distressing times. No one can make you feel better than Al Roker dashing down Central Park West and 6th Avenue on his RokerCycle, hi-fiving the crowd.



Speaking of the arts, more good news in the way of art as we display a few pictures from the exhibit of Hagar Shul Fletcher, wife of our own Martin Fletcher, who is both a member and has contributed to our magazine on numerous occasions. Congratulations to Hagar!

We also have a lot of congratulations for award winners within the NBC family. The kudos keep coming and we have reserved a few pages to name a few of the recipients.

Peacock North continues its series of one-on-one interviews. Once again, we are looking at journalism in today's complicated world of news coverage and information gathering, and the various platforms they occupy.

Grey Matters is provided by our own fearless and incredibly knowledgeable Bill Freeda. He keeps us current on all aspects of retirement and insurance issues. Always worth a read.

Wishing all of you a healthy, happy, peaceful and meaningful 2022.

And now for the good stuff, the rest of the magazine...

Members are our sole support.

Please make your 2022 Dues payment if you have not already done so by going to www.peacocknorth.com or by mail to the address on back cover. Our sincere thanks!

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

What's New!

NBC Presents Annie LIVE! - Reviewed in The New York Times



Celina

It is surprising that it took so long for the 1977 Tony winner “Annie” to join the live TV musical wave that began with NBC’s “The Sound of Music Live!” back in 2013. One of the most popular shows of the past 50 years — previously inspiring two big-budget movies and a 1999 TV adaptation — “Annie” is a staple of touring companies and regional theaters, and has received multiple Broadway revivals. The material still plays. Last night’s three-hour “Annie Live!” on NBC — directed by Lear deBessonet and Alex Rudzinski, with choreography by Sergio Trujillo — did not radically reimagine or reinterpret the original show, adapted by the book-writer Thomas Meehan, lyricist Martin Charnin and composer Charles Strouse from Harold Gray’s long-running comic strip, “Little Orphan Annie.” But neither did this version disappoint in any significant way.

If anything, after another hard year of Covid restrictions and political upheaval, it was a treat to watch a lot of talented people gather in one place to sing and dance their way through a bipartisan fable about a ridiculously rich industrialist — and proud Republican — who becomes a better-rounded person when he takes in a good-hearted orphan who has compassion for the underprivileged. Give a lot of credit to NBC’s two winning leads: Celina Smith as the wide-eyed waif Annie and the crooner Harry Connick Jr. as the bossy Daddy Warbucks.

The musical’s story remains appealingly simple. After the plucky Annie defies the cruel Miss Hannigan (Taraji P. Henson) at her spartan group home, she draws the attention of Grace (Nicole Scherzinger), who invites the 11-year-old to spend two weeks over Christmas with the gruff billionaire Oliver Warbucks. The grateful kid helps the old man appreciate the joy his money can bring, but before the two can live happily ever after they have to fend off a pair of grifters, Rooster (Tituss Burgess) and Lily (Megan Hilty), who are in cahoots with Hannigan. This TV version was staged in front of a small studio audience rather than in a big theater; the more confined space may have contributed to the occasional gaffes in blocking, with actors or crew members momentarily obstructing shots. In general, the visual side of the show felt a little repetitive, relying on many of the same tight frames and sparse sets, over and over.

There were a few flourishes, though, including a rousing rendition of one of the show’s best-known songs, “Hard Knock Life,” performed by children doing dynamic gymnastic moves. The number “N.Y.C.” also was a wonder, with a big chorus of dancers and singers performing in front of colorful backdrops, conveying both the splendor of 1930s New York and the ravages of the Great Depression.

The supporting performers kept the evening from slipping too far into stodginess. Henson followed in the footsteps of great scenery-chewing Hannigans like Carol Burnett and Nell Carter, playing the character as a chaotic force of malevolence. Burgess and Hilty seemed to delight in putting unexpected spins on their lines, keeping each other spry. And Scherzinger had one of the evening’s highlights with the dance number “We Got Annie,” a song that originated in the 1982 movie as a showcase for that production’s Grace, Ann Reinking, who died last December. Scherzinger’s version was likely a homage — and a sweet one.

Like much of the feel-good entertainment aimed at Generation X, “Annie” has endured — even with its quaint references to radio stars and the tennis player Don Budge. That may be why, aside from the multiracial cast and a pointed, crowd-pleasing, post-pandemic mention of “Broadway getting back on its feet,” NBC’s “Annie” stayed pretty firmly stuck in the past. It was not, in any overtly apparent way, a comment on the modern world. Nevertheless, it did resonate when Smith’s Annie sang, in “Maybe,” about the fulfilling life her birth parents might be living without her. And it will always be hard not to be moved by the show’s signature hit, “Tomorrow,” which promises a better day. So perhaps it was only proper that this musical about earnest, plain-spoken yearning arrived on TV in 2021 — when it would hit the hardest — instead of in 2013. This show may be dated by design, but when it’s clicking, it can still clear away the cobwebs and the sorrow.

By Noel Murray, © The New York Times, December 3, 2021



Peacock Profile

Marian Porges

Marian Porges came to NBC in 1995. She has spent her years with NBC News in a variety of jobs from Producer and Senior Producer with Specials, Chair of the Journalism Department at our New York Film Academy partnership, and eventually as SVP of NBC News Standards and Practices, a very significant position from which she recently stepped down. Bob Epstein and I caught up with Marian to ask her some in-depth questions about her thoughts on news coverage and journalism in today's complicated world. - Marilyn Altman.

MA: Given our knowledgeable readership, I don't know if everybody understands the breadth, width and depth of what Standards and Practices does. So, let's start there.



MP: The main mission and our main goal are to protect the reputation of NBC News and all of its platforms. So, it's NBC News, MSNBC, CNBC, Telemundo and all the owned stations. We have representatives who deal with all of those networks and groups and it's across all platforms: It's broadcast, cable, streaming, digital/social media. It's the whole kit and caboodle. Our job really is about our reputation, our credibility, and our integrity. Without the trust of our audience and the credibility of our news organization, there's not much to the news organization. So our goal is to make sure we report things fairly, accurately, in full context, and independent of any outside pressure.

One of the more specific things that we do is set policy. We train our employees on the basic fundamentals of journalism. We review scripts mostly on topics that revolve around anything that's sensitive or controversial and we provide guidance to the entire news organization on these types of stories; how to approach those stories, what's reportable, what's not reportable, what needs to be included in order for the stories to be fair and to provide proper context. We work closely with our journalists on source approval; i.e., Why has an individual given us information? What's their spin, etc.? We want to make sure that there is not any possibility of even a perceived conflict of interest. An area people don't realize we increasingly spend time with is the business aspect, engaging in the world of ecommerce. We have some very distinct brands at NBC. The Today Show comes to mind. There's a whole department within NBC that focuses on ways to basically leverage opportunities to help that brand make money. We work closely with the legal folks to make sure we are still maintaining our independence and integrity from any of the companies who we might be working with.

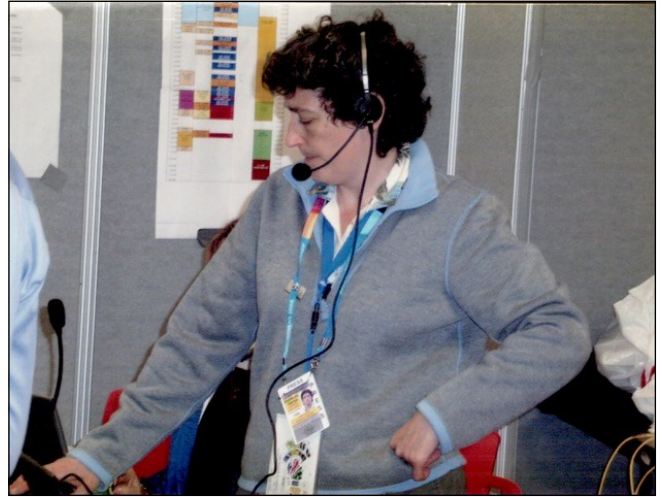
We also work closely with editorial, but we're not part of the editorial process. There's a difference. If I'm reviewing a script there should be no suggestion of changes unless there is something in there that is going to affect our reputation, or that's not factual or not fair, or is out of context. I think those are the sort of basic things that we cover.

BE: How does that impact your relationship with executive producers?

MP: We work closely with all of them. When there are pieces or segments that we can review beforehand we basically work as collaborators. Our goal is to make something reportable, but we don't always agree with senior editorial managers. For instance, there are times when for editorial reasons an executive producer would want to cover something and we are not comfortable yet with the sourcing or we're not comfortable with the approach, you know, a particular angle that a piece is taking. So there is often some pushback on our guidance and our advice. I think that that's an incredibly healthy part of our relationship. Those conversations are incredibly important. We're not the censors, right? We supply the guidance. We say, "Here's what we think should be." I'd say nine times out of ten it's not black and white. So there should be discussion and that's what I think is very healthy in a newsroom: discussion, pushback, obviously in a collegial way. But sometimes it can get adversarial.

BE: How does having all the different platforms change things? And what is the goal of Standards when you're dealing with everything from NBCNEWS.com to TikTok?

MP: Our standards apply across the board. That's the easy, quick answer. Everything needs to be factual no matter the platform. The reality is we also fully understand that we need to gear our decisions toward the platform or broadcast based on its voice. We might let Rachel Maddow say something that we wouldn't let Lester Holt say. Our bigger challenges are on the social media side and MSNBC on cable. MSNBC obviously made the business decision years ago that it would be part perspective and part hard news. Many folks in the audience don't make that differentiation. So it does get very complicated because I think it's hard for our audience to discern between the perspectives of MSNBC and NBC News. But that's something that's just inherent in our business right now. That's why things can't be black and white. We have to have some ability to understand that on certain platforms, whether it's TikTok and Stay Tuned, for instance, you're appealing to a younger audience. You're appealing to a group who's more visually oriented. And there are things we will allow on certain platforms that we wouldn't allow on others.



BE: For the last issue of Peacock North we talked with Mark Lukasiewicz especially about younger students who don't think there's anything that's truly objective; that everybody comes to a story with a perspective, maybe a definitive one. So how do you deal with that? How do you do that with younger producers? And if this is actually coming up as a discussion now between objectivity, neutrality, or just fairness. How do you balance all that?

MP: I firmly believe that the younger generation thinks that we can't be objective. Look, every one of us has a bias, right? We all have a different upbringing. We come from different backgrounds. What needs to happen is that everyone is aware of what our own bias is so that we can basically incorporate that into our reporting. We know where our bias is and that's part of the formula that we need to use when we report. I don't think we can tell people "You can never show an emotion." (Journalists are people too, right? We all have emotions.) But I think it's important that people realize, especially if you're going to work at a mainstream media organization such as NBC News, that we have to be fair in our reporting.

There's a difference between coming to a story with a distinct narrative and presenting that narrative in a fair fashion. It's a very fine line there. But I think that we have to try to explain to [the] younger generation that they are not advocates for an issue. That doesn't mean that you shouldn't care about something. But there is a way to be understanding of where you're coming from so that you can still be fair in your presentation of the facts. I think that it's up to our generation, the older generation, to keep the younger generation clear on the difference between being an advocate and caring. Everyone cares about certain things. But it's not our job to use this platform for advocacy. If we're journalists, our job is to present the facts and let the audience decide. Rather than advocating for or against something by joining a march or being highly vocal or even confrontational on social media, use the power you have as a journalist by reporting on it. Use the platform you have that most others don't.



MA: My question is about neutrality in reporting, which I believe is different from being objective. Is it possible to have some “realized bias” in your heart when covering a story, but remain neutral in your reporting: “Just the facts, ma’am,” or something like that?

MP: I don't think the old style of “just the facts” exists in our current atmosphere of how people write. And I don't think it's a generational issue because the people who are writing scripts are not all young people. I think there's a difference. I think there are two different questions here: can people be objective and can journalists be objective? I think that the younger generation thinks they shouldn't have to be. I mean, it's just a different road map in the eyes of younger journalists. I do think people have the ability to have a bias yet be fair in reporting, but I think the reality is we see that less and less every day.

BE: We all worked and lived through the Trump administration and you were in Standards during that [time when] it turned into a battleground. The attack on truth, the attack on mainstream media. Based on your last answer, how did you accommodate the shift in tone where you could go from, “On the one hand, on the other hand, the Republicans said this today, but the Democrats said that, blah, blah, blah, NBC News signing off,” to “There are objective facts here.”

MP: I think a lot of our lives changed in 2016. Obviously, the Trump administration was very challenging. Those of us who are 40 or over, probably 30 or over, were brought up in a newsroom where your personal politics weren't discussed. 2016 changed all that. The country became divided. Emotions ran high, and frankly, the distrust and the hostility towards journalists put us in a place we had never been before. I don't think there's any going back to the times when people wouldn't discuss politics in newsrooms. And I think that's just where we are. Every day was a delicate dance with the Trump administration because we really had to figure out how to cover a national leader who was not as concerned about facts as people had been in the past. One of the hardest things we had to deal with was when the President said things that we knew not to be true. We had a lot of discussion about how to handle that, a lot of discussion about whether to use the term “lie” or “liars” and it was just a new world. I don't know if I can say we always got it right because I think we slowly saw, as days progressed, a shift in how we had to look at things. We obviously still tried to be fair in our reporting, but there came a point where it was also our responsibility to call out the President when he said something that wasn't true. So it's as simple as that. I think what the Trump Presidency did for the credibility of news organizations in general is something that we're never going to recover from. I'll tell you that.

I think one of the biggest changes from the Trump administration was how it taught our journalists to report in a different way because no one in the administration wanted to go on the record when they were giving information and so many of our sources turned into “unnamed” sources. And that I think has opened up a whole new way of how reporters work.

BE: Let's talk about the New York Film Academy where you were Director of the Journalism program when NBC partnered with them in 2008. You loved that job. If you got a similar opportunity today, how would you approach teaching journalism?



MP: Look, the fundamentals are never going to change: fairness, accuracy, making sure that our research is solid, etc. But there are some things that I would emphasize. I think that I'd be more proactive about the importance of independence. I think we have to be more proactive on discussions of advocacy in journalism. Is that our place? Is it a journalist's place to be an advocate? I think as we mentioned earlier that the younger generation believes that is part of their role. I think I'd focus a lot on how to use social media responsibly as a journalist. Social media is such an informal form of communication that people get sloppy, and things don't get vetted because they get posted right away. I think that I would be clearer on making sure that we really are skeptics. We have to question everything. That's always been the case with journalists, but I think now, we see user-generated content that is posted without



context. We see deep fakes and things like that. Because of technology we have to question things more fiercely than we ever did. We must also be aware of our critics. I think it's important that the younger generation of students understand how much of a target journalists are. I would make sure that more people knew about companies like Bellingcat which teach open sourcing and how to really, really verify video and facts.

I would also put more of an emphasis on investigative journalism. I think people don't understand how important true investigative journalism is. I think those are the things that I would touch on.

BE: What's your news diet now that you're out of the pages and the data business?

MP: So I'll tell you where I don't get my news: television. I haven't watched news on television since I left TV news.

BE: What was your role in the election that just passed? I don't know if you want to comment on this but there was that column by someone on NJ.com a couple of days ago saying, "Forget polling because everybody blew New Jersey."

MP: Maybe there is a discussion to have about whether we should be doing horse race polls any longer. We seem to have problems with how polls are working now. And the problem is, if the polls are wrong, and we report those polls and they are wrong, it gives our critics too much of an opportunity to say that we fudged something. It gives them fodder. So I think that reporting on polls actually really works against us and against our credibility. You know, having said that, I don't know if that's a reasonable thing to happen. I think it's hard to tell people to stop doing polls. But it seems to me that it's quite clear that either people lied, or we're not polling the right people. And frankly, I'm not sure how you can fix it.

MA: One question I have been wanting to ask you is about your father, who did this very job for ABC News from 1989 to 1993. Was his job as difficult as yours is today? Did you think of him while you held this position and wonder what he would do or think on any given day?

MP: Easy answer...I think the role my dad and I shared has become increasingly complicated and difficult with each passing day. Technology has made the job harder. User generated content (people posting material without proper context and vetting or sourcing), social media (both used to report and spread misinformation and disinformation), the blurring of the line between news content and business and how we maintain our independence from those on whom we report, the creation and support of advocacy journalism and the increasingly sensitive issues over the past few years (mistrust between press and politicians, social justice issues) have all been responsible for the decisions that have to be made becoming harder and more complex. And, yes, I thought about him all the time while doing the Standards job and wish I could have spoken with him almost daily. These are tough decisions and not clean-cut; they necessitate nuance and detailed analysis and call for someone whose judgment is keen. My dad's judgment was nothing less than keen.



MA: What a lovely place to end. Thank you Marian. You do us and your dad proud.

About the Interviewer



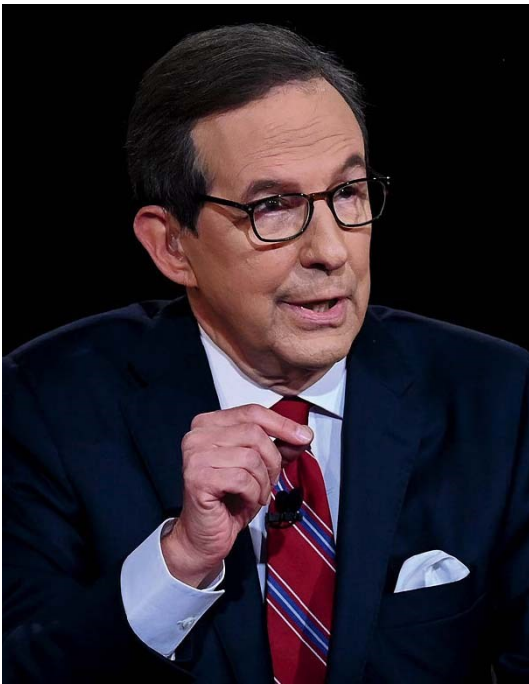
Bob Epstein was the Vice President of NBC News Specials from 2011-2020 and continues as one of Peacock North's principal interviewers.

What's Now!

Integrity in Television News

By Chris Wallace, Former NBC News Anchor and Reporter

This article is excerpted from material originally appearing at the conclusion of a long biographical article in the May-June 2021 issue of © Harvard Magazine, written by Craig Lambert. The full article is at <https://www.harvardmagazine.com/2021/05/features-chris-wallace>



The rapid proliferation of media in recent decades has of course affected journalism profoundly. “It’s an infinitely less hierarchical system than it was in the ’70s,” Wallace says. “Cable, the internet, digital apps—the explosion of news sources recalls the Chairman Mao line, ‘Let a thousand flowers bloom.’” Alas, at least as many weeds as flowers are sprouting.

“There’s a bigger burden on the news consumer now to decide whom to believe and what has value,” he explains. “One source could be a guy in his pajamas ranting in the basement, while another is the vetted reporting of a professional news organization. Even so, I’m not particularly comfortable with the idea of gatekeepers; I’d rather have people come to their decisions on their own. You have to triangulate: conservatives need to read The New York Times, liberals need to watch Fox News. The Founding Fathers put their faith in us, and we have to live up to that.

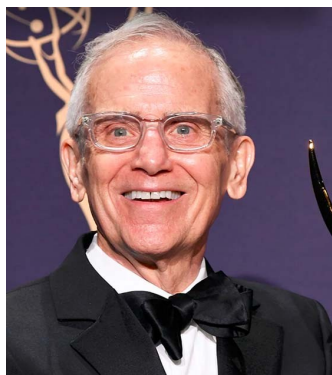
“I may be the only person in news today who isn’t on Twitter or Facebook,” Wallace continues. “Social media give you one more opportunity to blow up your career. I’m constantly surprised to see reporters saying things on Twitter that they would never put on the page of a newspaper. They hurt their credibility—and I can live without that.”

One development that concerns Wallace deeply is the way slanted news coverage, traditionally considered a flaw in journalism, has evolved into a marketable feature of news media. “I find that one of the most disturbing developments in journalism over the past quarter-century,” he explains. “In many places, the business plan has become, ‘Tell people what they want to hear,’ and don’t worry about objective truth. Unfortunately, there is a large audience for people who confirm their viewers’ biases. People now choose their news like that kids’ book series, ‘Choose Your Own Adventure,’ which lets the reader decide how the story turns out.”

This polarizes the citizenry. News consumers now hold not only differing opinions, but sign up for different versions of the truth. “At the Globe in 1969, fair and accurate reporting kept you from getting fired—it was a basic requirement of the job,” Wallace says. “Now I get praised for playing it straight. If I stand out for that, it’s a sad commentary on where the news business has headed.”

What's New!

SNL Director Don King to Retire



The cast of *Saturday Night Live* will look largely the same this season as it did last year, but a big change will happen behind the camera. Don Roy King, the 12-time Emmy winner who has directed the past 15 seasons of SNL, is retiring. Liz Patrick, who has helmed more than 2,100 episodes of *The Ellen DeGeneres Show*, will take over in January after having observed King for the first group episodes of its 47th season.

Beck Bennett, a cast member for the past eight seasons, has left the show, and featured player Lauren Holt has also departed. The rest of the regular cast has returned, and SNL added Aristotle Athari, James Austin Johnson and Sarah Sherman as featured players.

Patrick will be just the fifth director in *SNL*'s history, following Dave Wilson (1975-86 and 1989-95), Paul Miller (1986-89), Beth McCarthy Miller (1995-2006) and King. The 73-year-old King won his 11th Primetime Emmy for directing *SNL* earlier this month. He also won a Daytime Emmy in 1977 for *The Mike Douglas Show*. King began his career directing local news broadcasts in his home state of Pennsylvania. Later he moved to daytime TV, helming ABC's *Good Morning America* and CBS *This Morning* in addition to *The Mike Douglas Show*. He also directed several *Survivor* reunion shows. King is believed to have directed more hours of live television than anyone in history. In addition to his 12 Emmys, King has also won seven Directors Guild Awards.

Patrick has been with *The Ellen DeGeneres Show* since 2004 and has won three Daytime Emmys for directing the syndicated talk show (and three more as part of its producing team). Prior to that she spent 15 years at MTV, where her credits include *Total Request Live*, *The Real World*, *Wild 'n' Out* and a number of specials.

Adapted from an article by Rick Porter, © The Hollywood Reporter, September 28, 2021.



SNL Supervising Producer Ken Aymong Retires



Ken Aymong, a key producer at NBC's *Saturday Night Live* who has helped maintain the business of the venerable late-night program for more than three decades, has stepped down from his post. The cast nodded to Aymong's departure during the final minutes of the first episode of *SNL*'s 47th season, with Colin Hanks holding up a placard that read, "We'll miss you, Ken." Aymong has decided to retire, according to a person familiar with the matter, having been with the program since the mid-1980s. Aymong has been a key lieutenant of executive producer Lorne Michaels for many years, along with current and former producers like Erik Kenward, Steve Higgins, Lindsay Shookus, Erin Doyle, Mike Shoemaker and Marci Klein. Others deal with booking guests, managing talent and keeping the sketches moving from idea to script. Aymong has long kept his eye on the flow of the dollars behind the production. "I always look at the financial perspective of the show," Aymong said in "Live From New York," an oral history of the program by Tom Shales and James Andrew Miller. "I want it to go on forever."

Aymong "is a vital part" of *SNL* operations, said Miller, in an interview Sunday. "It's a live show. There's no margin for error. Expertise counts on a show like *SNL* more than other shows, because you can't make a mistake. By the way, Lorne Michaels hates mistakes. So Kenny Aymong is one of those people who is part of the institutional memory of the show. He's been there a long time, and he knows exactly what needs to be done." Aymong "is just all about making sure that everybody is protected and everything gets done the way it's supposed to get done."

By Brian Steinberg, ©Variety.com, October 3, 2021

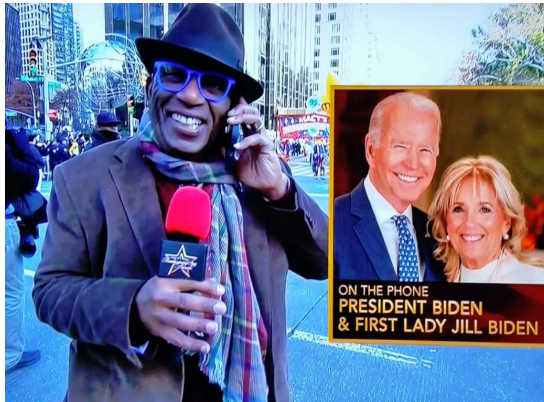


What's Now!

The 95th Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade returned in full force under a cloudless sky at 9:00 a.m. on November 25th. Here are a few highlights as captured off the TV screen.



Watching a Virtual Balloon!



ON THE PHONE
PRESIDENT BIDEN
& FIRST LADY JILL BIDEN



*What's Now!***'Tis the Season for the 30 Rock Tree and Skating Rink**

The iconic Rink at Rockefeller Center reopened for the 2021-22 fall and winter season on November 6th. The iconic skating rink, which first opened in 1936 and became a permanent fixture of midtown Manhattan's holiday season in 1939, will be open daily from 9 a.m. until midnight. Admission prices range from \$20 to \$54 per person depending on the date and time of day. Skate rentals are available for \$10. And if you think you'll be spending a lot of time on those skates, you can buy an unlimited skating pass for the whole season.

The 2021 Rockefeller Center Christmas Tree didn't come from New York, or New Jersey, or Pennsylvania like it usually does -- this year's tree is from Maryland instead.

The 79-foot tall Norway Spruce was donated by a family in Elkton, Maryland. The big news for the small town had been kept secret for weeks, and the tree had been under the watchful eye of local authorities ever since it was picked to become one of the most famous trees in the world. The tree was gingerly loaded onto a flatbed truck for its 145-mile journey from just over the western border of Delaware, arriving at Rockefeller Center on November 13th. After its trek, the tree was dressed with more than 50,000 LED lights and topped with a Swarovski crystal star.

It was lit the evening of December 1st in a live broadcast on NBC.

Article © NBC New York.com, Photo by © Diane Bondareff/AP Images for Tishman Speyer.

*Peacock Honors***Stacy Brady's Emmy®**

Stacy Brady, Executive Vice President & General Manager of News Field & Production Operations for NBC Universal, was one of eight broadcast executives who were honored this fall in the News categories of the 42nd Annual News and Documentary Emmy® Awards.

“We celebrate these news industry professionals who in the unprecedented year of 2020 navigated a global health crisis and a presidential election that shook the very bedrock of our democracy,” said Adam Sharp, President and CEO, NATAS.

“We also honor those individuals who kept their teams safe in the workplace throughout the pandemic, recognizing their efforts that allowed the free-flow of news coverage during these tumultuous times,” said Terry O’Reilly, Chairman, NATAS. “In tribute to these individuals, the National Academy proudly presents them with our Chairman’s Award.”

Information © 2021 NATAS, Graphic © NBC News

*Peacock Honors***Al Roker to Receive Walter Cronkite Award from ASU**

Al Roker, the Emmy award-winning weatherman and popular anchor for NBC NEWS' TODAY, has been chosen as the recipient of the 38th annual Walter Cronkite Award for Excellence in Journalism, Arizona State University officials announced today. Roker, an author, producer and one of the most recognizable personalities on television, will be presented with the award at an in-person ceremony in Phoenix on March 1 at the Sheraton Phoenix Downtown.

The Cronkite Award — named after the late CBS News anchor — has honored prominent journalists annually since 1984. The award recognizes the recipients' accomplishments and leadership over the course of their careers.

"Al Roker has long been a trusted and treasured voice in homes all across America. His integrity and commitment to honesty and fairness are the very values that guided the career of our school's namesake, Walter Cronkite. We are thrilled to honor Al and his contributions to the industry with the 2021 Cronkite Award," said Dean Battinto L. Batts Jr.



Roker joined TODAY full time as a weathercaster in 1996 and co-hosts the "3rd Hour" of the morning show, reaching millions of viewers a week. He is renowned for his weather coverage and has reported from some of the worst storms and natural disasters in history, including Hurricane Wilma, Hurricane Isaac, Superstorm Sandy and the earthquake in Haiti. Roker also served as the co-host of "Wake Up with Al" on The Weather Channel from 2009-2015. In addition to his weather coverage, Roker is widely known for hosting NBC's broadcast of the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade, as well as his celebrity interviews. Some of his notable interviews include Peanuts creator Charles Schulz, Willie Nelson, Burt Reynolds, James Earl Jones and B. Smith.

Roker has created a brand that extends well beyond television, regularly interviewing celebrities on Today's Instagram page, Today.com, YouTube and Sirius radio. He co-hosts Sirius XM's "Off the Rails" with Dylan Dreyer and Sheinelle Jones and hosts "Cold Cuts with Al Roker" on Today.com and YouTube.

For the past 26 years, Roker has also produced numerous TV programs for network, cable, digital and streaming channels through his own production company, Al Roker Entertainment. He was the executive producer for the award-winning Coast Guard TV Series, which aired on The Weather Channel and Pluto TV. He is the author of 13 books, ranging from mysteries to cookbooks to historical narratives. Roker has also become well known for his "Rokerthons," where he's broken the Guinness World Records for longest uninterrupted live weather report broadcast, the fastest time to report a weather forecast from all 50 states and the District of Columbia and, with the help of nearly 70 chefs, the most people in an online sandwich-making relay. In March 2017, Roker visited five colleges across the country in five days to help students break additional Guinness World Records.

Roker is the recipient of 14 Emmy awards for daytime programming as well as live news coverage. He has also been named "Best Weatherman" twice by New York Magazine and is a recipient of the American Meteorological Society's prestigious Seal of Approval.

Roker said that when he first heard he was the winner of the prestigious Cronkite Award, he thought he "was being pranked by any number of my colleagues at the TODAY Show." "Now that I realize this is legit, words cannot begin to express the privilege and gratitude I have being honored by ASU with this amazing recognition," he said. "I look forward to the award ceremony."

Roker began his broadcasting career as a weekend weathercaster at WTVH in Syracuse, New York in 1974 while he was still in college. After graduating, he worked as a weathercaster in Washington, D.C. and Cleveland before moving to WNBC in New York City in 1983. Roker served as the weekday weather forecaster for WNBC's early evening newscast until January 2000. This won't be Roker's first time visiting the Cronkite School. In October 2013, Roker surprised students at the Downtown Phoenix campus after two Cronkite students sent out a Tweet expressing their support for the TODAY Show.

By Jamar Younger, © ASU Cronkite School of Journalism, October 13, 2021

Peacock Honors

Steve Lucas Receives Indiana U Award



Stephen Lucas, BA '80, is an Emmy award-winning director who retired in 2019 after nearly 40 years of working in the television news industry. Most recently, he directed "NBC Nightly News with Lester Holt," a position he held for five years. During his time at NBC, Lucas also directed other network shows, including the "Today Show," "Today with Kathie Lee and Hoda," "Dateline" and various specials. Lucas also had a cameo directing appearance in the movie "Get Him to the Greek!" Prior to joining the NBC network, Lucas directed and/or produced news, sports, children's television and entertainment shows at both owned-and-operated stations and network affiliate stations around the country.

In addition to being recognized with 13 local and national Emmys and more than 15 Emmy nominations, Lucas has been a recipient of the McDonald's Black Media Legends Award and the Greater Boston YMCA Black Achievers Award. He was also selected to participate in the NBC Diversity Leadership Program, which recognizes future leaders in the company. Throughout his career, Lucas has served formally and informally as a mentor to many. He was a member of the steering committee of NBC's Black Employee Network group, a volunteer organization set up to foster and grow a strong Black employee base at NBCUniversal. In addition, he met with interns during internship rotations at NBC News. He has received two national Emmy awards for his work on the Olympics in Athens, Greece, and in Salt Lake City, Utah, as well as 11 local Emmys for directing and producing. He has been nominated for 15 Emmys for directing coverage during major national news stories, including the Boston Marathon bombing, the Fukushima disaster in Japan, the funeral of Ted Kennedy and the Las Vegas massacre.

Lucas was also on the air at WNBC-TV on Sept. 11, 2001, directing the station's coverage of the attack on the World Trade Center as the news broke that morning. Lucas' brief recounting of the day was included in the book "Running Toward Danger: Stories Behind the Breaking News of 9/11." The book was created by the Newseum, a museum dedicated to journalism and the First Amendment that until a few years ago was in Washington, D.C.

At his retirement, members of the "NBC Nightly News" production team awarded him a plaque bestowing him with a newly created title "The People's Director." It contains the inscription: "For our Steve, the People's Director, with respect, affection and love to the best director ever, on your retirement" and is one of the most cherished memories from his career.

News Release © Indiana University, The College of Arts + Sciences, The Media School.

Here's a link to Steve's interview on The PowerPLAY Show:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W2hYQZi2dOQ>



Steve with Monroe Anderson

Steve posted these remarks on Facebook on November 1st:

Such an honor to be one of five alumni to receive the IU Distinguished Alumni Award from the Indiana University Media School. And what a pleasant surprise to have met a fellow inductee from Gary, IN and a Roosevelt High School grad **Monroe Anderson**. Mr. Anderson was a journalist with Dow Jones, Johnson Publishing Co., the Tribune Co., Post-Newsweek, WBBM-TV and Viacom. What a blessing to be part of a group of professional leaders in the industry!

*Peacock Honors***SNL Lighting Team Wins Emmy® Award**

**Saturday Night Live •
Host: Adele
NBC • SNL Studios in
association with Universal
Television and
Broadway Video**

**Geoffrey Amoral,
Lighting Director
Richard McGuinness,
Lighting Director**

What's Now!

William Shatner's Trek from NBC to Blue Origin



After decades of exploring the final frontier on screen, "Star Trek" actor William Shatner became the oldest person to reach space in a 10-minute flight on October 13th that moved him to tears. "I am overwhelmed," Shatner, 90, said once back on Earth. Clad in a blue flight suit and a black baseball cap, he took a pensive pause to digest the experience aboard the Blue Origin flight. "It has to do with the enormity and the quickness and the suddenness of life and death, and oh, my God." He wiped his eyes.

The Canadian actor rocketed through the atmosphere as a guest of Blue Origin, the private space company founded by Jeff Bezos. As Bezos sprayed celebratory champagne into the air and greeted the returning crew members, Shatner stood apart from his fellow travelers and the assembled crowd of friends, family and Blue Origin employees. He then described his journey to Bezos, calling the sky "this comforter of blue that we have around us" that whips by before the blackness of space.

The contrast conjured questions of life and death, or life beyond Earth, for Shatner, best known for exploring space as Capt. James T. Kirk in the original "Star Trek" TV series and movies. As captain of the Starship Enterprise, Kirk and his crew traveled the universe, explored space — the final frontier — and engaged in space diplomacy

as well as battles. "It's just, there is mother and Earth and comfort and there is ... Is there, death?" Shatner asked. "Is that the way death is? Whip and it's gone?" He later grabbed Bezos by the shoulders, staring him straight in the eyes. "You have done something," Shatner said. "What you have given me is the most profound experience I can imagine."

Earlier, as the Blue Origin capsule floated back to the launch site, Shatner could be heard saying on in-capsule audio: "That was unlike anything they described." "I've heard about space for a long time now," Shatner said in a statement in the days before the launch. "I'm taking the opportunity to see it for myself."

The actor was part of a four-person crew who lifted off Wednesday, around 7:50 a.m. Pacific time, from Blue Origin's launch site near Van Horn, Texas. Inside the so-called New Shepard capsule, they experienced a few minutes of weightlessness in suborbital space before coming back down to Earth. Shatner joined Blue Origin's vice president of mission and flight operations, Audrey Powers; Chris Boshuizen, who co-founded small-satellite company Planet; and software executive Glen de Vries. Boshuizen and De Vries were the only paying passengers aboard the flight.

Shatner broke the Guinness World Record for the oldest person to fly to space, which was set this summer by Wally Funk, an aviation pioneer. Funk flew at the age of 82 on Blue Origin's first crewed flight to suborbital space, which also carried Bezos, his brother Mark and Oliver Daemen, the son of a Dutch private equity executive and Blue Origin's first paying customer. Before Wednesday's liftoff, the Blue Origin capsule communicator read out messages from that first crew to the individuals strapped into the spacecraft. "I hope this flight will be the most fantastic experience of your life as it was mine," Funk said in her message.

By Samantha Masunaga, Staff Writer © Los Angeles Times, October 13, 2021



*Peacock Family***Terry Ewert's Wimbledon Badges**

In the late 70s and early 80s, if you were a broadcaster covering the Wimbledon Tennis Championships, these tiny cardboard badges were all you needed to get to any location around the All England Lawn Tennis Club.

In '83, they seemed to have changed to a photo ID.

During this time at NBC Sports, I went from a Graphics PA to an AP to a Producer. The tiny cardboard badge never changed.

*Peacock Family***Hagar Shur Fletcher - Artist**

Martin Fletcher, the former NBC correspondent and author, spent a career documenting the trials of the unfortunate throughout the world. Now his wife, the artist Hagar Shur Fletcher, takes up the theme in her latest installation, titled "The Trial of the Trail." It is a stunning abstract sculpture, full of movement, emotion and desolation, shown in the Ceres gallery in Chelsea, New York City.

"You can see in it what you like," she says. "That's the beauty of art. But for me, the figures are separate yet related. I see a procession, people walking through space, and also time. They are refugees, setting out full of hope, looking for a better life, but at each step they are beaten down and disappointed. I wish it wasn't so."

Hagar began with colorful figures, made from discarded objects, full of joy, and gradually made them more bent and forlorn, then covered them with mud.

It is a simple, powerful statement full of empathy and support. "I hope they arrive in the end," she says, "to a place of love and safety."



Peacock Family



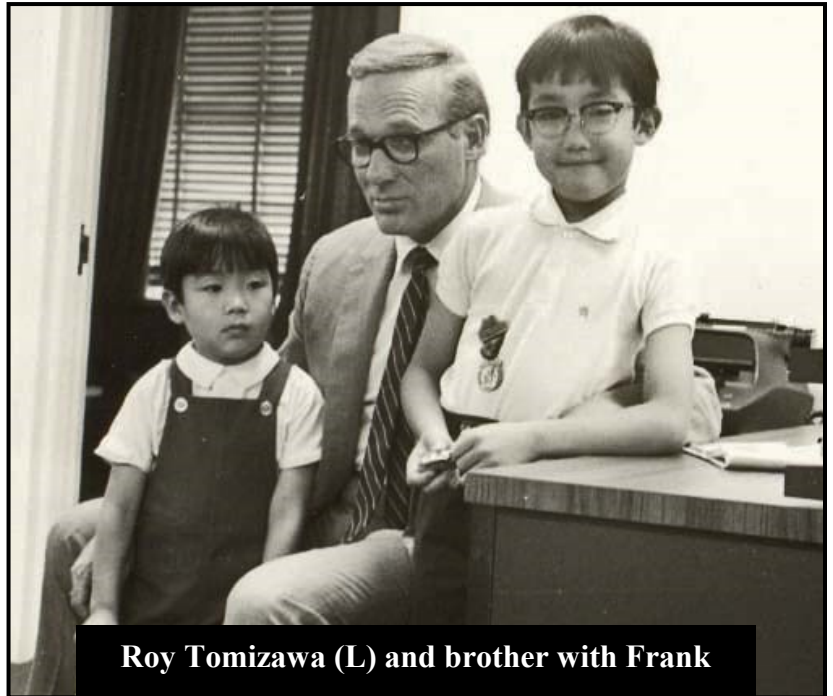
Mike Noseworthy writes: After graduating from WVU with a degree in business management and serving 5 years in the U.S. Navy, our younger son, Joe, has chosen a career in fire service. He was accepted to the LA County Fire Academy in early 2020. Upon graduation he was assigned to a station in Santa Clarita on the northern side of LA County. While there he was primarily fighting wildland fires, such as the Bobcat Fire, which was one of his early assignments. (Photo below).



During a recent trip from our home in Virginia to California Suzanne and I were able to visit Joe at his present firehouse in Huntington Park (Photo at Left). Obviously we are very proud of him. We pray for the safety of *all* first responders.

Roy Tomizawa recently posted this item on Facebook: In *The Fifties*, David Halberstam's brilliant tome on the post-war years in America, he wrote of so many significant trends, including the rise of television journalism. Through the course of the book, Halberstam (in my Pantheon of writers,) described a few journalists my father knew very well at NBC News. He wrote about an up-and-coming journalist named Frank McGee, who reported on Dr. Martin Luther King Jr and the bus boycott in Montgomery, Alabama in late 1955 and early 1956, becoming one of NBC's first national network correspondents.

In 1967, he fronted a documentary my father Thomas produced called *Same Mud Same Blood*. (I am the younger kid in the picture with McGee.) Halberstam also profiled a young NBC reporter named John Chancellor, who seemed to be one step ahead of every other reporter covering the 1957 attempt of African American children to enter Little Rock Central High School with the intent of integrating it. If you haven't done so, take some time to read *The Fifties*.



Roy Tomizawa (L) and brother with Frank

[Ed. note: Director Jerry Polikoff and Producer Gene Farinet and their staff had transcribed fifteen hours of soldiers' recounting their exploits while on patrol and paper-edited that down to perhaps 20 minutes of voice-over in the finished program. Bill Toohey and I were the Radio Recording engineers who physically edited the audio tapes of those recordings]

Peacock Family



Buddies Ken Edmundson and Rick Stern



Bob Riggio celebrates his birthday with John Jewczyn

*Peacock History***Al Camoin Rides "The Cyclone" - Remembered by Joel Spector**

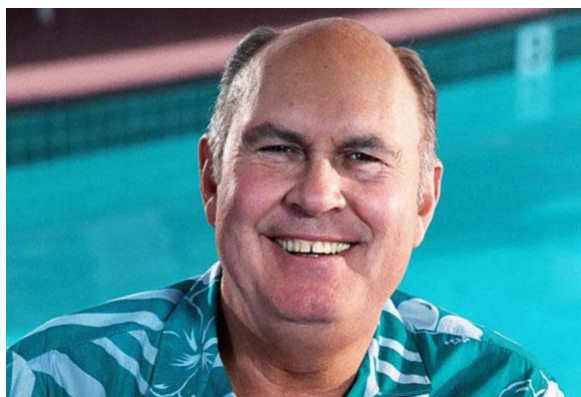
A promo for a 1974 *Go Show* episode includes shots of Al Camoin in the front seat of the Coney Island Cyclone I was on that shoot as the audio engineer, with Arnie Margolis (video) and Manoucher ("Mano") Khazen (VR-3000 operator). They were right behind Camoin for 4 passes! Afterwards, Director Rift Fournier, a paraplegic, insisted that *he* get a ride in the front seat, and so he was hoisted into it and had a blast.

After the Cyclone ride we went to the top of the Parachute Drop and three of us held onto Camoin's belt as he leaned over the edge with the camera to get a straight-down shot. What an experience!

This was a day of pickup shots for two episodes already in post-production and we were a one-

time crew. Earlier that day we were in Westchester for a dawn hot air balloon ascension. Of course Camoin got into the balloon's gondola with the camera, but the balloon was tethered to the ground during our shoot.



*Tributes to Silent Microphones***Willard Scott**

Willard Scott — the legendary TODAY weatherman known for his exuberant personality and launching the tradition of celebrating fans who reached the century mark — died this morning. He was 87 years old. "We lost a beloved member of our Today Show family this morning," Roker shared on Instagram. "Willard Scott passed peacefully surrounded by family, including his daughters Sally and Mary and his lovely wife, Paris. He was truly my second dad and am where I am today because of his generous spirit. Willard was a man of his times, the ultimate broadcaster. There will never be anyone quite like him."

Scott, who joined TODAY in 1980, may have been best known for wishing happy birthday to fans turning 100, a feature that soared in popularity over the years, with images of centenarians appearing on Smucker's jelly jars

while Scott recognized them in front of millions of viewers. Scott, who began his 65-year career with NBC as a page at the affiliate station in Washington, D.C., in 1950, would also do his forecasts on the road, delighting locals with his unflagging charm.

"I just love people," he told The New York Times in 1987. "A lot of speakers on the talk circuit leave right afterward. I do a lot of schmoozing. I'm like a dog. You just open the door and I go, 'rrrr, rrrr,' and then I lick everybody's face."

Born March 7, 1934 in Alexandria, Virginia, Scott's broadcasting career began in the 1950s, after he graduated from American University in Washington. In 1955, he began hosting the "Joy Boys" radio show on the NBC radio station WRC and remain on the program until it ended in 1974. In the 1960s, he also hosted children's TV shows and appeared on WRC playing a wide range of characters, including Bozo the Clown, a bygone children's icon who appeared on airwaves around the country in the '60s and '70s. Scott also had the distinction of being the first person to play Ronald McDonald, appearing in commercials in the Washington area starting in 1963.

Scott remained in Washington throughout the 1970s, becoming the weatherman for NBC's local channel 4 station. In March 1980, the network came calling, and he replaced Bob Ryan as weatherman on TODAY. (Ryan then took Scott's old job, becoming the meteorologist at WRC.)

No gimmick was too much for Scott. In 1985, he did the weather dressed as Boy George while the singer was at the height of his fame. He also dressed up as a giant Cupid on Valentine's Day, in a barrel on the day taxes were due and a groundhog to celebrate Groundhog Day. His most memorable stunt, though, may have been dressing up as Brazilian singer and actress Carmen Miranda in a 1983 episode of TODAY in order to secure a \$1,000 donation to the USO. He took some flak for it, but stood by it. "People said I was a buffoon to do it," he told The New York Times in that 1987 interview. "Well, all my life I've been a buffoon. That's my act."

In 1983, Scott honored a viewer's request to wish his mother a happy 100th birthday, which began the tradition of greetings to centenarians that is still going strong today. He got dressed as Santa Claus at the National Tree-Lighting Ceremony in Washington, D.C. for several years throughout the '80s, as well as at multiple events held at the White House. He co-anchored NBC's coverage of the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade from 1987-1997 and also enjoyed a recurring role as the gregarious Mr. Poole in the sitcom "The Hogan Family."

The lovable Scott was also once approached by first lady Barbara Bush during the 1989 inauguration parade of her husband, President George H.W. Bush. "Suddenly, I look over and see this very happy face, race over, give that face a kiss, race back to (husband) George," she recalled. "He said, 'I didn't know you knew Willard Scott.' I said, 'I don't know Willard Scott. I just love that face.'"

In 1996, Scott semi-retired and was replaced on TODAY by Al Roker, although he would fill in for Al for the next 10 years. He officially retired from TV in 2015, wrapping a 35-year run with TODAY.

In 1985, President Reagan awarded Scott a Private Sector Award for Public Service. He was married to wife Mary Dwyer Scott from 1959 until she died in 2002. They had two children. He is survived by wife Paris Keena, whom he married in 2014.

By Drew Weisholtz, © Today.com, September 4, 2021



Colleagues Remember Willard



I worked with Willard on a number of special events and parades. He was a true Virginia Gentleman and will be sorely missed. He also congratulated my mom and her twin sister several years ago when they turned 100. Rest easy.

Jim Hill

My friend, Willard Scott, has died. He was, in fact, a friend to all of us. That is why we invited him into our homes all those years. Every town in America was — to Willard — “my favorite town!” When the TODAY Show traveled to St. Louis, my hometown, he vowed to make a grand exit after his weather forecast. He would do his report from the gondola of a hot air balloon and then lift off with the Gateway Arch in the background. Ever the showman, he had surprise. “Bob,” he said, “Go ask that guy fishing in the Mississippi, if I can borrow some string.” “What?” “Fishing line. Us fishermen call it ‘string.’” “Oh.” I did. The man was only too happy to help America’s favorite weatherman. Willard did his report. The hot air balloon lifted off. Its flame whooshed. Willard’s toupee “blew away.” The crowd laughed. He had tied one end of the line to his hair. A stagehand held the other end.

Bob Dotson

Larger than life personality. That quality very diminished in today’s world of Corporate Media. Nice Man. RIP Willard

Chris Oliver

During an appearance on the *Tomorrow Show* he flung his hair piece at the camera explaining that he was contractually obligated to wear it on *Today* not *Tomorrow*. Truly one of the best, he had a gift of connection with his audience. RIP Willard

Mike Noseworthy

I began stage managing in 1986, as a summer relief SM on *Today*. Willard Scott was beyond kind to me. When he heard I was recently engaged, he would devise reasons to drag me in front of the camera, thereby ensuring I would receive the extra \$110 in my paycheck for each on camera appearance. He called it “Wedding Money!” There was no one else like Willard. Rest in Peace, dear gentleman.

Cindy Flood Jacobsen

Worked on Today from 1986 to July 4, 1997 as the TD and with Willard Scott who passed today at 87.

Looking for pictures will post later. He was a colorful man, a gentleman and knew my name and everyone loved him.

When I was with Today, fortunate to travel all over the place for live broadcasts and Willard was always there to add his humor and enjoyed highlighting 100 year old birthdays of viewers. I wish he would have made it to 100. I know his wife Paris is very very sad today!

Pray for the progress of his soul.

Gil Muro

We lost a beloved member of our Today show family this morning. Willard Scott passed peacefully at the age of 87 surrounded by family, including his daughters Sally and Mary and his lovely wife, Paris. He was truly my second dad and am where I am today because of his generous spirit. Willard was a man of his times, the ultimate broadcaster. There will never be anyone quite like him.

Al Roker

Things that come to my head right now...Peking Duck dinner in Beijing with his wife Mary and my future wife Lisa, dinner at an Italian restaurant on the Hill in St. Louis with the whole Today crew, Lisa's amazing picture of Willard in Chinese Opera makeup in Beijing at BeiHai Park. Carmen Miranda. The giant weather wall, so large only Willard could make it seen human-scale. And a good friend and colleague is gone. RIP, my friend.

Mark Traub

I went to DC to record some promos with Willard. When we were done he took me to the Four Seasons for breakfast. Just loved him. RIP my friend.

Judie Henninger

*Tributes to Silent Microphones***Mamye Smith Remembered by her Family**

Show yourself in all respects to be a model of good works, and in your teaching show integrity, dignity and sound speech that cannot be condemned. - Titus 2:7

Mamye L. Smith passed away peacefully at home, in Bessemer, Alabama, on October 29, comforted by her family members.



Mamye was the fifth of eleven children born to her proud parents George and Eliouse Smith on January 1, 1946, in Selma, Alabama. Mamye was a gentle and soft-spoken person with a big smile, a joyous laugh, and a heart to match. She was baptized at age 12 at Selma's Trinity Lutheran Church. After her family moved to Bessemer, Alabama in 1959, she attended and was graduated from Brighton High School. She completed her first year of college at Alabama Lutheran College in Selma, and it was there, through SNCC, the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, that she became active in the civil rights movement to help register blacks to vote. Mamye was present when Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. spoke at Brown Chapel AME Zion Church in Selma on January 2, 1965. During a protest, Mamye was jailed along with Dr. King and about 100 others, the majority of whom were young people.

After her first year of college, Mamye joined her sisters Virginia and Carol in New York City. Mamye aspired and achieved. She studied broadcasting at Career Academy and New York University. After graduating in 1969, she immediately landed her first and only job, with NBC's "Today Show".

Mamye was one of the first black Production Assistants at NBC. During her nearly two decades at NBC, she received many awards. Her early retirement was due to the onset of Multiple Sclerosis in 1977.

Mamye's travels for both work and leisure took her all over the world. Mamye's special friend and companion, Robert "Bob" Hickey, shared 40 years of their lives together. Bob took great care of Mamye. They were friends before they became a couple. That friendship was perhaps the secret ingredient to their loving relationship. They enjoyed each other's company and loved to entertain others in the home they shared. She and Bob loved to go on cruises, and they often planned trips for the family. They enjoyed the theater and all the arts. For nearly 45 years Mamye battled Multiple Sclerosis (MS). However, she never allowed MS to define her. She and Bob were very active with the New York City Chapter of the MS Society. Mamye loved her family and her friends, and they loved her. Mamye loved NBC and cherished the annual "Peacock North" luncheons for retirees. Mamye and Bob attended Holy Innocence Catholic Church in Brooklyn, NY.

In 2017, Mamye and Bob relocated to Alabama. Since then, she has been in the care of her family in the home of her sister Verlyne. Her nieces Monica and Crystal have been very helpful with her care.

Survivors include her cherished life partner, Robert Maurice "Bob" Hickey; five sisters, Virginia Dambreville (Jean Claude), Carolyn Smith, Lymbra Key (Cashuh), Verlyne Moten, and Steronica Mattocks, and a very special loved one, Kathryn Engldahl; and three brothers: Theophilus Smith, William Hall, and Quintos Dunston.

Additional survivors include many nieces, nephews, four very special cousins, and a host of dearly loved great and great-great nieces and nephews.

She was preceded in death by her parents, George and Eliouse Smith; brothers Christopher Smith, George Smith Jr., Ronald J. Smith, Nathan B. Smith; and her sister Willie Ann Paries Hill.

A graveside service was held at Highland Memorial Gardens, Bessemer, Alabama on November 2nd, 2021.

Condolences may be sent to
Verlyne Moten
1301 26th Street N
Bessemer, AL 35020

*Tributes to Silent Microphones***Chauncey Howell**

Chauncey Delphin Howell passed away in Easton PA at the age of 86 on September 20, 2021, after a long illness.

Chauncey was born on July 15, 1935 in Easton Pennsylvania to Kathryn Shirer and Chauncey Delphin Howell. He was their first child. Chauncey attended Easton Public Schools and graduated from Amherst College with a degree in Classics. After college, he served in the U.S. Army at Fort Jackson and Fort Gordon. He started his career in journalism at Women's Wear Daily in 1959, where he was a theater, movie and restaurant critic. He also wrote pieces for The New York Times and Playboy. He wrote fondly and humorously about the New York scene and that led to his becoming a reporter for TV: WABC-TV, WNBC and NewYork1, covering events throughout Manhattan and the Boroughs. He had a flair for bringing out the best in people in a light-hearted affectionate way. Every day at 5:00 pm on TV in the New York area, he reported on events and people from Manhattan and the Boroughs engaging the hidden talents of bystanders. Before his pieces aired, Chauncey loved editing them, adding music and interjections. For all his hard work on TV, Chauncey earned five Emmys.



Later in his career he worked on radio and TV in Long Island. He retired to his beloved home town of Easton PA where he continued writing and performing in video sketches of neighbors and friends. He also studied acting and voice. Throughout his life, he loved reading and collecting books. He treasured opera and vocal music from the past. He also studied languages and dialects including how to schmooze in Yiddish and Italian. He also loved traveling to Europe with his mother, Kathryn and sister, Sally. He was a generous caregiver to his mother on weekends and holidays, treating her to fancy restaurants and fun social gatherings.

He is predeceased by his parents Chauncey and Kathryn (Shirer) Howell, his brother-in-law Jack Gundy and nephew, Benjamin Gundy. He is survived by his sister Sally (Howell) Gundy and brother, Charles David Howell and sister-in-law, Reta L. Wells-Howell. He is also survived by his nephew Charles Gundy, and nieces, Jennifer Gundy, Caryn Pelegrino and Joanna (Josie) Gundy. His great nephews: Charles Rustau Gundy, Johannes Gundy, and Leo Pelegrino, and his great-niece Anna Pelegrino.

A graveside service was held on September 28, 2021 at Forks Cemetery in Stockertown, PA. Memorial contributions may be made to

Ascend Hospice,
1120 Welsh Rd., Suite 220,
North Wales, PA 18454.

Offer online condolences at www.AshtonFuneralHome.com.

Published by © Morning Call on September 24, 2021.

Tributes to Silent Microphones

Gene Walsh



Longtime NBC press-publicity exec Gene Walsh died September 1st at his home in Burbank. He was 87; publicist Charlie Barrett said Walsh died of natural causes. He attended Saranac Lake High School, where he won 12 varsity sports letters in football, basketball, baseball and track, was named to the 1951 All-State football team, and was elected to the school's Athletic Hall of Fame. Gene attended Paul Smith's College, where he captained the 1953-54 basketball team. He received his BA in English from St. Lawrence University in Canton, where he played two years of basketball and was on the Dean's list his senior year. Gene served with the 16th Artillery of the U.S. Army's Fourth Armored Division in Germany, 1957-59.

Walsh was with NBC's press and publicity departments for 30 years, from 1961 to 1991. He was the only executive to head that department for the broadcasting company at its two major production centers, New York City and Burbank. He joined in New York in 1961 and worked in the magazine, trade and program publicity units. In 1973 he was promoted to head the 50-member department and was named an NBC VP in 1975. Two years later, he was transferred to Burbank and headed the 45-member department. He retired in 1991.

When in New York in 1975, Walsh was the architect of the publicity campaign for NBC's then-new "Saturday Night Live." In their 1986 book, "Saturday Night," authors Doug Hill and Jeff Weingrad credited Walsh for recognizing NBC's weekly

late-night comedy was "the only new show the network had that it could point to with any pride." Under Walsh, the superiority of NBC's publicity operation was singled out by television critics. In 1983, David Williams, president of the Television Critics Assn., summarized the network's semi-annual Hollywood press tours: "No network does as well as NBC in attending to the myriad of details that make a press tour succeed ... NBC does it right ... everyone at NBC is relaxed, friendly and to an astonishing degree, willing to tell you the truth."

At his retirement ceremonies, Walsh said, "Johnny Carson and Bob Hope are the most savvy and professional of the hundreds of NBC stars I've worked with. In 1962, Johnny replaced Jack Paar as host of 'Tonight' and he smartly made himself available for a wide range of audience-building publicity, some which could be classified as frivolous. However, in a few years, with superstar status achieved and his ratings solidified, Johnny knew his best publicity was what he did every night on his show. He neither needed nor wanted any more audience-building publicity. Our primary job was to publicize what he did on his show and fend off the hundreds of interview requests from the press." Walsh added that the highlight of being at NBC was working with executives Grant Tinker and Brandon Tartikoff. In 1981, Grant left his MTM Prods. and signed a five-year contract as NBC's chairman. It was a rescue mission: NBC was mired in last place. Brandon was NBC's entertainment programming chief. Grant's edict to everyone: "First be the best, then be first." "Grant and Brandon attracted to NBC the best writers, producers and actors by giving them virtually free rein. By the 1985-86 season, with a schedule including 'Cheers,' 'Hill Street Blues' and 'Cosby,' NBC climbed out of the cellar — winning the primetime ratings race for the first time, dominated the Emmy Awards, and staying on top for a decade."

Walsh started NBC's press cost-recovery program, selling the department's publicity materials — storylines, pictures and features — to the many syndication companies distributing NBC's cancelled programs to stations.

He was a long-time member of the Academy of Television Arts & Sciences and served as a governor and as chairman of the ATAS' public relations committee. In 1985 he was one of the 13 founding members of the Television Publicity Executives Committee. He was also a member of the Museum of Television and Radio, plus a longtime member of the Southern California Sports Broadcasters, and served on its board of directors and as treasurer.

Prior to joining NBC, Walsh was a reporter and sports columnist for the Adirondack Daily Enterprise, and a play-by-play announcer for radio station WNBZ in Saranac Lake.

He married Judith Luce of Saranac Lake in 1957. She passed in 1997. He is survived by his three children.

By Tim Gray, © Variety, October 28, 2021 and © Adirondack Daily Enterprise, October 27, 2021

*Tributes to Silent Microphones***Norm MacDonald**

Norm Macdonald, the celebrated stand-up comedian and Saturday Night Live cast member, died on September 14th in Los Angeles after a private battle with cancer. He was 61. Macdonald's manager, Marc Gurvitz, confirmed the comedian's death to the New York Times. Macdonald had reportedly been battling cancer for nine years, but did not want to make the diagnosis public, according to his longtime producing partner and friend Lori Jo Hoekstra. "He was most proud of his comedy," Hoekstra said. "He never wanted the diagnosis to affect the way the audience or any of his loved ones saw him. Norm was a pure comic. He once wrote that 'a joke should catch someone by surprise, it should never pander.' He certainly never pandered. Norm will be missed terribly."

Macdonald had a prolific and multi-faceted career, working as a stand-up, actor and writer. Between 1993 and 1998, he was cast member on *Saturday Night Live*, and for three of those seasons he presided over Weekend Update with a style that blended acerbic punchlines and deadpan delivery.

Born in Quebec City, Canada in 1959, Macdonald began his career as a stand-up in Canada, and later appeared on the talent competition *Star Search*. His first major showbiz gig was writing for *Roseanne* in the early Nineties, but he left after just one season after being hired on *Saturday Night Live*.

Macdonald's SNL is probably remembered most for his anchoring of *Weekend Update* and, in particular, his ruthless and relentless coverage of O.J. Simpson during his murder trial. For some time after, Macdonald would claim that these jokes were part of the reason he was fired from *Saturday Night Live* in 1998, claiming that they upset then-NBC West Coast president Don Ohlmeyer, whom Macdonald said was friends with Simpson. Ohlmeyer, however, disputed these claims, and in a 2011 interview with Marc Maron, Macdonald revised his position, saying he was probably axed because SNL brass simply stopped finding him funny and because of his penchant for insubordination.

But on top of Weekend Update, Macdonald appeared in array of memorable sketches that helped cement his place as a SNL fan favorite. He impersonated David Letterman and Larry King, and even stepped in as Bob Dole during the 1996 presidential campaign. And he appeared as Burt Reynolds on SNL's long-running *Celebrity Jeopardy!* spoof, becoming perhaps the second-most famous antagonizer of Will Ferrell's Alex Trebek, just behind Darrell Hammond's incorrigible Sean Connery.

Macdonald's first major post-SNL project was the 1999 movie *Dirty Work*, directed by Bob Saget, which flopped (his feud with Ohlmeyer even briefly led to NBC pulling its ads for the film). The following year, though, Macdonald launched a new sitcom, *The Norm Show*, which would go on to air for three seasons on ABC.

Macdonald was a consistent presence in comedy throughout his career. He racked up memorable film roles in movies like *Billy Madison*, Eddie Murphy's *Doctor Doolittle* (he voiced the dog, Lucky), and *Funny People* and *The People vs. Larry Flynt*, and appeared on TV shows like *The Larry Sanders Show*, *Mike Tyson Mysteries*, and *The Drew Carey Show*. Macdonald was also a reliable guest on late-night television, and a sublimely-crafted shaggy dog joke about a moth, delivered on Conan O'Brien's *The Tonight Show*, is a perfect encapsulation of Macdonald's sense of humor.

In 2006, Macdonald released an album of sketch comedy, *Ridiculous*, while he later helmed two stand-up specials, 2011's *Me Doing Stand-Up*, and 2017's *Hitler's Dog, Gossip & Trickery*. He published a fictionalized memoir, *Based on a True Story: A Memoir*, and hosted a popular podcast, *Norm Macdonald Live*, between 2013 and 2017. In 2018, Macdonald scored a Netflix talk show, *Norm Macdonald Has a Show*, which ran for one season (its arrival was also marred by some controversial remarks Macdonald made about the #MeToo movement).

Throughout his career, Macdonald's comedy almost always had a classic feel. He largely eschewed politics, and a 2018 New York Times profile noted his continued pursuit of the Platonic joke. He offered one up in the piece's closing moments, quipping: "Making people laugh is a gift. Preaching to them is not a gift. There are people who can do that better — preachers."

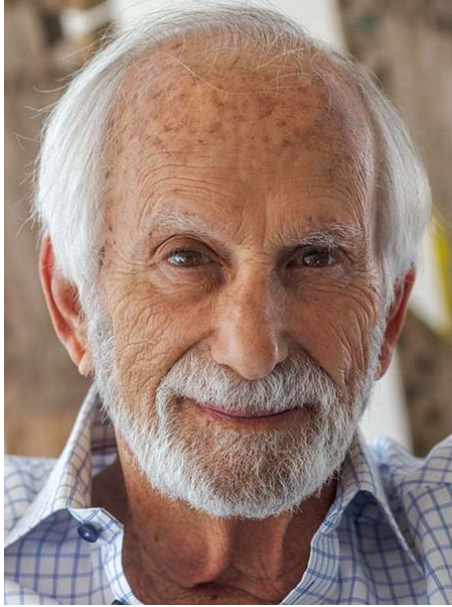
By Jon Blistein, © Rolling Stone, September 14, 2021

Photo credit: ABC Photo Archives/Disney General Entertainment Content/Getty Images.



Tributes to Silent Microphones

Jay Sandrich



Jay Sandrich, the top-notch sitcom director who was a regular on *The Mary Tyler Moore*, *The Cosby Show* and *Soap* and on the scene for some of the biggest moments in the history of television comedy, died in Los Angeles on September 22nd. He was 89.

A 10-time Emmy nominee and five-time winner, Sandrich landed his first job in Hollywood as a second assistant director on *I Love Lucy*. He later worked on *Make Room for Daddy* and *The Dick Van Dyke Show*; directed the pilot episodes of *The Bob Newhart Show*, *WKRP in Cincinnati* and *Benson*; and produced for *The Andy Griffith Show* and *Get Smart*. His father was Mark Sandrich, the director of five Fred Astaire-Ginger Rogers song-and-dance classics of the 1930s, including *Top Hat* and *The Gay Divorcee*.

A protégé of acclaimed TV producer Sheldon Leonard, Sandrich worked on all seven seasons of *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*, helming 119 of the series' 168 episodes. His efforts included "Love Is All Around," the pilot that premiered on Sept. 19, 1970, and "The Last Show," the acclaimed series finale that aired March 19, 1977. "I like to know what works," Sandrich said during a 2001 interview for the website *The Interviews: An Oral History of Television*. "By working, I mean my feeling as an audience: 'This is funny. I understand the points that are being made and I'm enjoying myself.' If that doesn't happen to me early, I try to find a way to make it happen." After *The Mary Tyler Moore Show* concluded its run, Sandrich cemented his place as a top sitcom director

on *Soap*, Susan Harris' envelope-pushing spoof of daytime dramas that made stars of Billy Crystal, Katherine Helmond, Richard Mulligan and Robert Guillaume.

Sandrich directed every episode of the show's first and second seasons (and 51 installments in all through November 1979) and received two more Emmy noms. He also directed the September 1979 pilot for *Benson*, the spinoff based on Guillaume's character.

Having directed 11 episodes of *The Bill Cosby Show*, a 1969-71 sitcom for NBC, Sandrich accepted the offer to direct the pilot of *The Cosby Show* and helped put the NBC series together, serving as an influential voice in the casting of Phylicia Rashad and Keshia Knight Pulliam. Sandrich wound up helming half of the 200 episodes of *The Cosby Show*, covering all eight seasons, and winning two more Primetime Emmys, for his work on the 1984 episode "The Younger Woman" and 1985's "Denise's Friend."

Jay Henry Sandrich was born in Los Angeles on Feb. 24, 1932, the younger of two sons. With a father in Hollywood, he grew up surrounded by celebrities and didn't give a second thought to having Jimmy Stewart and Jack Benny as neighbors or seeing Astaire or Irving Berlin drop by the house. After graduating from Beverly Hills High School, Sandrich majored in film at UCLA, and he joined the DGA — without any credits — while still in college, getting in because of his dad's stint as the guild's president from 1943-44. He then spent several summer months as an unpaid second assistant on *The Lone Ranger*.

After graduating from UCLA in 1953, Sandrich entered the U.S. Army and made documentaries for the Signal Corps. When his service ended, he returned to L.A. and landed a gig with Desilu Productions as a second A.D. on *I Love Lucy*. "The reason I got that job is that [Lucille Ball's] first job, my father had directed," Sandrich said. "She later told me that she was very nervous and kept blowing her lines and he was really lovely to her. So without me knowing it, there was that heritage, and I got chances. But keeping the job was different from getting the job."

Other projects included *Make Room for Daddy*, *The Andy Griffith Show*, *Get Smart*, *Rhoda*, *Phyllis*, *Lou Grant*, *The Bob Newhart Show*, *The Betty White Show*, *WKRP in Cincinnati* and *Two and a Half Men*.

Survivors include his second wife, Linda, whom he wed in 1984; his children Eric, Tony and Wendy; four grandchildren; a niece and nephew; and great nieces and nephews.

Donations in his memory can be made to Planned Parenthood, the Los Angeles Regional Food Bank and the Cradle to Career Aspen Community Foundation.

By Chris Koseluk, © The Hollywood Reporter, September 23, 2021

*Tributes to Silent Microphones***Arthur Forrest**

Arthur Forrest — a legendary figure in the television industry, whose seventy-year career spanned the history of television itself — passed away on October 25, 2021 at the age of 95.

Forrest, born in 1926 in Brooklyn and raised in the Bronx as a first-generation American, was 22 when he headed for New York City to begin his career. After completing a NYU extension course in television production, he sought work and accepted the only job offered to him at the DuMont Network's studio — janitor. It was 1948, the dawn of American television, and Arthur went from janitor to page to studio assistant, to stagehand, mike boom operator, grip, cameraman, associate director and on up. Each position fine-tuned his professional expertise and instilled in him a sensitivity and respect for each member of his crew. At DuMont, Arthur was cameraman on “The Honeymooners” and “Captain Video” and worked with such TV icons as Sid Caesar and Ernie Kovacs in those early days of live television.

Forrest left DuMont for New York's Channel 5, where he directed the enormously popular children's show “Wonderama” and worked on shows featuring a wide range of iconic TV personalities, from serious intellectuals David Susskind and David Frost to Soupy Sales with his pie-in-the face antics. Forrest remained at the station until 1973, when he left to direct the late night Dick Cavett Show, the cerebral alternative to Johnny Carson.

In 1975, Forrest relocated to Los Angeles, where his long career spanned the full range of popular American television, including reality, event and daytime talk shows. He directed the long-running early “reality” television hit “That's Incredible” on ABC and the equally popular improvisational comedy show “Whose Line Is It Anyway?” Forrest produced and directed rock-and-roll tribute shows with Murray the K, Kasey Kasem and Don Kirshner and the game shows “Money Maze” and “Matchmaker.” The talk shows he directed include Mike Douglas, Montel Williams, Will Shriner, Vicki Lawrence, Leeza Gibbons, Rosie O'Donnell, Donny and Marie and Pat Sajak. Forrest won Emmy Awards for his direction of “Leeza” and later, “Rosie.”

One of Forrest's longest-running associations was with Jerry Lewis and the annual Labor Day Telethon for Muscular Dystrophy. Forrest produced and directed the show for over forty years, from New York to Las Vegas. One of the best remembered moments in telethon history was the Martin & Lewis reunion on live television, which Frank Sinatra and Arthur secretly arranged. For years, Arthur and his wife, Marcy, were a team. As the telethons' talent coordinator, she was the creative force behind many such memorable moments. The Forrests worked together on many other productions, including the Arthritis, Easter Seals, Cerebral Palsy and United Negro College Fund telethons, as well as the 1979 Olympathon, a fundraiser for the later-boycotted Moscow Olympics.

Of all the programs Forrest worked on the annual Tournament of Roses Parade on NBC — which he directed from 1977 to 2017 — may have been his favorite. Forrest loved working on this event with his long-time, loyal crew and having his friends and family join in the joyous New Year's Day celebration. Arthur's mastery of parade coverage was acknowledged with his third Emmy Award for his work on the 1995 Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade.

Arthur loved the flurry of the entertainment business, and he loved the calm and charm of his life in Chevy Chase, Maryland. He enjoyed taking part in community activities: in October, he would throw on a cape, blow a whistle and lead the children in the Halloween costume parade; during the holidays, he would don a Santa suit and visit neighbors' homes. Forrest directed his final Rose Parade and officially retired from show business at 90 in 2017. His retirement years were full. He enjoyed every big and small moment and most especially his life at home with his wife, children, grandchildren and cats.

Arthur Forrest is survived by his wife, Marcy; their children, Zak and Nicole; his son-in-law, Steve Byers; his grandchildren, Max and Dahlia; his son from a previous marriage, Richard Forrest; and his step-son, Kyle Cascioli.

Posted on Facebook by Howard Kirsch.



*Tributes to Silent Microphones***Mike Gargiulo**

Mike Gargiulo, the nine-time Emmy winner who directed some of TV's best-loved game shows for a half-century and started his illustrious broadcast career at WNBC, where his son Michael co-anchors "Today in New York," passed away on November 30, 2021. He was 95 years old.

He kicked off his TV career at WNBC, working as a staff director in the early 1950s, and did most all of the local shows in New York until 1959 when NBC selected him to join the State Department project to build a television studio in Moscow and introduce color TV to the Russian people during the exchange.

It was in this studio that Nikita Khrushchev and Richard Nixon had their famous "kitchen debate", which Gargiulo recorded and rushed back to NBC. The tapes were shared with CBS and ABC within hours and are said to have potentially helped usher along the era of modern-day, televised political debates.

For 50 years, Gargiulo directed some of TV's favorite game shows, including "Password," "The Price Is Right" and "\$10,000 Pyramid." He also produced more than 30 years of variety specials for CBS, covering the Thanksgiving Day Parade, for which he earned an Emmy nomination in 1974, New Year's Eve and other events.

Gargiulo was born and raised on Coney Island and lived above his father's restaurant, where bands and variety talent appeared regularly. He had a flair for those shows, which became the vogue in the early 1960s, throughout his career.

Victor Borge hired him to direct his music and comedy special featuring the jazz version of "Peter and the Wolf." He also returned to Russia for "The Leningrad Ice Show," and later to Las Vegas for a second NBC special featuring the Igor Moiseyev contemporary dance company, hosted by Orson Welles.

In 2015, The National Academy of Television Arts & Sciences awarded Gargiulo an Emmy® for Lifetime Achievement. He has accrued a total of 31 nominations and nine Emmy® Awards in his storied career.

Gargiulo often noted none of his accomplishments could have been completed without the support of his wife of more than half a century, Dorothy, and his children, Susan and Michael. He was especially proud of his family and three grandchildren, Ian, Olivia and Andrew.

*Gray Matters***Insurance and Drug Plan News
from Bill Freeda****GE Basic Life Insurance Policy**

I wanted to alert those of you who may not be aware that you “may” have a GE Basic Life Insurance policy in your name. The amount of the policy will vary depending on your annual salary when you retired. If you retire before you are 65, the amount of the policy is reduced each year until you reach the age of 65. At 65 the value of the policy is frozen.

Let me suggest you call the GE Pension Benefits Center at 1-800-432-3450, and use the prompt for Life Insurance. If you are eligible you should confirm the amount to which you are entitled and the name of your beneficiary, and update it if necessary. I would also suggest that you ask for a hard copy document to be placed with your other important papers.

GEPAF is the acronym for the GE Pharmaceutical Assistance Fund.

Let’s review how your Medicare Part D Prescription Drug Plan (PDP) works:

The Deductible (if applicable) is \$445 in 2021 and \$480 for 2022

During your initial coverage, which is up to \$4130, your **co-pay** is 25% , and your Plan pays 75% . Initial coverage for 2022 will be \$4430.

The **Coverage Gap**, commonly known as the “Donut Hole” up to \$5,183.75.

Generic Drugs: Your Co-Pay is 25%, your plan pays 75%.

Brand name drugs: Your Co-Pay is 25%, your Plan pays 5%, and the drug manufacturer pays 70%

Catastrophic Benefit Period is when your costs, or True Out-Of-Pocket (TROOP), hit \$5183.75 for the 2021 calendar year, \$7,050 for 2022. Your Plan pays 15%, and Medicare pays 80%, leaving a 5% balance. That is where the GEPAF comes in. However, there is a process and you need to fill out a form to apply for assistance. Please call VIA Benefits at 1-855-359-0133 and use the prompt for **Funding**.

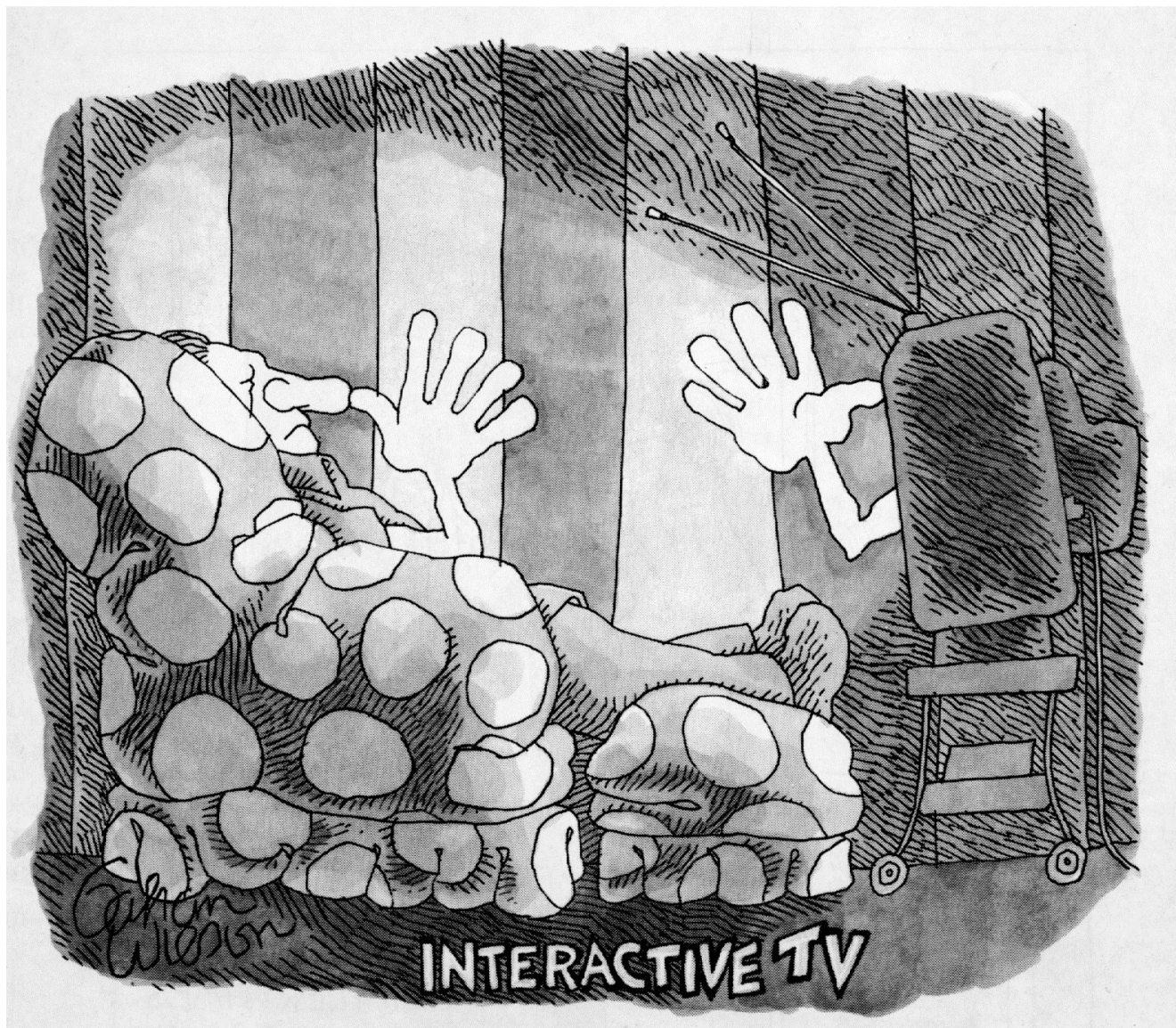
Once you have reached the catastrophic stage for your Medicare Part D Prescription Drug Plan (PDP), Medicare will pay for 95% of your prescription costs. The GEPAF is designed to help with the remaining 5%.

To receive assistance from the GEPAF, in 2021 you must have paid \$6,550 of actual Out Of Pocket expenses for your prescription medications. It is quite possible that amount will go up in 2022.

**You may contact me at 516-376-9785 or bfreedanabetcwa@verizon.net
whether or not you are a NABET member.**

The Kicker

Gahan Wilson Was Right!



Cartoon © Gahan Wilson, The New Yorker



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