

May 2016



Indiana Broadcast Pioneers Newsletter



Broadcast coverage of the Indianapolis 500 on radio began in 1922. Two small stations, Indianapolis's first radio station, WLK, previously 9ZJ, owned by Hamilton Mfg. Company went on the air December 31, 1921 and WOH, a 1250 watt Indianapolis station owned by Hatfield Electric, a radio manufacturer, signed on in 1922. The two stations broadcast descriptions of the race to a small number of households in the Indianapolis area. Starting in 1925 WFBM, Indianapolis and WGN, Chicago, carried the race broadcasting periodic updates. The first national coverage came in 1928 when NBC covered the

final hour of the race live, with Graham McNamee as anchor.

In 1929, Rock Island, Illinois station WKBF, owned by Calvin Beardsley owner of the Beardsley Radio Shop, and Indianapolis station WFBM carried a 5-1/2 hour full race broadcast.



Graham McNamee

There was no radio coverage in 1932, as Speedway officials decided to allow newspapers exclusive coverage of the race. NBC eventually returned, and continued until 1939, in some years also carrying live segments at the start. Charlie Lyons was their announcer for 1939. Lyons was the announcer who introduced Gene Autry on the Melody Ranch program for many years. He also announced for Lum and Abner, Lassie and Wild Bill Hickok.

CBS also covered the race in the late 1930s, with Ted Husing anchoring the coverage in 1936. Indianapolis stations WIRE and WLW also reported from the race during the 1930s. From 1939 to 1950, Mutual Broadcasting System covered the Indianapolis 500 nationwide with live segments at the start, the finish, and live periodic updates throughout the race. Bill Slater, the primary voice for Paramount News reels and the NBC announcer for the 1936 Berlin Summer Olympics was brought in as the anchor.

In the years prior to WWII, Mutual used the production services of Cincinnati station WLW, and provided the signal to other Mutual stations across the country. In the years after WWII, Mutual utilized the services of WIBC-AM to produce the broadcast and provide additional talent. In 1950, due to an illness, Slater was expected to miss the broadcast. Sid Collins, who had served as a turn reporter for two years, was tentatively named his replacement. Slater was able to make it to the race, so Collins joined Slater in the booth as co-anchor. Later in the day, Collins reported from victory lane. That year's race was cut short by rain, forcing Mutual to interrupt Queen For A Day to broadcast the finish of the rain-shortened event. For 1951, Mutual substantially raised its advertising rates and its primary sponsor, Perfect Circle Piston Rings, pulled its support. Mutual eventually decided to stop covering the event, and it appeared for a time that the 1951 race would not be carried on radio. In early May of 1951, Speedway president Wilbur Shaw consummated a last-minute deal for WIBC-AM to cover the race, with Sid Collins as anchor. WIBC's format followed that of Mutual's, with live coverage at the start, the finish, and periodic updates throughout the race. WIBC provided its coverage to approximately 25 other Mutual affiliates on IMS Radio Network. From 1957 to 1998, the IMS Radio Network booth was on the second floor of the Master Control Tower. After the success of WIBC's radio effort in 1951, the Speedway management became interested in taking the broadcasting duties in-house permanently. In 1952, the Speedway officially launched the Indianapolis Motor Speedway Radio Network, utilizing on-air talent and technical support from WIBC. The format again followed the Mutual-style format, with live coverage at the start, the finish, and periodic updates during the race. Starting in 1953, after complaints from the other four stations in the area the talent pool was extended to feature personalities from all five Indianapolis radio stations. The 1953 race was notable in that it expanded to feature the first live "flag-to-flag" coverage and the affiliate count had already grown to 130 stations. During this time, the broadcast was typically simulcast on all of the major stations in Indianapolis, and the nationwide affiliate count continued to grow rapidly. By 1955, the broadcast was carried in all 48 states. In 1961, it reached new states Alaska and Hawaii as well. Worldwide shortwave transmission through Armed Forces Radio started in 1953, and claimed to reach every country where English was spoken. Former Indy 500 driver Elmer George, husband of Mari Hulman George, and father of Tony George, would eventually become the director of the network. He served in the position until his death in 1976.

Indiana's Chris Schenkel

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Born in 1923, Chris Schenkel grew up on a farm in Bippus, IN, listening to Notre Dame football games on the radio and soaking in the style of the era's biggest sportscasters. He even tried his own hand at broadcasting, calling his high school's basketball tournament over a telephone line to an audience in downtown Bippus.

After attending Purdue University and serving in World War II, Schenkel pursued a career in radio before breaking into television in 1947 as the play-by-play voice for Harvard University. His big break would arrive a few years later, when he was hired by CBS in 1952 to be the voice of the New York Football Giants, Triple Crown horse racing, and The Masters golf tournament. As the voice of the Giants, Schenkel was in the booth for the pre-Super Bowl 1958 National Football League

Championship against the Baltimore Colts.

In 1965, Schenkel joined ABC Sports, where his profile grew exponentially with the addition of MLB, NBA, Indianapolis 500, and Olympic Games to his resumé. Already the first sportscaster to call The Masters live on television, he became the first to anchor an Olympic Games live, taking on studio-host duties in Mexico City in 1968.

After the 1972 Olympic Games in Munich, he shifted from studio host to calling several Olympic events, including figure skating and Nadia Comeneci's perfect 10 in gymnastics during the 1976 Montreal Summer Games. When it comes to broadcast versatility, few, if any, can match Chris Schenkel. A television stalwart for more than 40 years, he called football, basketball, golf, horse racing, boxing, bowling, and much more. And he did it while earning a reputation as one of the nicest guys in the business. "Chris was an unbelievable gentlemen," says legendary TV producer and Sports Broadcasting Hall of Famer Don Ohlmeyer. "He had one of the most important qualities people can have on television: they are instantly likeable. The audience liked and enjoyed him on-air. He was professional, did his homework, and was a great storyteller.



He understood that a game was not just a sequence of unconnected events; you could make it more interesting for the viewer if you weaved it all into a connected story."

"For a long time, Chris was the biggest name around, and I think some people have forgotten that," says former ABC Sports President Howard Katz, a Sports Broadcasting Hall of Famer. "He was a legend already in 1971 when I arrived [at ABC]. "He was one of the nicest men that has ever been in front of a microphone," Katz continued. "He was a consummate gentleman. He treated people the way he would want to be treated. I've said many times, you could take Chris out of Indiana but you couldn't take Indiana out of Chris."

Sports Broadcasting Hall of Famer Geoff Mason, a colleague at ABC Sports, attributes the network's success to Schenkel's behind-the-scenes work as well. "He wrote the book on how to cultivate relationships with people in the industry. In those days, we were like one giant family. We were all in this new endeavor called sports TV; we pretty much needed each other because we were carving out new territory each and every week. Chris was one of the very few people who totally understood that and who was always available for a drink, a cigarette, and I guarantee, a lot of things got done in those days contractually primarily because of the work that Chris had done. He was one of the very first people who ever truly understood the value of those relationships."

Famous for his distinctive baritone, Schenkel is probably best-known for calling the Professional Bowlers Association Tour, which he did for 36 years until ABC stopped carrying the PBA Tour in 1997.

"Chris Schenkel wasn't just a great announcer for the PBA on ABC; he became part of the fabric of the game," says PBA Commissioner Tom Clark. "Our most prestigious award each year is the Chris Schenkel PBA Player of the Year Award. I am not sure if any other sports name their MVP award after a broadcaster, further testament to how critical to the success of pro bowling on TV and how beloved he was by the entire PBA."

Although millions of Americans knew Schenkel through their television sets, he was far more than a broadcaster. A devoted family man, he and his wife, Fran, a former June Taylor dancer, married in 1955 and had three children. The family moved from New York to Indiana in the early 1970's and still lived there at the time of Schenkel's death in 2005.

Stratovision

In the 1940s, Westinghouse radar engineer Charles E. Nobles invented a system he named Stratovision. The purpose of this new technology was to bring media to small towns and farm homes. He believed his new system would expand coverage to the homes that terrestrial transmitters atop city buildings couldn't reach. Stratovision would rebroadcast TV and FM radio signals via transmitters mounted on airplanes. A 1948 demonstration fueled hype that Stratovision had the potential to transform the delivery of media.

On June 23, 1948, a B-29, orbiting 25,000 feet above Pittsburgh, rebroadcast the Republican convention directly from WMAR-TV in Baltimore. The bomber was outfitted with an eight-foot mast on its vertical stabilizer to receive programs; the signal was sent from the antenna to the cabin, and then on to the broadcast antenna. The antenna, stored horizontally in the bomb bay, projected 28 feet below the plane when operating.

After this first test transmission, Martin and Westinghouse representatives trumpeted Stratovision's future. They foresaw a nationwide Stratovision network, with programs beamed from one airplane to the next. Fourteen airplanes could bring TV and FM radio to 78 percent of the population; Westinghouse estimated a comparable ground installation network would require more than 100 relay points, with this new transmission source a fleet of 60 Martin 202 airliners would suffice.



Broadcast Antenna

Stratovision tests were undertaken between June 1948 to February 1949. The first phase was undertaken by the Glenn L. Martin Co. and Westinghouse Electric Corporation using a twin-engine PV-2 aircraft flying at 25,000 feet (7.6km) that transmitted with 250 watts on 107.5MHz and 5kW on 514MHz at Baltimore, Maryland so that recordings could be made at various locations ranging from Norfolk, Virginia to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania and Boston, Massachusetts.

The second phase of testing was undertaken by these same companies using a stripped-down B29 Superfortress flying at 30,000 feet. The plane was equipped to receive a relay transmission from WMAR-TV in Baltimore, which was then relayed over a 5kW video transmitter and a 1kw audio transmitter for reception on 82-88MHz with a television set tuned to Channel 6.



Executives & B29 Super Fortress

The tests were watched by many television viewers who sent in reception reports. From these reports it was calculated that Stratovision would require only eight relay planes to provide a transcontinental network and six additional planes to provide coverage to 78 percent of the United States. Mr. Charles Edward Nobles who was the head of Stratovision for Westinghouse said in his report: "*The major technical*

problems of the system have been solved, and the commercial development awaits only the crystallization of public demand for the expanded services offered by airborne broadcasting, application of the system by the radio industry to meet this demand, and the clarification of channel facilities available to make possible this application."

In 1949, AT&T set up a coaxial cable network to connect the East Coast with the Midwest, largely through underground wiring. Westinghouse dropped Stratovision in 1950.



Bill Shirk

In one of the stranger twists in the history of Indianapolis media, it fell to a former professional wrestler from Delaware County, a white guy known as an escape artist, a sort of late 20th century Houdini, to bring rap music to Indianapolis radio. It was 1991, and the guy was Bill Shirk. "WTLC wouldn't play rap," Shirk said, referring to the Indianapolis station that dominated the ratings among black listeners, "and I saw an opportunity because, at that time, of the top 30 songs nationally, 15 were rap." Rap was thought to be incendiary. "There was resistance to it in the community," Amos Brown, a WTLC executive then and now who also hosts a black-oriented radio talk show, told The Indianapolis Star..

But younger people, black and white, craved it, as Shirk would happily discover. He was an experienced though small-time radio station operator — over the years Shirk bought and sold nine Indianapolis radio stations — when the Federal Communications Commission awarded him a new FM signal in Indianapolis: 96.3. Despite its 330 watts, puny compared with the city's big stations' 50,000 watts, Shirk quickly made "Hoosier Hot 96" into a ratings powerhouse and forced other stations into playing more progressive hip hop music. "I don't remember all the artists back then," Shirk said, "but I remember we played a lot of Biggie Smalls' 'Mo Money Mo Problems.'"

Shirk was doing a phone interview Monday from his 13,500-square-foot house on 12 acres outside Zionsville. It was the first day of his retirement, and he was spending it lazily: lingering with coffee over the newspaper, soaking in a bath tub. He planned to have lunch at Panda Express, and later, for fitness, there would be a 2-mile stroll around the home he shares with his wife and daughter.

His last on-air shift was noon to 7 p.m. Saturday on "Radio Mom" 91.1 FM, a low-power, nonprofit station in Lebanon. Shirk sold it last week for \$205,000. After 43 years in Indianapolis radio, he is exiting.

Shirk arrived in Indianapolis in 1972 after acquiring WXLW on the AM band. He had moved from his hometown of Muncie, where he had been running WERK, a station owned by his father, a Muncie advertising executive. One of Shirk's first competitors was Jeff Smulyan, who would go on to build the Indianapolis-based media conglomerate Emmis Communications. Smulyan bought WNTS the year after Shirk bought WXLW. "Bill was different," said Smulyan, recalling an early Shirk promotion: "'WXLW has balls!' They said that over and over. What it was, they were giving away autographed basketballs."



Shirk is one of those people who is skilled in two wildly different disciplines, like a football player who also is a concert pianist. In 1977, he created buzz at the Indianapolis Auto Show as an escape artist. He freed himself from a straitjacket while suspended from the ceiling of the hall. It was the same thing he had done at pro wrestling events staged by the legendary Dick the Bruiser. Later, Shirk actually got in the ring several times and mixed it up with other wrestlers. "It may be choreographed, but out of 10 punches one would land," Shirk said. "I got the hell beat out of me on numerous occasions." He said he hasn't done any stunts in six or seven years, "other than to show someone how to get out of a straitjacket." "Before I got to know him," Brown said, "I thought: 'OK, is he a con man? Is he a carnief? What's up with the magic?'" The truth was Shirk, whose real name is William Shirk Poorman, was a top-notch self-promoter, and his radio stations benefited from his wacky brand of fame. The stations also benefited from a hands-on management style that harked to small town 1960, when a station general manager would sell the ads and turn around and do the play-by-play for the high school basketball game.

As essentially a sole proprietor (though he did have investors), Shirk was more nimble than his corporate competitors. Shirk's stations could morph in a hurry, depending on market forces. At various times they broadcast Top 40, hip hop, even religion. "The core was Southern Baptist," he said, "teaching and some gospel music. Very popular. We did very well with that." In 1994 he drew fire for airing programming on his WAV TV-53, the one television station he owned, that some people found sexually explicit. Shirk insisted it was merely "borderline." He explained later: "I was in a financial crunch." "We've always said we could make any decision we needed to make in six hours," Smulyan said, "but Bill didn't answer to anybody. He didn't have a board, he didn't have public shareholders. He was just a classic entrepreneur. I always loved his energy. I'm stunned he's really retiring." Although last week Shirk sold his last Indiana station, he retains a 24 percent stake in an 11-station chain in Hawaii. Those stations are for sale, too, he said. Shirk's big score came in 2000 when, as investors' demand for radio stations peaked, he sold 96.3 FM and two smaller stations to the Maryland-based media giant Radio One for \$40 million. Half the money was his, the other half belonged to his investment partner, Bill Mays. Mays, who had wide-ranging business interests and was considered one of Indianapolis' top business leaders, died in December on his 69th birthday. But that is not why Shirk, younger than Mays by five months, is retiring. "I loved Bill dearly, incredible individual, but my father is who I idolized. He retired at 70, and he said that's the age to do it." Shirk, who still wears his signature pony tail, says he is an avid hunter and angler. He is heading to Florida in April to fish. "I'm really looking forward to it," he said.

Death Notices

Kristi Ann Heitzman 55, died peacefully on March 22, 2016 while surrounded by family. Born April 4, 1960 in Latonia, KY, to the late Donald Heitzman and



Kristi Ann Heitzman

Dr. Susan Kemper; Kristi "Heitz" Heitzman, is

survived by family members, mother Dr. Susan Kemper, sister Holly Heitzman, brother Scott Heitzman, uncle Father Jack Heitzman and uncle Steve Schlickman and their families.

"Heitz" had an amazing sense of humor and was always the smartest person in the room. Clever, funny, and brilliant, she tempered her sharp wit with an extremely kind heart. She graduated Western Hills High School in 1978 and attended Northern Kentucky University.

Kristi began a broadcasting career in Cincinnati in 1980 where she worked for a jazz station until the early 80's. She moved to Indianapolis in the mid 80's to take a position as on air talent for WFBQ-Q95. She ultimately transitioned to sales and worked at Q95 until the mid 90's

For over 20 years, Kristi was a nationally known voice talent and owned and managed her company PROVOICES. She was the voice behind many successful brands and campaigns such as Duncan Hines, Jaguar, Southwest, and many others.

Kristi was an avid art and nature lover and a supporter of the visual arts for many years. She volunteered with numerous organizations and is best known for her hours of tireless devotion to her community and friends. She was always willing to lend an ear or a hand and will be remembered for her selfless approach to life and willingness to help anyone in need.

James Joseph Goheen, Sr., 88, passed away April 23

,2016 in Coventry Meadows Nursing Home, Fort Wayne, Indiana. He was born the third child of fifteen children of Esther and Harry Goheen, Sr. in Huntington, West Virginia on February 21, 1928. "Jimmy" or "Mr.



James Joseph Goheen, Sr.

Goheen, Sir", was an active member of the Fort Wayne community contributing his time and manner for over 60 years, often seen wearing his signature bow tie. Mr. Goheen was a founding employee of Wane TV / Channel 15 (a green brief case guy), beginning the station in 1954 until his retirement in 2007. He enjoyed many community leadership positions as Past President of Rotary, Honorary Member of the Fort Wayne Advertising Club, Silver Medal Awardee of The Fort Wayne Advertising Club, Member of Knights of Columbus, and was active in his church as a choir member and reader. Mr. Goheen also served in many inspiring capacities to his large family and many family friends - being a power of example to both the elderly and youth by quietly practicing actions of service, honesty, humility and love. Inheriting his mother Esther's musical talent, Mr. Goheen played the piano before every family engagement, enjoyed reading, writing poetry, making jokes, taking long walks, and encouraging his family to read the dictionary and pursue higher education. He spent his last years with his surviving wife of sixty-two years, Marcia M. Goheen.

Mike C. Goode of Carmel, Indiana, passed away on April 11, 2016, at the age of 68. Mike was born to Cecil and Svetla L. Goode on February 9, 1948, in Indianapolis, Indiana.



Mike C. Goode

Upon graduation from Carmel High School, Mike enrolled in Indiana University where he majored in Geology and Engineering. Mike was both a geologist and mineralogist who studied rocks and minerals, and attended many gem shows across the country. Mike also had a deep love for hunting gems, rocks, and other earthy minerals. He visited many volcano site eruptions collecting lava and ash. Mike had a profound passion for exploring and traveling the world. He guided many amateur radio expeditions to remote areas and islands. He and his amateur radio friends would erect a transmitting station antenna, and communicate with others from around the world.

Death Notices continued

Victor Koshurin, 57, passed away Saturday, May 14, 2016 at Visiting Nurse Hospice in Fort Wayne. Born in Fort Wayne, IN, Studied General Studies at Indiana-Purdue University Fort Wayne

Past: Elmhurst High School Victor formerly worked at ITT and was a Producer and Director with WFFT

Channel 55 for 19 years. He was a member of the former Holy Trinity (Russian) Eastern Orthodox Church of Ft. Wayne, IN. Victor enjoyed music and movies and collected records and CD's.



Victor Koshurin

Richard R. Rogers, 65, Carmel, passed away April 13, 2016, at home surrounded by his family. He was born May 12, 1950 in South Bend, the son of the late Frank and Alice (Kazmirski) Rogers. He married Debbie (Luckett) Rogers on August 17, 1974.



Richard R. Rogers

Rich retired in 2011 from WRTV after more than 25 years of service. in Advertising Sales.

He was a member of Our Lady of Mount Carmel Catholic Church. His greatest enjoyment was spending time with his family. He is survived by his loving wife of 41 years, Debbie Rogers; children, Rachel (John) Cera, Richard Jr. (Kelsey) Rogers, Rebecca (Nathan) O'Neil, Renee (Mark) Clerkin, and Ryan Rogers; 10 grandchildren, Max, Bonnie, Alice, and Luke Rogers, Gabriella, Sofia, and Anthony Cera, Milo, Violet, and Roger O'Neil; and a brother, Donald (Mary) Rogers. He was preceded in passing by a brother Ronald Rogers.



TAKE A LOOK

Check out the Pioneer website to see what's happening and what you may have missed.

Includes information and media on the Hall of Fame, Newsletters, Pioneer History, the Hall of Fame, Pioneer News, Membership application and more.

<http://indianabroadcastpioneers.org/news>

Douglas James Zink, 78, of Greenwood, passed away Sunday, April 3, 2016. He was born on November 12, 1937 in Clifton, Kansas to the late Homer and Armana



Douglas J. Zink

(Thimes) Zink. Doug was married on October 5, 1968 to Dee (Loux) Zink, in Indianapolis. He spent his career in broadcasting, working for WIRE Radio from 1959 to 1986 and also the Indianapolis Motor Speedway Network from 1966 to 1985.



Zink began a long association with the racetrack by serving as a backstretch reporter from 1966-1973, was Turn 3 announcer



from 1974-1981 and Turn 2 voice from 1982-1984.

Zink spent 27 years with Indianapolis radio station WIRE before retiring in 1986.

After retiring Doug joined Dee in running the Colonial Peddler Gift Shop until 2006. He was a member of the Broadcast Pioneers.

Doug is survived by his wife Dee Zink; daughters Jennifer Zink and Julie Zink; sister Loretta (Paul) Zink Raikes and beloved dog Mattie.

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