

May 2015



Indiana Broadcast Pioneers Newsletter

Richard M. Fairbanks 2015 Hall of Fame Nominee's

A new year and a new opportunity to honor individuals who have made their mark on Indiana broadcasting. The now yearly tradition for the Indiana Broadcast Pioneers, it's members and the Indiana Broadcasters Association. This year three outstanding broadcasters will have the honor of joining the distinguished members who have been recognized and honored by their peers. The inductees are selected from nominations received from members of the Indiana Broadcast Pioneers and the Indiana Broadcasters Association.

Brief Bio's of the 2015 Indiana Broadcast Pioneers Hall of Fame Members

Dick Florea: Dick worked at WMRI radio and WTAF TV in Marion before moving to WJTG TV in Ft.



Wayne, Indiana where he began a 35-year career. While at WKJG, Dick served as News Director and Anchorman, Public Affairs and Community Relations Director, and host of the Daily Interview Show "Editors Desk", and weekend "Our Town" reports. He is past president of the Indiana Broadcast Pioneers and the Associated Press Broadcaster's Association of Indiana.



Jane Woods Hodge: Jane "Janie" Hodge, a former Indianapolis educator enjoyed a spectacular run on WTTV-Channel 4, appearing every weekday from 1963 to 1986. Her show, stuffed with everything from safety tips to a segment called "Janie's Tree House" that featured local Boy Scout, Girl Scout and Brownie troops. The local program aired from 1963 to 1986 and became so popular it was syndicated to TV markets across Indiana, Illinois, Ohio and West Virginia.

Howard Kellman: Longtime play-by-play Hoosier sportscaster. For nearly four decades, starting in 1974,



Kellman has been Central Indiana's resident "Voice of Summer", as the radio voice of the Triple A Indianapolis Indians, and simulcasting as the television voice of the Indianapolis Indians the past 15 years. For 24 years, Kellman has been the play-by-play announcer for WHMB-Channel 40's Game of the Week Indiana high school football and basketball games. Through the years, he has contributed to the sportscasts of the World Series, the NFL, and the NBA.

The inductees to the Richard M. Fairbanks Indiana Broadcast Pioneers Hall of Fame will be honored at the annual Indiana Broadcasters Association Hall of Fame/Spectrum Awards. The 2015 event is Saturday, November 14, at the north side Keystone Marriott. Additional details will follow in a separate mailing.

Indiana Broadcasters on



1949 was the first television coverage of the Indianapolis 500 mile race. It was broadcast locally by WFBM TV. The Indianapolis station produced and aired the event again in 1950. The coverage was hosted by WFBM staff announcer **Earl Townsend** while Dick Pienge and Paul Roberts provided color commentary. The Speedway, concerned with the possible negative effect on live attendance did not agree to any live video broadcast of the race until 1964 when the race was shown on closed-circuit television in theaters and other similar venues across the United States. That live event was anchored by Indiana broadcaster **Charlie Brockman**. (*WXLW, WIRE, Speedway Radio Network, sports director WLWI-TV, Indianapolis.*) The following year, 1965, Charlie was the host of ABC's first Wide World of Sports coverage of the Indianapolis 500.



WFBM 1949
Camera Tower
1949



Charlie Brockman

The following year Indiana native, (Bippus, Indiana) **Chris Schenkel** became the main anchor of the network's Indy 500 race coverage. He then skipped four years but returned in 1971 for a ten year run ending in May of 1979. In 1971, a young David Letterman, who then worked at ABC's then-Indianapolis affiliate WLWI-TV, was one of the pit reporter/interviewers.



Chris Schenkel

Schenkel's early broadcasting experience was at WBAA, Purdue University, and WLBC, Muncie, Indiana. He later called the pro football games of the New York Giants. Schenkel was the first to cover The Masters golf tournament on TV in 1956, the first to call a college football game on ABC, and the first to anchor live Olympic coverage in 1968. He also hosted the Pro Bowlers Tour on ABC from the early '60's to 1997.

Paul Page's broadcasting career began at WAIV and WATI radio, Vincennes, Indiana. He then moved to WIBC in Indianapolis in 1968, where he was mentored by Sid Collins. From 1974–1987, Page served on the Indianapolis Motor Speedway Radio Network and as a pit reporter from 1974–1976. He was ABC's Chief Announcer for Indianapolis 500 from 1977–1987. During this time, the three-man booth of Page, Bobby Unser, and Sam Posey became a fixture of the ABC 500 telecasts.



Paul Page

In 2002 Richmond, Indiana native **Bob Jenkins** was Host of the nationally syndicated "Ag Day" program through WTHI TV, Terre Haute and WNDU TV, South Bend and was Farm Director at WIRE radio, Indianapolis. He was one of the original cornerstone anchors on ESPN when it debuted in 1979 while also working for the Indianapolis Motor Speedway Radio Network.



Bob Jenkins

This year **Allen Bestwick** will anchor the TV coverage for second year in a row. Bestwick, from Rhode Island called his first race at age 15 while his Dad was racing at Seekonk Speedway. From here he made it to Radio Reports Network, Motorsports radio Network, TBS's NASCAR Commentator then NBC and Turner network and then to ESPN.



Allen Bestwick

You can watch the Indianapolis 500 "Live" on your PC, laptop, Mac, Iphone, notepad, notebook or TV. ABC and ESPN will share 92 cameras to capture the event. You can also just listen on your radio.



Fred Lowery

Fred Lowery, (1909-1984), the "King of whistlers," was born in Palestine, Texas, on November 2, 1909. He lost his eyesight before he was two years old. His mother died shortly after his birth, and his father deserted him and his three older sisters, who were then raised by their grandmother Lucy White.

In September 1917, at the age of seven, Lowery entered the Texas School for the Blind (now the Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired) in Austin, where he stayed for the next twelve years. His whistling career began with the encouragement of his piano teacher, Peggy Richter, and bird imitator Ernest Nichols. In May 1929 Lowery and Richter traveled to Chicago, where Lowery took lessons in acting at the American Institute to teach him stage presence. In August 1929 he gave his first performance on a radio show, the Farm and Home Hour. In November of that year he left the School for the Blind and moved into the home of Peggy Richter. He continued to perform, and soon after a performance at the National



Fred Lowery
Peggy Richter

Business Confidence Week, a Lions Club event, he received a letter inviting him to try out for a full-time job with the Early Birds program on radio station WFAA in Dallas. In 1932 entrepreneur and carnival pitchman Henry Murphy hired Lowery, along with the other Early Birds stars, for a six-month tour with Lignon Smith's band in Texas, Arkansas, Oklahoma, and Louisiana. They worked out a two-hour program with music and comedy called "Heads Up!" eventually the group ran out of money and Lowery returned to his former job at WFAA. Despite a few concerns and some self doubt he moved to New York in 1934. He joined the Vincent Lopez orchestra and, during the ensuing four years with Lopez, met and performed with many stars, including Bing Crosby, Mary Pickford, and Jack Dempsey. Toward the end of 1938 Lowery began working for Horace Heidt and his Musical Knights. After this stint he began touring solo while living in Chicago. He soon found that the heavy touring schedule did not fit well with having a wife and raising their young son. While performing at La Rue's Supper Club in Indianapolis in the early 1950s he was offered a job as a permanent host for the club. He felt it was the answer to his family concerns and



WISH radio
1440 N. Meridian

signed a contract. Not long after he settled in Indianapolis he was contacted by Bob Ohleyer, General Manager of WISH radio the Indianapolis CBS affiliate. The two of them agreed to Fred having his own radio show "Live" from WISH radio, 1310 AM. and located at 1440 N. Meridian Street. His

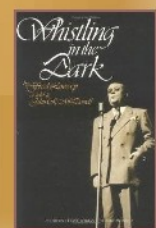
program was titled "The Fred Lowery Show" and aired at 11:00 pm five

nights a week. The program featured Fred talking, interviewing a variety of guests and well known performers that were passing through the city. During his career he

appeared with many big names in the entertainment field, including Steve Allen, Edgar Bergen, Jackie Gleason, Bob Hope, Stan Kenton, Ed Sullivan, Bandleader Paul Whiteman, Bing Crosby and many other famous entertainers. His biggest-selling single record was "Indian Love Call" (1939) which sold over two million records. His autobiography, "Whistling in the Dark" was published in 1983. Lowery died at home in Jacksonville, Florida on December 11, 1984.



La Rue's Supper Club





Hall of Fame Member Elmer Davis

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Elmer Davis was born on January 13, 1890 in Aurora, Indiana. He began his career in news early in life when he started working for the Aurora Bulletin as a printer's devil after his freshman year in high school. His interest in writing led him to become a well known and popular national radio newsmen. He would return home each night from that first job with empty lunch pail and his overalls, shirt, face and hands covered with ink and grease. But that wasn't the job Davis had in mind for a career. He wanted to write the news. One of his early professional writing jobs was for the Indianapolis Star and he was paid \$25.00. While attending Franklin College he continued to work for the Star. He became the Franklin College correspondent during his college years.

In 1910 Davis received a Rhodes scholarship to Oxford. His time at Oxford, however, was cut short when his father was taken ill and eventually died. After returning to America, Davis took an editorial position with Adventure magazine. But a year later he landed a job as reporter for the New York Times. For the next ten years, Davis reported on stories ranging from pugilist Jack Dempsey to evangelist Billy Sunday. It was his reportage on Sunday that earned him early fame and fortune. Sunday was the outspoken preacher on Creationism and evolution, the hot issues of the day. Since reporters were paid by the space their stories occupied, Davis' coverage of Sunday was a gold mine.

Davis continued to climb the ladder of success at the Times but left the publication in 1923 to become a freelance writer. In August, 1939, Davis received a call from CBS's news chief, Paul White, asking Davis to fill in as a news analyst for well known newsmen H. V. Kaltenborn, who was off in Europe reporting on the increasingly hostile events. Davis later said "I had done some broadcasting at odd times over the past dozen years, had sometimes even pinch-hit for Kaltenborn during his absences; but to fill in for him in such a crisis as this was a little like trying to play center field in place of Joe DiMaggio." Davis became an instant success. Edward R. Murrow felt that some of Davis' success was that his Hoosier accent reminded folks of home. He also wrote to Davis saying, "I have hopes that broadcasting is to become an adult means of communication at last. I've spent a lot of time listening to broadcasters from many countries and yours stands out as the best example of fair-minded tough minded, interesting talking I've heard. An example of Davis's tough minded talk was his broadcast



Elmer Davis, Director of
Office of War Information,

recommending the government disseminate news under one organization. This would prompt FDR to create the OWI, or Office of War Information, which Davis would be asked to head. Though reluctant at first, Davis finally accepted. Davis always thought of himself as a writer first, but eventually managed to create a powerful organization with one goal in mind: This is a people's war, and the people are entitled to know as much as possible about it."

When the war ended, so did the OWI. Davis returned to broadcasting, this time with ABC Radio. During the next decade he would continue to fight for the rights of the individual, including his public disgust with Sen. Joe McCarthy. But near the end of the 1950's, Davis suffered a stroke and later died, ending a worthy Hall of Fame career..

Death Notices:

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Robert "Bob" F. Gamble 89. died on March 7, 2015. Bob, as he was known, was reared in the small Iowa town of Jefferson. He attended schools there and met his future and beloved wife, Bette in high school. They married in 1947 after Bob finished his BA degree at Cornell College, Mt. Vernon, Iowa. After marriage the Gambles started professional life in Albert Lea, MN, where Bob did news and general announcing at station KATE. Then followed news work in Lincoln, NB and Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.



Bob Gamble

Bob joined the Time-Life stations (WFBM, WFBM-FM and WFBM-TV) in 1959 as news director. He continued those duties with WFBM's new owner, McGraw-Hill, when the station became WRTV. Bob went on to earn many professional awards in his career. At Oklahoma City station WKY-TV he was cited by the Radio Television News Directors Association as Outstanding News Operation in 1959. In Indianapolis WRTV won many RTNDA (Radio-TV News Directors Association) awards for its station editorials, which Bob aired. Bob later became president of RTNDA. He retired from WRTV and broadcasting in 1986. After broadcast retirement he and Bette designed, had built and operated a small dog-boarding kennel near Fortville, IN. The Gambles

left the country life for a home in Fishers in 1991 and in 2007 Westminster Village North. after heading news operations in Minnesota, Nebraska and Oklahoma, Gamble came to Indianapolis in 1959 to serve as News Director for Channel 6, WFBM/WRTV. His leadership won many national awards for the station.

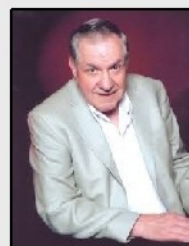


Bob received the

Alfred I. Dupont award for excellence in broadcast journalism.

He has been credited with creating innovative techniques and a strong staff to raise the level of local TV news in the Indianapolis market. He later became president of the National Radio TV News Directors Association. Gamble retired in 1986.

William "Bill" Greene – 86, passed away March 7, 2015. at his home in



Bill Greene

Washington, Indiana on Saturday March 7, 2015. He was born in Daviess County on August 27th 1929 to

David Hershel and Consuella Greene. He graduated from Washington High School in 1947 and married his classmate Ruth Ann Mattingly in 1950. Following Bill's service in the Navy as an electrical and communications instructor, he and Ruth Ann returned to Washington. In 1956 they opened Greene Electronics a retail store on Main Street adding a Paging Service in 1979. He purchased WAMW Washington's local AM radio station from Vincennes University in 1987.

He believed Washington needed their own locally owned adult programmed radio station. . Bill built a studio above his TV shop in Downtown Washington and moved the station to his new studio while leasing space on the WRTB tower for his AM signal. In 1989 obtained a new FM station for the Washington area. Bill was a member of the First Baptist Church and a 50 year member of the Masonic Lodge. His wife . Ruth Ann preceded him in death in 1994.

Jean Ann Neal was born in Terre Haute, Indiana on November 7, 1945. She died March 30, 2015



after a hard-fought battle with cancer. Jean Ann enjoyed a long career with Turner Broadcasting where she retired as the Manager

of Information Systems. Turner owns and operates some of the leading cable television networks and related properties in the world, including CNN, HLN, TNT, TBS, Cartoon Network, Turner Classic Movies, and Turner Sports. In addition to its cable networks, Turner manages digital sports, including bleacherreporter.com, NBA.com, NCAA.com, PGA.com. Turner reaches consumers in more than 200 countries around the world. She enjoyed spending time with her children, grandchildren and the rest of her family. She was preceded in death by her husband, Rickey Harold Neal.

Dr. Gene Hood 77, of Indianapolis, passed away



April 24, 2015 in He earned his Doctorate of Divinity from Indiana Christian University. For over 42 years, Dr. Hood was pastor of Independent Nazarene Church in Beech Grove. He

did extensive missionary work and built many churches and schools in Honduras, Guatemala, Mexico, Belize, Costa Rica, Jamaica, Haiti, Nigeria, South Africa, Ukraine, Korea and in the Western United States among Native Americans. He owned and operated radio stations, radio towers and radio programs in several states and in the countries of Belize, Honduras, and Papua New Guinea. For over 20 years, he hosted a Gospel Music Southern Style Radio Program from downtown Indianapolis. He was the owner of Pilgrim Communications which included local stations WXLW-AM, Indpls, WFDM Franklin, IN.

Charles, Charlie"DavidSears, 81, of



New Whiteland, Indiana passed away on Wednesday, February 25, 2015. Charles was a broadcast engineer for WTTV 4 for more than 50 years, and worked for many other

TV and radio stations, including WFCI at Franklin College. He was a member of The Society of Broadcast Engineers, ARRL, and several other professional and recreational radio and computer clubs and societies. Broadcast Pioneer Jed Duvall commented on the life of Charlie Sears. "He was a great man, in my humble opinion...an engineer's engineer. I do not know if there was ever a piece of broadcast equipment that Charlie could not fix. He could take parts that others refused to examine and find a way to fix them so that they would operate in compliance. I am certain that there are others from his generation to whom we non-engineering broadcasters owe much for the success of our past endeavors." Charlie entered the U.S. Army after high school and learned radio and electronics, which formed the basis of his lifelong career. He served in Germany during the Korean Conflict where he met and married Elfriede his loving wife of 57 years. He is also survived by his six children, Jane Sears, Ken (Cindi) Sears, William (Shelly) Sears, Richard (Carrie) Sears, Chris (Jennifer) Sears, and Rob (Jenny) Sears.

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