



Indiana Broadcast Pioneers Newsletter

G.M.A.

Steve Bell

BSU

MUNCIE, Ind. — Steve Bell, 83, a former ABC News anchor who died January 25, 2019 is also being remembered for his contributions to Ball State University as a faculty member.

Bell spent more than 30 years on network and local news, reporting on such historic events as the Vietnam War, the Watergate scandal, the Newark riots and the assassinations of John Kennedy, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., and Sen. Robert Kennedy. He was on the scene when RFK was shot. In 1970, Bell was captured by the Viet Cong and held at gunpoint as a war correspondent.



Steve Bell



Steve Bell GMA

In 1975, he became the first anchor of "Good Morning America." After returning to local TV news in the late 1980s, Bell decided it was time to do what he had planned to do when he first went to college. He ended up teaching at Ball State from 1992 to 2007. "Steve put Ball State's telecommunications program on the map," Phil Bremen, a former NBC news correspondent and associate professor at Ball State, told The Star Press on Saturday night. "He brought his towering reputation and wealth of experience." More than that to all who knew him, "Steve was a profoundly decent and generous man," Bremen said, "admired by his colleagues and beloved by his students. He set a high bar for us all."

"There was a great deal of prestige brought to this program

when Steve came here," Dom Caristi, Ball State telecommunications professor, told The Star Press for an article about Bell's retirement from teaching.

Bell's wealth of experience included walking up the stairs and standing on the balcony of the Lorraine Motel in Memphis after MLK was murdered. Blood remained on the concrete. Bell then walked to a nearby boarding house and looked down at the motel from the vantage point of the bathroom window where James Earl Ray fired the fatal shot.

"To stand there, and to know I'd done the same thing when John F. Kennedy was killed, it was a powerful moment," Bell later recalled. "I just stood and thought about the historical context."

Bell himself made news four years ago, as he often did as a Ball State professor looking back at his career.

"The offer to be the first Ball Endowed Chair in Telecommunications, and to teach broadcast news, was perfect. ... From the very moment I arrived, I was so impressed with Ball State," he told the university's director of media strategy, Lisa Renze-Rhodes, for a 2015 magazine report on the 40th anniversary of "Good Morning America."

"Ed Ball himself invited me to bring (Bell's wife) Joyce for a visit. It was the perfect position, and Ed's kindness and interest in us made all the difference. From the very moment I arrived, I was so impressed with Ball State."

Ball State President Geoffrey S. Meams said the presence of the legendary journalist helped raise the stature of the university's telecommunications programs.

"Steve Bell brought real-world knowledge about journalism to the classroom and our production facilities, sharing his keen storytelling skills with our students," Meams said in a statement. "We are very proud that he was able to serve Ball State as an outstanding and committed member of our campus community."

(Muncie Star Press)



Prof. Steve Bell, Ball State

CBS Premiered a new program in the Fall of 1957 titled "Gunsmoke", starring James Arness as Sheriff Matt Dillon and Dennis Weaver as "Chester Goode". The program aired Saturday night in Indianapolis on WISH TV. and Harry Evard, the top salesman for WISH, sold the sponsorship to Richard Bennett, the owner of Richard Bennett Furniture, a small Indianapolis Furniture Store on East Washington Street. Much to everyone's



surprise, and good fortune for Mr. Bennett, "Gunsmoke" became the number one program in the nation and aired for 20 years. From the very beginning Mr. Bennett decided he would do his own "Live" commercials during the program each week and had his staff haul a load of furniture to the station to display on air. His signature verbal closing at the end of the last commercial break always ended with "him saying "Mother, put the Coffee Pot On." indicating to his wife he was heading home. It became a well known phrase for the huge local "Gunsmoke" audience.



Marshall Dillon
Chester Goode

The normal procedure at the end of each "Gunsmoke" evening was for the Studio Floor Director, to "pack up" the Furniture and move it to the "Prop" area for pick up the next day. Apparently, when the furniture was returned the next day Mr. Bennett personally inspected it for any damage. On one occasion there was some slight damage discovered and the poor Floor Director was severely chastised. . . the word spread.

At that time I was working in the Film/Photo Department but due to illness the Floor Director for Sunday morning called in sick and. I was asked to work his shift. It was the Sunday morning shift which started with a "LIVE" "TV Church" program. Each week a different Church would bring their congregation to WISH's Studio B, which had a decent sized stage and a room full of actual "Theater" seats for the Congregation.

Occasionally the Church Minister would be the "on air" Host but most often, Rev. Russ Blowers would handle the service with Virginia Byrd playing the organ. When I arrived on Sunday morning I was stunned to find Richard Bennett's Furniture still on the stage.

The previous crew had not moved it to the "Prop" room. Making it worse, it was all bedroom furniture! Still assembled! Before I could set up the Church program I had to very carefully disassemble and pack up a bedroom set. This meant stuffing a mattress and box springs into paper bags by myself and haul it down half a floor on an elevator, unload it, load the Church set and haul it back up to the studio and set it up. The elevator was designed to transport piano's and it moved slower than a herd of snails traveling through peanut butter, all the while having visions of Mr. Bennett and his magnifying glass. I then loaded the Church set, pulpit, organ, background flats, and the mock up Church used for the opening shot.



TV Church

Virginia Byrd - Rev. Russ Blowers

I snailed my way up half a floor and began the set up. The flats were about 4 feet wide and 12 feet tall and had to be clamped together to make two entire walls, one behind the Minister and one behind Virginia. With the clock ticking to "Air" time I fastened the last clamp ran to nearest camera and put on my headset. The opening for the show began with Virginia playing the organ and a shot of the fake Church with the camera dolly in to the doors. I was now behind the fake church ready to open the doors to expose Russ Blowers as if he were in the church. I looked over at Virginia and the wall flat behind her was falling forward. I jumped up and ran to the wall, arms outstretched, and caught the wall just as my headset ran out of cord, pulling my head back. Virginia kept playing. After what seemed like a couple of EON's an Engineer came out of the Control room and re-fastened the flats. With Dr. Edyvean, who was directing the program, screaming in my ear I made it back to the fake Church and opened the door. The Church service went on. I didn't know what anyone else was going to say about what happened but I knew Mr. Bennett would be happy. RRS

Broadcasting Indiana Basketball

Radio stations around Indiana learned early on that adding high school and college basketball coverage to their broadcasts would guarantee a listening audience. High school and college basketball have been a part of Indiana life for over a hundred years. In the 1910s, the popular game of basketball spread through Hoosier high schools and colleges; local fans began to flock to games at their school's gymnasium. In those first years, however, fans could either attend the game in person, learn about it from friends or relatives or read about it in the next issue of their daily (or weekly) local newspaper.

A few towns offered basketball by a telephone wire in a local theater, where people would gather. A reporter sat at



Art Craft Theater

the game as it was being played, and was on the telephone with an announcer in the

theater, who repeated both descriptions and scores to the assembled crowd.

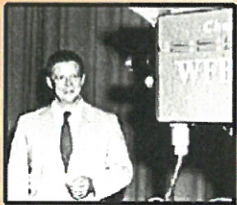
In December 1920, the Franklin, Indiana Evening Star described the game, attempting to make it sound as thrilling as watching the real game between teams from Franklin and Martinsville. The audience watched a so-called "electronic basketball court," which was no more than a scoreboard with colored lights that flashed with each score.



Theater Announcer

Then in 1921, WGAZ radio went on the air in South Bend, Indiana, quickly followed by WOWO in Fort Wayne and WFBM in Indianapolis; smaller town stations were added throughout the decade.

The early stations in big cities, with powerful transmitters and little competition, could be heard across large



Harry Martin

portions of the state. Station owners soon learned how popular local basketball games were with the immediate increase of listeners AND advertisers. Radio stations covered regular Friday night high school games, as well as conference playoffs and regional college games.

Harry Martin, who began covering sports for WLBC in Muncie in the 1940s before moving to WFBM in Indianapolis, recalled that basketball was so popular that "there was a basketball play-by-play announcer at every station" across the state. Bob Hammel, retired sports editor of

the Bloomington Herald-Times said that even in the early 1950s, before television had spread through Indiana, he and many other Hoosiers were still getting basketball news from their radios. Radio stations around Indiana learned that adding high school and college basketball coverage to their broadcasts would guarantee an listening audience and in turn, and importantly, new advertisers.

, listeners could use their imaginations to situate double plays and home run balls in the requisite infield dirt and the familiar outfield bleachers. Diving into their own memories of afternoons at the ballpark, they could paint a mental picture: the modernity of the concrete and steel of Forbes Field would match the modernity of radio as a new medium. In this moment, in this space, baseball entered a new era that was marked by new technologies. The broadcast collapsed time and space, inviting those listening at a distance into the community of the ballpark. Bob Hammel, former sports editor of the Bloomington Herald-Times, wrote that even in the early 1950s, before television had spread through Indiana, he and many other Hoosiers were still getting basketball news from their radios.

Sources: Play On: Celebrating 100 Years of High School Sports in Indiana; Bob Hammel, review of Mac's Boys, Indiana

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YOU'LL SHOOT YOUR EYE OUT!

Famous line from the movie "A Christmas Story" written by Indiana native Jean Sheppard.

Born on the south side of Chicago, Illinois, Jean Shepherd was raised in Hammond, Indiana, where he graduated from Hammond High School in 1939. He began his working life as a mail boy in a steel mill, later served in the United States Army Signal Corps and studied at Indiana University, though he did not graduate.



Shepherd at KYW

He began his broadcast radio career in early 1945 on WJOB in Hammond, Indiana, later working at WTOD in Toledo, Ohio, in 1946. He then began working in Cincinnati, Ohio, in January 1947 at WSAI, later also working at Cincinnati stations WCKY and



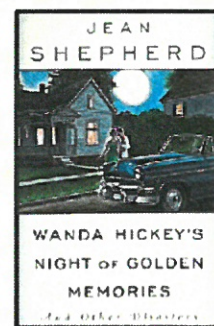
WOR New York

WKRC the following year, before returning to WSAI. Then on to Philadelphia at 50,000-watt KYW, . . . back to Cincinnati at WLW and finally in New York City at WOR where he stayed for 21 years.

In 1956 he was about to be released by WOR for not wanting to run commercials, so he acquiesced by doing a commercial for Sweetheart Soap (not a sponsor) and was immediately fired. His listeners besieged WOR with complaints, and when Sweetheart offered to sponsor him he was reinstated. Eventually, he attracted more sponsors than he wanted. He then complained to management that the commercials interrupted the flow of his monologue's. Despite the on and off again hassles with station management he remained at the station for 21 years.

His subsequent radio work consisted only of short segments on several other stations, including WCBS and occasional commentaries on NPR's All Things Considered. His final radio gig was the Sunday night radio show "Shepherd's Pie" on New York station WBAI in the mid-1990s, which consisted of his reading stories he had written, and at his insistence were uncut. While at WOR-AM in New York, he also broadcast live night club acts from the Limelight in Greenwich Village.

He also wrote for Playboy and other magazines. Those articles were published in a series of books including "The America of George Ade", "In God We Trust, All Others Pay Cash", "Wanda Hickey's Night of Golden Memories, and Other Disasters", "A Fistful of Fig Newtons" and "The Ferrari in the Bedroom". During the 1970s, he did two series of humorous programs as well as several American Playhouse (1981) episodes for PBS. In 1983, he wrote his first feature film, A Christmas Story (1983), putting together many tales of his semi-autobiographical character "Ralphie". A sequel, "My Summer Story" (aka It Runs in the Family (1994)) was made in 1994.



On a few occasions he would talk about significant events as he did following the death of President Kennedy.

He was also a participant in the March on Washington, which he talked about on the air the next day. Shepherd maintained his interest in amateur radio throughout his life. After leaving Hammond, Indiana he obtained the call signs W4QWN (Kentucky), W8QWN (Ohio) and W3STE (Pennsylvania). Upon his arrival at WOR in New York in 1955, he obtained the call K2ORS, with which he would often be heard speaking to other ham radio operators for many years. At one point Shepherd expressed his love of writing by saying "

"There are fewer things more thrilling in life than lumpy letters. that rattle."

Jean Parker Shepherd, Jr. Indiana storyteller, radio/ TV personality, writer and actor died October 16, 1999

Television News On Paper

In the early years of Television two Wire services provided the latest news for TV Stations, as they had been for Newspapers and radio stations. for most of the 20th century. Associated Press preceded UPI and United Press International a co-provider of those services to thousands of newspapers, magazines and radio stations. Walter Cronkite, who started with United Press in Kansas City, gained fame for his coverage of World War II in Europe and turned down Edward R. Murrow's first offer of a CBS job to stay with UP, but later went on to anchor the CBS Evening News,



Walter Cronkite

The constant feed of the latest News and "Feature" stories provided a steady click clack of noise as the machines typed News and feature stories and sounding an alarm bell whenever of breaking news or important story was

being fed.

In 1948, it entered into a partnership with 20th Century Fox subsidiary Fox Movietone News to shoot news film for television stations. That service, United Press Movietone, or UPMT, was a pioneer in news film syndication and numbered among its clients major US and foreign networks and local stations, including for many years the early TV operation of ABC News.

In subsequent decades, it underwent several changes in partnerships and names, becoming best known as United Press International Television News Senior UPITN executives later helped Ted Turner create CNN.

On the local level radio and TV stations were now in touch with the world. Not only were they being fed the latest News photos with corresponding numbers which allowed stations to match

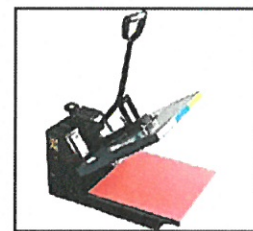


Facsimile Machine

picture with text. Local News staff copied or re-wrote the stories and provided the production staff the matching photo. The photos were then "Hot Pressed" to a 8 1/2 x 11 sheet of card board and later placed in the proper order on an easel to match it's placement in the News script. When one picture immediately followed another the Floor Director would pre-align the cards then simply yank the first photo out of the way and the pre-aligned second

photo would appear properly framed for the camera. The photo on the stand in this picture (R) shows the Indianapolis "Tony Kiritsis Shotgun Hostage "story which was sent around the world .

At its peak, UPI had more than 6,000 media subscribers.



Hot Press



Flip Card Stand
Bob Warren WISH TV



AP - UPI News Machines

Death Notices

Adriana Werneck de Aguiar, 67,. Born in Rio de Janeiro to Ricardo Werneck de Aguiar and Dulce de Oliveira (DOWA). She was raised in Brazil and France.

After graduating from IU, Adriana was a Producer, Director, and Host with WCTY Channel the Government Access Channel in Marion County on Comcast Channel 16 for 17 years and Spectrum Channel 340, and to viewers in Indiana on AT&T Channel 99,) followed by a career as a language teacher. . Adriana was a gifted singer, dancer, guitarist, crafter, and writer.



Adriana Aguiar

Ronald "Ron" G. Douglas, 74, of Indianapolis died



Ron" G. Douglas

January 7, 2019 As a young man, Ron had built a small AM radio transmitter and every Sunday for months would broadcast from about noon to about 6 P.M. with a signal that could go about 2500 feet around his neighborhood.

He would hang out with Jim Shelton of WIBC radio while he was broadcasting from Herb Newhouse Chevrolet in downtown Indy. and with Dick Sommers of WISH radio when he broadcast from Foxworthy Ford on East Washington Street.

"Foxworthy Ford just can't be beat, 819 east Washington Street."

He and his friend Larry Harrison built their own DJ equipment and would schedule and play Friday night dances at high schools

He later became general manager and part owner of WIFN radio station in Franklin, Indiana for 20 years before working as the sales manager at the Spotlight Paper for 20 plus years.

He was a member of Greenwood Rotary Club, where he earned the Ernie Mishler Distinguished Service Award and the Paul Harris Fellow Medal.

Blair Trask, 60, is widely credited with having helped to build WMJL from a low-powered, rural Kentucky AM station into a modern broadcasting company. He did everything at the station from on-air broadcasting to engineering.



Blair Trask

At the time of his death Trask was living in Floyds Knob, Ind., where he was broadcast Co-owner-operator of WXKU 92.7 and WZZB 1390/99.3 in Seymour and WUME 95.3 and WSEZ 1560 and WKLO 96.9 in Paoli.

Trask was born in Louisville and graduated from Western Kentucky University. Shortly thereafter, he landed a job at the radio station in Marion. George Patmor, who was co-owner of WMJL at the time, thought "Trask hung the moon."

Dossett said Trask helped design and build the studio at WMJL's headquarter's on Old Morganfield Road after the station moved from its previous location in downtown on East Bellville Street.

"He was mainly an electronics guy, but Blair could do a little bit of everything," Dossett said.

"At a small station you had to and he had that ability. :Later, when they added the FM frequency. Blair was credited with making (WMJL) into a real radio station.

In addition to his Engineering skills he also contributed programming ideas during that 1980s. period. Blair knew radio," Dossett added.

NOTE:

Media General's CW affiliate WISH-TV (Channel 8, Indianapolis) Assistant Chief Engineer Tom Weber retires, after 40 years in broadcast engineering.

Death Notices continued

Faith Leavitt 90, passed away January 1, 2019.



A broadcasting Pioneer for women, she produced and hosted the Faith Leavitt program at CBS Affiliate WISH TV in Indianapolis from 1963 to 1971. Faith was a Pioneer, producing a format addressing women's

issues with guests discussing topics of social injustice and unwed mothers. Other guests included celebrities, authors and politicians including Paul Newman, Woody Allen, Nelson Rockefeller and Spiro Agnew. As "Women's Director" she also appeared daily on the noon News program, pioneering subjects considered controversial at that time. Following her TV career she ran for the Indiana Legislature and later became a Realtor. In 2011 she participated in a Panel discussion

Along with her broadcast career, Leavitt raised five children, ran for political office twice and reinvented herself, post-divorce, as a successful real estate agent.

She got to travel to New York and Chicago to interview TV stars. She played pool on air with Minnesota Fats and danced with suave, mustached actor Caesar Romero. Even around major celebrities, she tried to be relaxed and authentic, inviting them to have informal conversations.

had been offered a job with CBS news in New York but didn't want to move. Faith Leavitt left WISH in 1971,

Russell Rathbone Leonard, 91, Indianapolis, Indiana, passed away in Indianapolis Jan. 23, 2019. A native of Culver IN, Mr. Leonard also has been publisher editor of Big Time Wrestling, a magazine published in the 1960's. He served as moderator of Citizens Forum Says on WTTV and as Sports Information Director at Indiana Central University. He was publicist for ESPN's Friday Night Fights and a correspondent for the Chicago Herald-American. Leonard had radio programs on WBAT (Marion), WASK (Lafayette) and WILO (Frankfort). He was a member of Roberts Park United Methodist Church, the American Legion and VFW, the Journalist's Hardscrabble Club, and lifetime member of The Indianapolis Star's Fourth Estate. He appeared in two movies, Blue Chips and Crazy Cop.



Bob Shannon Veteran Country WSCH (99.3fm, Aurora) broadcaster passed away on New Year's Day after battling cancer. Mr.

Shannon was 70 years old and a broadcaster for over 40 years. In late 1970, Mr. Shannon joined WSCH about the time it signed on the air for the first time. After returning from Vietnam, Bob entered broadcasting school. He was hired in 1974 at John Schuler's fledgling radio station, WSCH, in Aurora, Indiana. he was there for 20 years. Bob left WSCH to work for some bigger stations in Cincinnati for a couple years, but would later return to WSCH in the late 1970s. Over his career, he had been assigned to almost every one of the station's air shifts, sold advertising, and led the station's news department.

Blair Trask, 60, is widely credited with having helped to build WMJL from a low-powered, rural Kentucky AM station into a modern broadcasting company. He did everything at the station from on-air broadcasting to engineering, then he passed away, Trask was living in Floyds Knob, Ind., where he was broadcast co-owner-operator of WXXU 92.7 and WZZB 1390/99.3 in Seymour and WUME 95.3 and WSEZ 1560 and WKLO 96.9 in Paoli. Trask was born in Louisville and graduated from Western Kentucky University. Shortly thereafter, he landed a job at the radio station in Marion. Dossett said George Patmor, co-owner of WMJL at the time, thought "Trask hung the moon." Dossett said Trask helped design and build the studio at WMJL's headquarter

Pioneer Newsletter Contact Information

Bob Smith
13448 Lantern Road
Fishers, Indiana 46038