



Indiana Broadcast Pioneers Newsletter



1958 500



The 1958 Indianapolis 500 race was expected to be a spectacular race, ... and it delivered. With drivers like A.J. Foyt, Tony Bettenhausen, Eddie Sachs, Roger Ward and Pat O'Connor the competition was fierce and impressive. On race day, Sid Collins of WIBC radio and *the Voice of the 500* was in the Tower along with WIRE's Charlie Brockman, acting as Statistician. Turn one announcer was Bill Frosch of WISH Radio, turn 2, Bob Rhodes, Back Stretch, Bernie Herman, WIRE, Turn 3, Lou Palmer, WIBC, Turn 4, Jim Shelton, WIBC, Pits, Jack Shapiro, WXLW, Luke Walton WISH.



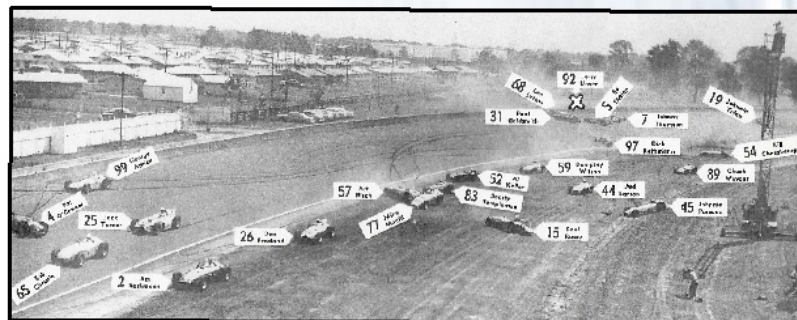
Sid Collins "Voice of the 500"

Bob Hoover, WIBC, was assigned to the Garage area.

The broadcast reached 302 affiliates across and all 48 states (at that time) as well as Armed Forces Radio Network and "The Voice of America".

As the cars lined up for the start of the race emotions of fans and drivers were high. But none could have imagined what was about to happen.

The green flag dropped and Pole winner Dick Rathman, middle man Ed Elisian and outside driver Jimmy Reese raced into the first turn. Rathman took the lead with Elisian close behind through turns one and two. As the pack of 33 cars



Massive third turn wreck on lap one



Jerry Unser has left the Track"

headed toward turn three Elisian, in a daring move, attempted to pass Rathman. He lost it and started a chain reaction crash never seen before or since. Lou Palmer who was calling his first race reported from the normally quiet third turn was quickly thrust into describing what turned into a massive 15-car pileup.

Nearly half the starting field was involved in one accident. Palmer began with a prize winning understatement by saying, " We've got an accident here." Fourteen cars had spun into the infield grass, six cars were sideways in turn 3, fan favorite Pat O'Conner spun between turns 3 and 4 and was killed when he was broad sided by another car. Jerry Unser spun to the outside of turn 3 hit the wall and flipped over it and out of sight, dislocating his shoulder. He survived. So did first time 500 broadcaster Lou Palmer. ...

PICTURE
STARTPICTURE
START

WISH TV News Photographers Circa 1960's
L-R Chief Photographer Jerry Brossart, Tim Harlan
Dave Brady, Don Mc Lauughlin

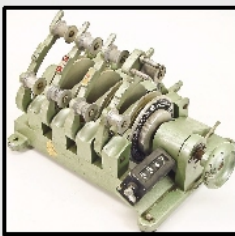
Pre- videotape all local news stories, both silent and with audio, were recorded on film. Pre-videotape all local news stories, both silent and with audio, were recorded on 16mm film. The film was then processed, viewed by the News Anchor then edited for air. At that time the photographers also did the editing.

Early on, all the shots were edited back to back, just straight cuts. The picture and the soundtrack are not alongside their corresponding images on the film. This displacement is 26 frames in 16mm optical film, which was the norm at that time.

Basically, simple cuts in editing with "cut aways" to hide the jump cut disparity of sound vs picture.

Then, Jerry Brossart became Chief photographer and moved it to the next level.

With the purchase of a "4 gang" synchronizer the film could now be edited on separate reels while all remained in perfect sync allowing you to cut from one to the other with no visible glitches. However, it then required 3-4



4 Gang 16mm
Film Synchronizer

projectors to play them back in perfect sync.

We could do that!

As the editing was taking place the time of each transition point was logged on the News script

along with which reel/projector to cut or dissolve to. As long as the Director and the T.D. followed the script . Ta Da! It worked!.



16mm Film/Slide Chain

Presenting a much more professional "On Air" image .



Walter Cronkite's top rated national Newscast immediately followed the local Newscast at 7pm . . and if you weren't ready Walter wasn't going to wait on you . . .

Article by Indiana Author Bill Murphy (Edited)

If the Bible is the Greatest Story Ever Told, then for Indiana basketball fans (for which Indiana basketball is regarded by many as at least a secondary religion), this may be the greatest story ever heard.

It was 1951, the season that followed the Garrett era, a season after McCracken had produced his seventh second place Big Ten finish in ten years as head coach of Indiana University, a season that would usher in the Leonard, Schlundt, Farley, Scott, and Kraak era. Schlundt was a 6' 9", highly touted freshman who would be eligible to join the four sophomores because of a waiver that allowed freshmen to compete at a varsity level as a result of the Korean war. It would be a season that would mark the fiftieth year of Indiana basketball going all the way back to February 8, 1901, when Indiana played its first game against Butler, a 20 to 17 loss.

It would be the season in which IU, McCracken, WTTV, Paul Lennon, Bob Petranoff, Bob Cook, Gary Ruben, Herman Wells, and Chesty Foods would make college basketball history. It would be the first televised broadcast of a regular season collegiate game, and this is the story of how it all came about.

This was the brainchild of Paul Lennon. Bob Cook, and Bob Petranoff. The first order of business was to ask Carl Onken, the station's chief engineer, to see if it was possible to microwave-relay a signal from the IU Fieldhouse on seventh street to the transmitter.

When the answer was yes, then the next course of action was to seek permission from President Herman Wells, and Athletic Director Pooch Harrell. The response took both Lennon and Petranoff by surprise. Both Wells and Harrell were concerned about fans not showing up to the games if it was televised. Harrell's exact response was "Why would anyone pay a dollar for a ticket to our game if they can see it for free on TV. Lennon didn't blink. His response was, "How about we buy the empty seats at a dollar apiece." He pulled a number out of the air, of say 750 people staying home and not coming to the games, and if that's not enough we can adjust it for the next game. With that very meeting, television rights fees would begin. Both Harrell and Wells while expressing doubts that they could get anyone to pay that kind of money, agreed to allow WTTV to broadcast the games.



WTTV Bloomington Studios Circa 1950's

But Lennon had a vision and he really wanted this to happen. Motivation can be a powerful incentive, so Lennon drove to Indianapolis to meet with Gary Ruben, who had a new client in Terre Haute, Chesty Foods. With Eckrich meats already sponsoring the Television of high school tournament, then maybe Chesty Foods and Chesty Potato Chips would be a perfect match after all people would sit down with a bowl of chips and watch the game. Ruben asked how much it would cost Chesty per game. Lennon would reply totally off the cuff, \$2,500 dollars a game. Ruben's next question was, how many commercials would they get? Lennon would again answer off the cuff saying about 12, depending on timeouts.

Ruben would call Lennon two days later to say that Chesty would take all 11 games.



Paul Lennon



Bob Petranoff



Death Notices

James (Jim) Gerard, age 93, passed away peacefully in his sleep on May 1, 2020, Jim graduated from Newton Falls OhioHigh School where he excelled in drama, music, school government, and the Prince of Peace speech contest winner.. Following service in the U.S. Navy during World War II, he attended Kent State University where he met Nancy, the love of his life, and earned a B.A. in Broadcasting and Theatre. During the early days of TV, Jim set his sights on being a TV broadcaster. Jim started his career working in local radio stations until he landed a job at WLWD TV in Dayton, Ohio where he worked as a weatherman, hosted a live Teen dance show, announced sports and auto racing, and hosted a live late night in-studio wrestling show. Moving to KDKA TV in Pittsburgh, Jim was a staff studio announcer in addition to hosting late night weather and an afternoon movie show. In Cleveland Ohio, Jim worked at KYW. In 1962 Jim joined Time Life's Radio and Television station, WFBM. He quickly became known for his interviews that comprised Sounds of the City, a man-on-the-street-vignettes of people and events from all over Indianapolis. It aired on WFBM Radio while he co-hosted an afternoon movie show with actress Frances Farmer. He later hosted a daily, live talk show, The Jim Gerard Show, with a studio audience and an 8-piece band led by George Nicoloff. In 1976, Jim was hired by the Hook Drug Company to appear exclusively in their TV and radio commercials. Within a few months, The Jim Gerard Show was back in production on



Jim Gerard

WTTV-Channel 4 sponsored by Hook's Drugs from 1976-1987. At the time, it was the longest running television show in Indiana.



Jim Gerard Show

David Keister grew up in Michigan and after earning his First Class FCC engineering license went to work at a Hillsdale, Michigan radio station.



David Keister

At age 24 David Keister applied to the FCC for what was to be his first station, a 250 watt daytime station in Martinsville, Indiana. His wife and children were off with him to Martinsville, Indiana. It was April 18, 1967 that

WCBK-1540 AM signed on the air.



With a few thousand dollars inherited from

his father, he personally constructed this station, which made it possible over the next forty years for him to own thirty plus stations, including six other stations built from the ground up in Indiana. Dave has put his stamp on over 10 different Indiana communities, while solely owning 26 different AM and FM signals in the state. His company has totally believed in being "local" serving the unique and varied interests of each community. Over more than forty-five years Mid-America Radio has been blessed with many quality broadcasters who shared and implemented Dave's philosophy of solid community service radio. In 2012 the Indiana Broadcast Pioneers inducted David Keister into the Pioneer Hall of Fame for his 50+ years of service and received the highest and most prestigious award given by the Indiana Broadcasters Association, *The Lifetime Achievement Award.

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