



## Indiana Black History Radio

There were several Black people broadcasting in the very early days of radio. The most notable was Jack L. Cooper, the first Black Radio personality, broadcasting over WSBC in Cicero in 1928 and later WHFC in Chicago for a period of over thirty years. His program, as was the norm for those days featured live performances but his was the first to feature black performers exclusively. It was not long after he went on the air that he started playing records on a home type phonograph and is recognized as the first to start it in Chicago, and although there is some debate, possibly in the nation.

Another early Black Radio personality was Eddie Honesty at WJOB in Hammond, Indiana who started in 1935 with a program featuring a mixture of black and white swing bands on his show "Rockin' Rhythm".



Eddie Honesty

Also in the '30's the Indianapolis radio station, WKBF aired a weekly program that was hosted by Reginald DuValle, Sr. aka "The Rhythm King" (1892-1953). DuValle received pithy requests that were mailed in from his fans asking him to play selections from the popular rags of the day like, " Hangin' on the Garden Gate," "Sayin' Good Night" by Gus Kahn and Ted Fiorito, "Tiger Rag", and "Beside an Open Fireplace", this format helped raise the significance of radio shows that created a

community around jazz and ragtime music beyond the nightclub environment. Prior to his radio gig, Reginald DuValle, Sr. and "The DuValle Blackbirds" had the honor of opening Madame C.J. Walker's Theatre to a packed audience on December 26, 1927.



Reginald DuValle, Sr. & The DuValle Blackbirds Opening night at Madame C.J. Walker's Theatre

Vivian Carter's family moved to Gary, Indiana when she was a child. She graduated from Roosevelt High in 1939. In 1948 she won a talent contest for new deejays conducted by Al Benson of WGES.



Vivian Carter

where she worked for 3 months. She then moved to WWCA and later to WGRY, both in her hometown of Gary, Indiana. After her marriage she and her husband started a record company which became big business after signing "The Spaniels" and Jimmy Reed to recording contracts. One of their songs "Goodnight Sweetheart Goodnight" became a million seller for the McGuire Sisters. In the mid 1960's, fulltime Black radio stations on AM were flourishing in a number of American cities, except Indianapolis. The only Black music and programming on radio was limited to part-time stations or weekend specialty programs. In 1967, a

biracial, bipartisan group of Indianapolis business and civic leaders began to work together to find a way to create a radio the station for Indianapolis. The group approached ELI Lilly and Company who owned WAIV(FM), a full time classical music station at 105.7 FM. The station was doing well artistically but wasn't doing that well financially. In late 1967, a deal was struck and the new organization, Indianapolis Radio, bought the station WTLC was chosen as the call letters and the journey began January 22, 1968. WTLC began broadcasting first from the Dearborn Hotel, located on the city's east side. In a stroke of irony the first fulltime Black radio station in Indianapolis began operation in the Dearborn Hotel, built by the Ku Klux Klan in the mid-1920s. Today, WTLC-FM enjoys outstanding ratings success traditionally placing in the Top 3-5 in the 25-54 Adult demographic. Black stations today in Indiana include, Evansville WEOA 1400 AM, Fort Wayne WJFX 107.9 FM, Gary WLTH 1370 AM, Hicksville WFJZ 106.7 FM, Indianapolis WHHH 96.3 FM, Indianapolis WTLC 106.7 FM, Indianapolis WYJZ 100.9 FM, Indianapolis WTLC 1310 AM South Bend WMSK 99.1 FM, South Bend WUBS 89.7 FM, South Bend WURU 106.3 FM

## From WISH to WIFE to War!

A new documentary, "Naptown Rock Radio Wars", premiered January 14, 2012 at the IMAX theater in Indianapolis. Former WNAP program director, Al Stone, and Dave Fulton, founder and president of Image Resources Inc. co-produced the program.



The death of long time local newsman Lou Palmer, led Fulton to move forward with the project and approach Stone, who he knew held the same ideas and passion for the project. The passing of Palmer brought the realization that many of the old time radio people would soon be gone and that time was an important issue. So, with Fulton having a video company and Stone have the connections to people and resources the work began.



In 1963 Corinthian Broadcasting sold WISH AM radio to Star Stations of Indiana Inc. which soon changed the call letters to WIFE, at 1310 on your radio dial.

Programmed with a rock heavy format WIFE took over the ratings battle from long time leader WIBC causing owner Richard Fairbanks to convert his classical music station WNAP into the Indianapolis's first FM Rock and Roll station and the battle began.

Fulton, who directed the production, interviewed many WIFE and WNAP on-air personalities for the program, mixing them with vintage audio and video clips of the people who were the participants in the intense competition.

Fulton said he believes it's a great opportunity for people who want to relive some of those memories and there is a good story at the heart of the film. It tells the history of the "Radio Wars" and the roles of the broadcast personalities of that time. He also said, "It's a slice of what radio used to be, and it's not like that anymore."

## Pioneer Activities

The Executive Committee of the Indiana Broadcast Pioneers met January 25, 2012 at the IBA offices in Indianapolis.

Discussion items included:

- \*The need for an Indianapolis connection to run the committee but input is needed from other parts of the state. Members who would like to participate should contact Pioneer president Dick Florea, [dickf1417@frontier.com](mailto:dickf1417@frontier.com).
- \* Board member and V.P. Joe Misiewicz agreed to head the Hall of Fame nomination committee for 2012, replacing Sid Weedman as Chair.
- \*The committee agreed to send a thank you letter to the Indiana Broadcasters Association recognizing their personal and financial support for the 2011 Hall of Fame event.
- \* The next Pioneer social event will take place in April of 2012. Lee Giles, WISH TV and Reid Duffy, WRTV will produce the program featuring News Photographers from the early years of TV. Topics will include news stories of the that period and the challenges when film was the heart of local news coverage and the difficult transition from film to video. Tentatively scheduled for April of 2012. Information to follow through the Newsletter and U.S. mail.

### Call for Hall of Fame Nominations:

#### Rules for Nomination:

Nominees shall have demonstrated a significant dedication to the broadcast industry. This may involve any phase of the business. Dedication may be judged by length of service and steady advancement and accomplishments that have earned the nominee and an employer recognition.

Also to be considered is a nominee's credibility that has contributed to audience respect and enhanced the dignity and prestige of the industry. This subject area should also include contribution to a broadcast market or markets through positive acts of personal involvement.

Finally, candidates should have an Indiana connection either by birth or broadcast experience.

Nominations may come from anyone who is currently employed at a radio or TV station in Indiana, serves as a broadcast faculty member at an Indiana college or university or is retired with a minimum of ten years of service in broadcasting. Nominations should also include sufficient information to justify eligibility.

Send nominations to.... **Indiana Broadcasters Association**

**Attn: Hall of Fame**

**3003 E. 98th Street**

**Indianapolis, IN. 46280**

...by David Goodnow, Indiana Broadcast Pioneer Hall of Fame member and one of CNN's original anchors.

Working in the broadcast business can be dangerous. Aside from the risks of working for paranoid managers and enduring the on-air performance ideas of consultants (the experts from out of town), there are physical dangers. I



**David Goodnow,**

found out about all this in my very first job at WAKO radio in Lawrenceville, Illinois in 1959. In those days it was a sort of middle-of-the-road music format AM daytime station managed by the late Wally Bruner. Bruner was famous as a former weatherman at WTTV, Bloomington-Indianapolis. In that job he became possibly the first on-air personality to accidentally belch after introducing himself. This happened during the dinner hour and it wasn't a timid gaffe. It reminded those who saw and heard it of either the mess hall in the army or a nearby truck stop. Wally would later become the originator of the syndicated "Wally's Workshop," an ABC correspondent and

moderator of "What's My Line?" He must have thought I could make something of myself in radio when he gave his blessing to my being hired as a disk jockey.. Most of my duties were centered at first in the control room playing records and commercials. I was told not to miss any commercial breaks "because that's where your paycheck comes from." I took that to heart and paid attention to business. By the time a few months had passed I was feeling pretty sure of myself and enjoyed playing records. I wasn't sure how many people were listening but I was having a ball.



**Wally Bruner**

One fine day, I was looking over the control room at WAKO and decided I could sail around it in my fancy chair and move from the record cabinet to the control board with haste. The control console was shaped like a horseshoe with the turntables on each side and the control panel in the middle. I had just introduced a song by Nat King Cole and moved to get another record. I decided to speed my return to the control panel by grasping both sides of the horseshoe desk and pulling myself forward like a rocket. I did, the chair shot forward like greased lightning, and I managed to hit the edge of the console with my knee. The result was big time pain. I stood to try to give the knee first aid and felt very light headed. Next thing I knew I was on the floor with a very sharp pain at the back of my head. I'd passed out and hit the floor falling backwards after first bouncing off the control room chair since it was turned over. I shuffled to my feet and noticed that the Nat King Cole record was nearly over. I was staggering around in the control room trying to get my bearings when general manager Bruner walked in to ask some question. Taken aback by my obvious disorientation and babbling about the horseshoe console, he fixed me with a baleful stare and asked if I was trying to be funny, adding Insult to injury. I could hardly make my case since I was still hopping around, trying to hold both my damaged knee and my sore head while attempting to be suitably indignant. But my efforts did little to convince him of my rectitude and he told me to get my act together and then tell him later what happened. While this was going on, I could hardly believe the pain in my knee. I thought I'd broken it.

When my air shift was over, I stepped in his office to explain the chain of events. He listened carefully and finally said he sympathized with my aching body. He also said the time would come, possibly at that station, when I might be promoted to program director (it never happened). He told me to watch out for some characters who would want to be on the air and who would try to be comedians now and then. He said he couldn't have any silly DJs playing records. Who knew what they might say? He, as manager, could wind up staring into the cold countenance of the F.C.C. inspector who always wore a homburg hat and dressed like he was going to a funeral. Wally Bruner wanted none of that. You didn't fool with the FCC if you owned a radio station. They could shut you down, he said, quicker than an Indianapolis minute.

I wound up my session by telling him I'd watch those DJ's like a hawk, if I ever got the chance. No silliness in the control room would be tolerated.

It was quite an experience. I later decided I was out cold a little more than two minutes since the Nat King Cole record was two and one-half minutes long. Good thing that FCC inspector wasn't around.

## Wire Services Wars

In the early years of radio stations aired mostly special events and coverage of local activities, but in 1932 when the Lindbergh baby was kidnapped, Amelia Earhart crossed the Atlantic, the Atom was split, the Olympics took place in L.A. and 11 million people were unemployed, advertisers and radio stations began to realize the potential value of radio news. At that time radio advertising was cheap and business's now realized they had an opportunity to reach new customers as well as their current client base.

The print media quickly realized the threat to their near total advertising monopoly and the risk of no longer being the public's prime news source. Once radio began to increase their news efforts the panicked newspapers began a concerted effort to restrict the broadcasters access to news gathered by the wire and print services. The American Newspapers Publishers Association Radio committee headed by Ed Harris of the Richmond,



Ed Harris

Indiana Palladium began pressuring AP, UP and INS wire services to restrict radio access to wire news copy. At one point all three wire services refused to sell their product to radio stations. In response the fledgling radio networks created their own news gathering service and the conflict

continued. Finally, in December 1933 the wire services, the newspapers and radio networks met at the Biltmore hotel in N.Y. City and negotiated the "Press Radio Agreement". Although there was an agreement the radio group came out on the short end because the agreement was very restrictive. It called for the radio network to dismantle its news organization in exchange for access to wire service bulletins. Also radio was prohibited from airing bulletins over five minutes in length and could not air them until after the morning and evening papers were on the newsstands. Then to dig it in a little deeper, the use of any major breaking stories required the stations to refer their listeners to the newspapers for more details. The restrictions were finally modified in 1934 and 1935 when independent wire services were created to provide news service specifically for radio. By April of 1935 United Press and International News Service were selling their services to independent stations. In May of 1939 the Associated press lifted its ban on sponsored newscast of its services and created a separate Press Association to provide broadcast style rewrites of its print wire to radio stations.

**Note:** William Randolph Hearst started the INS, International News Service, in the mid 1900's and in 1958 INS and United Press Association consolidated to form United Press International (UPI).



## What's Next?

### Television Viewing:

According to the first principle of functional similarity, an activity that can satisfy the same needs but less efficiently stands a greater chance of being displaced. Viewers benefit from television with entertainment, escapism, cognition and information. They can also easily achieve those same satisfactions from the Internet. The Internet can also provide them with other entertainment such as personal preference activities, interactivity, and the ability to do these activities whenever you choose. You also have greater control over the kinds of subject you want. And the big ticket item, the ability to communicate with others.

Today's TV would have a difficult time satisfying these same needs. In the public domain access to the Internet is becoming more common than television viewing because of its versatility. You can take your laptop with you and easily find a network connection. The Internet is now being used in schools, libraries, cybercafes and other sources. Television is generally seen as entertainment while the Internet is considered educational and children are encouraged to use it. As of right now it appears there is no evidence that television has any plan to transform itself so the big question becomes, will the Internet eventually in some way displace television viewing?

**Radio** as a medium has undergone several transitions since its early days. The emergence of television forced a major change, as it became a secondary activity and is mainly a source for music entertainment. Today, with a good computer and Internet skills, users can download or listen to music on the Internet. Although radio lacks the range of gratifications that the Internet provides it is flexible, portable and cheap and Internet users can go online while playing the radio in the background. So it appears that radio faces a less difficult battle than television. But maybe the cyber wizards should consider asking themselves, .....

"What will replace the Internet?"

**Death Notices:**

**Bill Bailey**, former Louisville disc jockey, known to many southern Indiana listeners as the "Duke of Louisville" on his morning show on WAKY-AM in the 1960s and 1970s, died Saturday. He was 81. Bailey,



whose given name was William Boahn, worked at stations in North Carolina, WLS Chicago, WPOC Baltimore WKLO, WAKY, WTMT in Louisville and WVLK in Lexington retiring from there in 1994. Bill used a format of music and

water cooler talk that drew his audience. Bailey was an accomplished artist who loved to draw and paint. He suffered a stroke in 2003 and spent his last years in a Louisville-area nursing home where he routinely hung out near the nurses' station so he could talk to everyone who walked by. Leslie Butterfield, the home administrator said "Everybody did love him.

He was a very social person. I'll miss not seeing him out in the hallway, and that's the way it'll be for a lot of people here."

**Milton L. Bohard** -- "Milt Lewis" 86, Indianapolis, died Dec. 28, 2011.



Milt was born in Indianapolis Aug. 14, 1925. He was an ensign in the U.S. Navy during World War II. He attended Indiana University and graduated from the University of Minnesota. He earned a master's degree in communications from IU and taught drama and radio at Manchester

College. Known professionally as Milt Lewis, he was a radio disc jockey in Bloomington and on WIBC (1070 AM) in Indianapolis.

He moved to television, hosting "Milt's Music Mart" on WTTV

Channel 4. He later was an advertising

executive at Channel 4 and then at Channel

13. He also worked for WIRE (1430 AM).

After working as general manager of WGEE (1590 AM), he bought the station, converting

it to WNTS and hiring a young David

Letterman to host his first talk show. After

Milt's retirement he stayed active as an advertising consultant and in merchandising.

Milt was president of the Indianapolis Ad Club and of Congregation Beth-El Zedeck and its men's club. He was secretary of the Northwest Kiwanis Club and also served the community as a master of ceremonies for numerous charitable organizations, amusing his audiences with stories about TV and radio anecdotes. He also endeared himself to family and friends with his unique sense of humor. He is survived by his wife of 64 years, Rosalind "Roz" Bohard.



Milt Lewis & 2 yr. old Steve Smith

**Death Notices Continued:**

**Clifford M. Nicholson, 62**, of Cicero, IN

died January 20, 2012 at Riverview Hospital in Noblesville, IN. He was born April 21, 1949 at Colorado

Springs, CO, to H. Byron and Marjorie Martha (Clark) Nicholson.

He was a graduate of Cheyenne Mountain High School in 1967 and also a graduate of Colorado State University earning a degree in journalism and drama. He served his country in the U.S. Army.

Cliff, as he was affectionately known, was a meteorologist. He had worked as the weatherman at television stations starting at KUSA TV at Denver, CO, then at WISH TV and at WTHR TV at Indianapolis, IN. Cliff was founder and owner of Weather History Research.

He was a member of the American Meteorology Society and the Cicero American Legion. Cliff enjoyed fishing, boating and photography, but most of all being with family and friends.

He married Pamela L. Kennedy September 19, 1998. She survives him.

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