

2008 Kansas Broadcasting Hall of Fame and Distinguished Service Award

Robert Hilton



Robert is a native of Liberty Missouri and graduated from Kansas State University in 1971. When his church began broadcasting their Sunday morning worship service on a brand new radio station (KBIL) that came on the air, he volunteered to set up and run the mixer for the church service each week. This led to a few other odd jobs around KBIL and began the interest in broadcasting as a career.

While at K-State Robert worked as the program director of the carrier current residence hall radio service, managed the student station KSDB-FM, was selected to the Radio TV Honorary Society Alpha Epsilon Rho and worked at KMAN AM. After college Robert enlisted in the U.S. Air Force and was stationed in Texas, England and Germany. In off duty time he worked in broadcasting when possible. Immediately after his military service he and his new bride Katy Lindsey moved to Independence, Missouri where Robert worked as a local origination TV director for a cable television system

In the summer of 1977 Robert was a part of the start up staff for a new FM only station, KNZA Hiawatha working in sales and on air. In June 1983 Robert and Greg Buser became partners and purchased KNZA. For the past 25 years they have developed and grown their company into a 6-station cluster. Along with KNZA other stations in the cluster are: KMZA Seneca which was built in 1992; KAIR AM & FM Atchison were purchased in 1996; KLZA Falls City, NE was built in 1998; and in September 2007 KTNC AM Falls City was purchased.

Robert served as a member of the KAB Board of Directors from 1996 – 2001 and was chairman in 2000. In the early 90's Robert started a system to provide phone lines for the high school state basketball tournaments as a new member service for the KAB. In 1996 the FCC appointed him as the Chair of the State Emergency Communication Committee for EAS. As Chair of the SECC Robert developed the broadcast portion of the original Kansas EAS plan. He also serves on the Community Advisory Committee for public broadcasting station KTWU TV.

Robert & Katy's only child, 30 year old Jeff, died on March 1, 2008 of a massive heart attack. Fortunately he just passed out and ran off the road and no one else was hurt. When he had renewed his driver's license he had become an organ donor and the family is pleased that some of his organs were harvested and they did help others.

2008 Kansas Broadcasting Hall of Fame

Mitch Holthus



Mitch Holthus has been the “Voice of the Kansas City Chiefs” since 1994. He is the longest tenured play-by-play “voice” in franchise history. In addition to his play-by-play duties, Holthus also hosts the “Minute With Mitch” television series that is seen and heard in five states. Holthus also hosts the “Chiefs Insider” television show. Following the NFL season, Holthus is a television play-by-play talent for selected college basketball games.

His talents have been featured on ESPN, FOX, and other national outlets. He is the number one announcer for the Missouri Valley Conference and received the prestigious John Sanders ‘Spirit of the Valley’ award in 2007

For 13 years, Mitch was the play-by-play voice of the Kansas State Wildcats of the Big 12 Conference. He has been named “Kansas Sportscaster of the Year” eight times. He has also been named the top play-by-play sportscaster in Kansas nine times by the Kansas Association of Broadcasters. In 1996, he was awarded the Hod Humiston Award of Excellence in Kansas Sportscasting. As a result, he is the youngest sportscaster in Kansas’s history to receive every major sportscasting award. For 10 years, he was also the sales manager of the Wildcat Sports Network. He currently owns his own company that features talent, marketing and motivational services.

Mitch is a past President of the National Sportscasters and Sportswriters Association and currently serves on its Board of Directors. He is also on the Board of Directors of Brooke Corporation and on the Board of Trustees of Southwestern College in Winfield, Kansas.

Mitch is a 1979 graduate of Kansas State University with a degree in journalism. He received a degree in business administration from K-State in 1980. He is married to the former Tami Johnson of McPherson, Kansas, a former K-State women’s basketball player. They have two children, Brian and Hayley. Holthus is a native of Smith Center, Kansas.

2008 Kansas Broadcasting Hall of Fame

Steve McIntosh



Steve McIntosh was born in December of 1949 in Fowler, Kansas, the third of four sons. As a youth he lived in Mead, Newton, Kingman, Dodge City, and Wichita. He graduated from Wichita West High School, where he excelled in football, basketball, and baseball. Steve also attended Friends University in Wichita, and is a graduate of the Columbia School of Broadcasting.

Steve signed on the air as a mid-morning News anchor at KWBB 1410 AM in 1970. A few months later he took over as News Director at KEYN 103.7 FM, “the Rock of Wichita”. His one-person news team grew to four reporters during the 70’s and won numerous news coverage awards. Steve reported live from downtown Wichita when a sniper fired from atop the Holiday Inn. He also contributed less-serious content to mornings on KEYN, creating the “Anchorman of the Year, Jay Peabody Weatherwax”, who originated the phrase, “When the news breaks, Jay will fix it”.

Steve went to KFH 1330 from 1980 to 1986, where he served as News Director, Operations Manager, and Program Manager at KBRA 98 FM. Next came eight years at KXLK FM 105.3 ... mornings, News Director, and the awards piled up!

After a 3 1/2 – year stint at Brite Voice Corporation, Steve returned to radio at KNSS 1240 AM as morning show host and Program Manager. His first year back, 1998, KNSS won Radio Station of the Year from the Kansas Association of Broadcasters. For the past 10 years Steve has hosted the Morning Newswatch with Ted Woodward on Newsradio 1330 KNSS.

Steve has hosted and co-hosted television shows (Mike & Mac Reel Late Movie, Kansas Chronicles) and done a few TV commercials (Star Lumber). But his first love has always been radio. He’s done The McIntosh Report, Wichita’s only daily news commentary, since 1971. The Report has won 16 awards from the KAB for editorial/commentary. Steve has also won awards in several other K.A.B. categories, including Best Newscast twice. (2004 and 2006)

Steve and wife Shelley have been married 38 years. They have two grown children – Scott and Staci – and six grandchildren.

2008 Kansas Broadcasting Hall of Fame

Jim O'Donnell (Posthumously)

*"We don't say the weatherman missed the forecast.
We say Mother Nature changed her mind."*



Jim O'Donnell was born and raised in Bronx, New York and at the age of 17 enlisted in the military. He spent a long and distinguished career in the Air Weather Service of the U.S. Air Force. In 1948 Jim was the principle meteorologist for the Air Force during the Berlin Airlift where the United States and many other countries provided food for millions of Berliners by air. In one day, Jim and the other meteorologists guided 1398 flights from around the world into Berlin.

After retiring from the Air Force in 1968, Jim joined a struggling private weather service in Oklahoma City, and helped launch a statewide radio service called the Oklahoma News Network, and was later named a partner in the firm. In late 1969 he moved to Wichita where he opened a branch office of the News Service located at Beechcraft. KAKE TV was one of his first clients and later his full-time job. At KAKE, he started a new tradition – staying on during periods of severe weather. Jim was the voice of calm in the face of Kansas storms for the next 26 years before retiring in 1995.

Over those years Jim weathered changes in TV weather sets. From maps that seem primitive now, he transitioned to state of the art technology. Jim was voted a professional member of the American Meteorologist Society and awarded the Seal of Approval from the National Weather Service in 1974. In 1981 he was given "Public Service Award" by the National Weather Service and was the only broadcast meteorologist in Kansas to receive the honor.

Off the air, Jim loved his community and spent countless hours making it a better place by serving on a number of boards. The St. Patrick's Day parade that KAKE began was the brainchild of Jim and radio personality Gene Rump. It became one of Wichita's signature parades. Jim co-hosted the first MDA Telethon in Kansas in 1971 and year after year spent time raising money for "Jerry's Kids" and making people smile.

Jim enjoyed spending time with his grandchildren, playing golf, tennis, and oil painting. He passed away in 2007 and is survived by his wife Marilan, their son David, a daughter Stephanie, and six grandchildren.

2008 Kansas Broadcasting Hall of Fame

Merril Teller



Merril Teller has been forecasting weather for 35 years. He is chief meteorologist at KWCH in Wichita, where he supervises a staff of five full-time meteorologists and the station's team of trained storm chasers. Merrill also reports for radio stations KFDI/KFTI in Wichita, KSAL in Salina and Q-97 in Garden City. In addition, he produces a daily weather page and column in The Wichita Eagle.

Growing up on Long Island, his interest in weather may have started with his experience going through Hurricane Donna when he was 8 years old. He also spent lots of time outdoors as a kid and was intrigued by the variety of cloud formations.

Merril's broadcast career began in college, doing weather reports on the radio. He received a bachelor of science in meteorology at Rutgers University and did graduate studies at the University of Oklahoma. He started his television career in Wichita Falls and Oklahoma City, before moving to Wichita in 1981.

Merril has worked with the Children's Miracle Network since its beginning in Wichita in 1984, including co-hosting the CMN telethons. He currently serves on the CMN Advisory Board. He also served 6 years on the board of directors of Breakthrough Club of Wichita, an organization that works with people who have mental health problems.

Merril enjoys bowling, tennis, golf and has volunteered as a soccer referee for the last 15 years. He also enjoys speaking to schools and civic groups about weather and sharing stories of his unique experiences on the air over the years. He's married to his wife of 32 years, Rita. Their son, Matthew, is a commercial pilot.

2008 Sonny Slater Award

Bill “Ray” Rowson



Bill was first bitten by the radio bug while still in High School in Liberal, Ks. Through the urging of both Speech and Debate instructors, he volunteered to help produce a high school radio show which aired once a week on KSCB AM. After a short stint working part-time for Stu Melchert at KSCB AM, Bill attended a year and a half at Emporia State (then Kansas State Teachers College) majoring in Radio and TV Broadcasting.

Eventually moving back to Liberal and trying other jobs, the call of radio beckoned again and Bill went to work for KLIB AM in Liberal. In 1973 he received his First Class License from Elkins Electronics Institute in Oklahoma City.

Bill and his wife Virginia then moved to Salina in 1980 to go to work for Russ Gibson and Ken Jennison at KINA AM and later KSAL AM and KYEZ FM. He also spent time working for KSKG in Salina before returning to KYEZ FM (Y 93.7).

Bill is a past member of Masonic Blue Lodge (33 degree Mason) and the Accessibility Advisory Board for the City of Salina. He currently serves on the KAB Board of Directors and is a member of the Country Music Association. He also serves the community of Salina by helping raise money for the Salina United Way, Child Advocacy and Parenting Services, and St. Jude Children's Research Hospital.

Bill and Virginia have 4 grown children Stephen 28, Daniel, Kaysie and Nathan 22 (triplets who are KAB Scholarship Kids).

2008 Mike Oatman Award

Ken Clifford



Ken is a native of Wisconsin and began his broadcasting career in 1966 at the campus radio station at the University of Oshkosh-Wisconsin. His first commercial station job was on air at WERL-AM Eagle River, Wisconsin in 1966. He also worked his way through college at WOSH-AM doing afternoon drive with the Top 40 format before graduating with a BA in Speech and Communications.

Ken was an Information Specialist while serving the US Army from 1969 to 1971 . After the service he worked as talent and news director for several stations in Wisconsin and Iowa before moving to Wichita in 1973, when he joined KLEO AM as talent and program director. In 1979 Ken became sales manager and IN 1982 became general manager at KEYN FM until 1984 when sunny Florida called and he went to work for WFLA AM-FM in Tampa.

Ken returned to the Midwest in 1985 working for KCMO AM-FM in Kansas City as local and national sales manager. He then came back to Wichita as general manager for a new radio station, KZSN FM. Over the next 22 years, Ken worked for Brite Voice Systems and KKRK-FM, KRZZ-FM, KNSS-AM as general sales manager, and then moved into television selling for KSAS, KAKE, and KSNW.

In 2004 Ken was named local sales manager for KWCH TV where he works today. He has been married for 39 years to Kathleen and they have two children - Mathew Clifford and Bridget Clifford. In his spare time Ken is an Avid motorcyclist enthusiast and likes to ride the non paved back roads of Kansas.