

the monthly memo

A GREENLEE SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM AND COMMUNICATION
publication in Iowa State University's College of Liberal Arts and Sciences.

April 2006
Vol 3. No. 8

Over 70 years in journalism Greenlee School pays tribute to Jack Shelley, living legend

Editor's note:

We dedicate this edition of the Director's Newsletter to the accomplishments of Jack Shelley, honorary member of the Greenlee School's Advisory Council. Articles by Matt Neznanski and reporting by Michael Bugeja.

Through the birth of broadcast journalism and its formative years covering World War II, to the development of television news and molding a generation of Iowa State University students, Jack Shelley has been called a living legend in Iowa broadcast history.

"I'll always remember listening with my dad to Jack Shelley's crisp, clear voice booming over the radio," said Iowa Sen. Chuck Grassley. "It was like listening to something from a higher power."

Shelley was born in Boone, Iowa in 1912. His interest in journalism began at his high school newspaper, where he worked as a reporter and columnist. After graduation, he took jobs at two regional railroads at the beginning of the Depression.

In the fall of 1931, with \$35 earned from railroad work, he enrolled in the University of Missouri journalism department.

After graduation, Shelley briefly worked at the *Iowa Herald*, in Clinton before taking a job at Des Moines' WHO radio in 1935, a 50,000-watt station.

Shelley joined H.R. Gross as a two-man team delivering news live on the air, as no recording equipment was available at the time.

Shelley was the focus of a dissertation by Chris Allen. "You have to remember that in those days, in the 1930s, the vast majority of our audience found radio news something brand new and very exciting to them. All these people who lived in small towns and on the farms in Iowa had never had anything that brought news to them so

quickly," he is quoted as saying in Allen's work. "And very quickly we established a rapport with the audience and a kind of faithful listenership that I don't think has ever been duplicated since."

With radio broadcasting still in its infancy, Gross and Shelley developed their own methods, Allen wrote. They got help from the UP, which began adapting their reports for broadcast.

Shelley said the station had a strong presence throughout Iowa as well as the Midwest, featuring live talent shows, weekly barn dances, and news broadcasts in between shows. In 1940, Shelley took over as news director.

Station Manager Joe Maland had begun using sponsors to make his news department profitable. At first, single sponsors served as underwriters of the programming, Allen wrote. Later, multiple sponsors became the norm.

Shelley told Allen he preferred having multiple sponsors, which lessened the chance of influence by a single powerful advertiser.

When Pearl Harbor was attacked, Shelley's direction thrust WHO into the forefront of war coverage in the region. Listeners flooded the station with letters about its coverage. Allen found that some listeners in Montana, Wyoming, Colorado, and other Rocky Mountain states regularly tuned in

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On the home front and the front lines

From the first words announcing the attack on Pearl Harbor, Jack Shelley led coverage of World War II for WHO radio, as a news director and later as a war correspondent.

Those broadcasting experiences, he said, provided some of the most rewarding of his long career.

“This was the experience of my lifetime,” he told Bugeja.



When Pearl Harbor was bombed in early 1941, WHO broadcast a short wire report on the attack at 1 p.m. Shelley, listening at his Boone home during a Sunday family dinner, Shelley called the station and told his staff to start building coverage of what he though sounded “like a war breaking out,” he is quoted as saying by Allen.

Under Shelley’s direction, WHO focused heavily on war coverage after the Japanese attack.

Before the summer of 1944, the military would not allow civilian correspondents from individual stations overseas. As soon as Shelley was accredited by the army, he shipped out to Spa, Belgium, and soon after joined coverage in the Battle of the Bulge.

“The Nazis chased us out of Spa and into southern Holland, where we could file our reports,” Shelley told Bugeja.

In the field, Shelley got in the habit of calling out “Anybody here from Iowa?” anytime he was around a group of soldiers, Allen wrote. About half the time, somebody was.

As the war in Europe began to wind down, Shelley returned home for a short time but left again to report during the final battles in the Pacific.

Equipped with a recording device this time, Shelley taped the voices of Iowa patients in Hawaii hospitals. On Guam, he filed regular reports including interviews with the B-29 crews bombing Tokyo, often recording from airfields with the roar of aircraft in the background, Allen wrote.

After the first atomic bombs were dropped on Japan, Shelley and another reporter had the rare

opportunity to record the first interviews with the Army Air Force crews who had bombed Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Always looking for the Iowa angle, Shelley learned that Enola Gay pilot Paul W. Tibbets had attended North High School in Des Moines. Also among the crew was James Nolan, a classmate of Shelley’s at Missouri, Allen wrote.

After the interviews, Shelley knew he had a great story. Allen quotes Shelley as saying the interviews were “the hottest thing we’ve ever had.”

On September 2, 1945, Shelley was aboard the U.S.S. Missouri to cover the formal Japanese surrender.

Years later, he was invited onboard the Missouri again - this time anchored in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii - to speak at a ceremony commemorating the 56th anniversary of the surrender.

Nuclear eyewitness

In 1953, Shelley was invited to witness the detonation of a nuclear device at the Atomic Energy Commission’s Yucca Flats site in Nevada.

The commission had designated “ANNIE” an open shot, which meant that reporters were allowed to view the blast from News Nob, a location six miles south of ground zero.

Shelley was among 20 reporters selected to accompany about 1,500 troops in five-foot trenches just two miles away.

At 4 a.m., an hour and 20 minutes from blast-time, they were shuttled to the trenches.

Shelley carried a battery-powered tape recorder. It was one of the few devices to survive with a usable recording of sounds from the event. The nuclear device was 16 kilotons and detonated from atop a 300-foot tower.

“With my eyes shut, I can see that tremendous light,” Allen quoted from Shelley’s report. “The earth is shaking under me... There’s the tremendous sound. This trench is being filled with dust.”

council news

Three join Advisory Council

EDITOR'S NOTE: The Greenlee School welcomes the three newest members to its Advisory Council, Jerry Bowen, Patricia Dean, and John Arends.

Bowen is a long-time CBS News correspondent; Dean is a former broadcast journalist who now helps administer the Annenberg School in Southern California; and John Arends is head of a major communications agency with multinational clients.



John Arends

John Arends, who earned a journalism degree at Iowa State in 1977, is currently president and chief executive officer of Arends, a marketing group founded by his father, Greenlee School Advisory Council member Don Arends.

Arends, Inc. is based near Chicago and serves local, regional, national and multinational corporate clients including Kaiser Aluminum, Canadian Pacific Railway, Lucent Technologies, Philips, and Tyco.

At ISU Arends was a member of the Men's Gymnastics Team, team captain his senior year and on the 1974
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Jerry Bowen

New Advisory Council member Jerry Bowen, who attended Iowa State from 1965 to 1968, has been a CBS News correspondent based in Los Angeles since 1979.

He reports primarily for the CBS Evening News, contributes to other CBS News broadcasts and also delivers profiles of celebrated and not-so-celebrated Americans for CBS News Sunday Morning.

Bowen has covered most major stories in the west over the past two decades, including California earthquakes, Arizona floods, the O.J. Simpson trials, and the Rodney King beating and subsequent riots.

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Patricia Dean

New council member Patricia Dean, who earned a B.S. in Journalism from Iowa State in 1968, is the Associate Director of the School of Journalism, Annenberg School for Communication at the University of Southern California.

She also is a Professor of Professional Practice and teaches television news reporting classes. Her research interests focus on local television news and reporting on public policy issues.

Dean joined USC in 2003 from Northwestern University where she taught for 16 years. She also served as Chair of the
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council news

John Arends

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NCAA Championship squad.

After graduation, Arends worked for the Iowa Development Commission, first as editor of the commission's newsletter on tourism, industrial development and community betterment, and then as public information director, where he wrote speeches and guest editorials for state and federal officials.

During this time, Arends helped establish the state's first Iowa Film Commission office, and served as editor-in-chief of the book "Iowa, The American Heartland," featuring an introduction by Hugh Sidey and the work of National Geographic photographer Craig Aurness. He has also contributed to *The Des Moines Register* and *Newsweek*.

Arends is a former member of the board of directors for the Transportation and Marketing Communications Association, and currently serves as a member of the board of directors for the International Gymnastics Hall of Fame, and the Marketing and Advertising Global Network (MAGNET), comprising over 30 international ad agencies. He will be joining his father, Don Arends, on the Council.

Jerry Bowen

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During the 1980s, Bowen reported on Mexican and Caribbean affairs. He also covered the overthrow of Philippines President Ferdinand Marcos, the student revolt in Tiananmen Square and the opening of Siberia's gulag system after the fall of Communism.

Domestically, Bowen reported on Ronald Reagan's successful Presidential campaign and the 1980, 1984 and 1988 political conventions, as well as the 1984 Summer Olympics in Los Angeles and the 1988 Winter Olympics in Calgary.

Prior to his Los Angeles assignment, Bowen was a correspondent in CBS News' Rome bureau from 1977 to 1979 where he provided extensive coverage of the Middle East. Bowen reported on Papal affairs, including the death of Pope Paul and the elections of Pope John Paul I and John Paul II, and covered the birth of the world's first test tube baby in England.

Bowen led a CBS News team to Antarctica in November 1991 for a series of reports on scientific experiments and environmental concerns.

He joined CBS News in April 1977 as a reporter in its Chicago bureau, and is the recipient of three Emmy Awards.

Patricia Dean

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Broadcast News sequence for six years. Dean was honored for her teaching in 1999 with the prestigious Northwestern Alumni Association Excellence in Teaching Award.

Prior to academia, Dean was a professional broadcast journalist in Chicago for more than 18 years at stations owned by three major broadcast networks.

She was a news show producer, executive producer, writer/producer for two award winning investigative units and director of programming.

Her work has been honored with numerous awards, including two George Foster Peabody Awards, two Chicago Television Academy Emmy Awards, the Gavel Award of the American Bar Association, and the National Press Club Award for Best Consumer Journalism.

She is a member of the Radio Television News Directors Association, the National Association of Television Arts & Sciences, the Association for Women Journalists, the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, the International Communication Association and the Academy of Political Science.

The Advisory Council was created to support the school, Director, faculty, staff and students in a collaborative partnership to make the Greenlee School of Journalism and Communication the premiere institution for educational, professional and scholarly contributions to communication and society.



Inspiring ISU students

Jack Shelley surprised his professional peers when he left WHO to take up a new broadcast journalism program at Iowa State University.

“For many of us, this recommitment of his many talents for the benefit of young people was a further testament to his unique willingness to share his knowledge and many talents for the greater good of his chosen profession,” said Bob Greenlee, the school’s namesake with wife Diane.

As an educator, Shelley insisted on putting his students’ needs above all.

Some students who grew up watching Shelley’s broadcasts found themselves working with a local broadcast hero in their classes.

“It was a privilege to have been one of his students. He was actually reading my copy and kindly making suggestions that continue to serve me for four decades,” said Jerry Bowen, a student of Shelley’s in the 1960s and longtime CBS correspondent. “Don’t lecture. Most importantly, don’t take yourself too seriously. It’s the news that matters most, not the news reporter.”

Patricia Dean, a Chicago broadcast journalist for

18 years, educator at Northwestern, and now associate director of the School of Journalism at the Annenberg School for Communication, learned how to apply high standards to her work despite deadline pressure. Shelley also served as a mentor to Dean at Iowa State and beyond.

“We should not underestimate how important a strong mentor is to students,” Dean said. “At a time when women were not encouraged to enter some areas of the profession, Jack said ‘nonsense.’ He believed in me and gave me the education to achieve my goals and the courage to pursue my dreams.”

For Kevin Cooney, Des Moines’ KCCI anchor, Shelley’s reputation and a personal tour of the Iowa State journalism facilities won him over.

“He never made it seem like work,” Cooney said. “I still remember his emphasis on realizing that television, while it reached thousands, was really a personal, one-on-one style of storytelling. There is not a day that goes by that I don’t put into practice something that Jack taught me.”

70 years of journalism

to WHO for war news.

Shelley served the station as an overseas correspondent in Europe and the Pacific. At the end of the war, he returned to Des Moines and his news director's job at WHO.

He also had a hand in the formation of what would become the Radio Television News Director's Association (RTNDA), a professional organization founded to guarantee autonomy for news directors and standards for broadcast journalism.

Shelley became the third person to serve as president of the group in 1950. In 2000, he was awarded the RTNDA's John S. Hogan award, named after its first president. Other Hogan award recipients include Hugh Downs and Walter Cronkite.

Throughout the 1950s, Shelley continued to serve as the face of news for thousands of Iowans.

"If you lived in Iowa in the 1950s and 60s and didn't know who Jack Shelley was, then it's almost certain you didn't own a radio or TV," said Bob Greenlee. "For many people, Jack Shelley was the news."

In 1954, WHO received a license to begin broadcasting television signals. Shelley told Allen the first broadcast was "utter chaos," with the newsroom still under construction and technical difficulties that kept any film files from rolling on-air.

Shelley eventually anchored the 6 and 10 p.m. newscasts, Allen wrote, with the anchor and news director working 12-hour days.

Jerry Bowen, CBS correspondent and student of Shelley's in the 1960s, remembered Shelley's "warm, commanding style" of delivering news to Iowa homes.

"If Jack said it was so, you could go to bed assured it was true. And when he said goodnight with that twinkle in his eye, you turned off the set feeling even better," Bowen said. "He was and is our Walter Cronkite."

From 1968 until 1988, Shelley served as the executive director of the Iowa Broadcast News Association. He was awarded the group's Distinguished Service Award when he retired. In 1971, the IBNA honored him by establishing the Jack Shelley Award.

"Jack Shelley didn't make broadcast history in Iowa, he lived it," said Mike Peterson, news director

at KMA/KKBZ in Shenandoah, Iowa and current president of the IBNA. "We thank him for everything he did in the media, at Iowa State, and with the IBNA"

In 1965, Shelley left professional broadcasting and took a job teaching broadcast journalism at Iowa State University, where he taught for 17 years.

Shelley told Bugjea his days at Iowa State's journalism department were among his happiest.

"Then, as now, we had such respect for each other," Shelley said. "You had the feeling at Iowa State that when somebody had an accomplishment, that you all shared in it."

At Iowa State, Shelley served for six years as a member of the accreditation committee of the American Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communication.

Shelley was a founding member of the Iowa Freedom of Information Council, and served as its president in 1981. In 1979, Shelley was appointed to a special committee advising the state supreme court on the use of cameras and recorders in classrooms.

A mandatory university retirement policy forced Shelley to teach his last class at the end of the 1982 school year at age 70.

In 1983, the Radio-TV Division of the Association of Education in Journalism and Mass Communication made Shelley the first winner of its Distinguished Broadcast Journalism Educator Award.

In retirement, Shelley worked in his native Boone as president of its historical society, was a member of the board of ISU's College for Seniors, and an honorary member of the Greenlee School's Advisory Council.

Shelley received the J.W. Schwartz award in 1993, the highest award given by ISU's Greenlee School.

Noting the award, *The Des Moines Register* said Shelley had earned a place in Iowa journalism history for being a pioneer and a risk-taker as a professional, and helping to launch countless careers as an educator.

"If I get really personal, the blessings of my life were that I was married to two lovely women and a father to two wonderful sons and then a grandfather and great-grandfather," Shelley told Bugeja. "All that didn't require my brains."