

2009 Kansas Broadcasting Hall of Fame and Distinguished Service Award

Gary Shorman



Gary Shorman oversees the operation of Eagle's 25 radio broadcast properties and 30 cable/broadband systems in Kansas, Nebraska, Missouri, and Colorado. Shorman started his broadcast career in 1978 at KCLY in Clay Center, Kansas. He started as Sport Director and morning radio show host, and then later added radio sales and chief engineering to his duties.

In 1982 he was named General Sales Manager of KTOP/KDVV Radio in Topeka. In 1985, Shorman joined Eagle Communications, Inc, then known as Beach-Schmidt Communications, as General Manager of KELN/KOOQ Radio in North Platte, Nebraska. Shorman was promoted to Vice-President of Radio Operations in 1988 and in 1998 named President and CEO of Eagle Communications, Inc. which is the position he currently holds. Shorman is also a member of the Eagle Board of Directors and Trustee of the Eagle Employee Stock Ownership Plan (ESOP).

Shorman has served on the Board of Directors of the Kansas Association of Broadcasters and served as KAB President in 1991 and has presented and participated in numerous NAB events. He currently serves on the Board of Directors of the National Cable Telecommunications Association and he was recently elected to serve on the Board of Directors of the National Cable Television Cooperative. Shorman has also served as President of the Kansas Cable Telecommunications Association and currently is on the Executive Committee of the Heart of America ESOP Association.

Shorman also participates in numerous business and community activities. He is currently serving on the Board of Directors of Blue Cross Blue Shield of Kansas, Hays Medical Center, and the Board of Trustees of the Fort Hays State University Foundation. He is a member of "Leadership Kansas," a statewide leadership-training program. Shorman hosts the annual "Christmas For Kids" radio and cable telethon which raises money for children in Kansas. He is also host of the local cable television program, "The Forum" which airs on Eagle Community Television.

Shorman was raised on a family farm in North Central Kansas where his parents still reside. He is a licensed instrument pilot, and enjoys golfing and hunting when he finds spare time. He and his wife Mary Ann live in Hays, Kansas and they have five children, Matthew, Rachel, Michael, Austin, and Matt.

2009 Kansas Broadcasting Hall of Fame

Greg Gamer



Greg was born in Emporia but grew up in Wichita. He attended the University of Kansas with the intention of becoming a pharmacist, but later transferred to Wichita University (now Wichita State). While finishing an undergraduate degree in political science, he began working part-time at KFBI-AM (later to become KIRL, then KFDI). It was at KFBI that Greg became acquainted with Martin Umansky, who hired him to work at KAKE-TV, which had not yet signed on the air.

On October 19, 1954, as the station’s “booth announcer,” Greg spoke the first words heard on KAKE. For the next dozen years, he would help establish the station as the leader in local news in south central Kansas. When a tornado struck the Cowley County town of Udall late at night on May 25, 1955, Gamer and photographer Paul Threlfall were the first television journalists to arrive the next morning. Their reports were used by both ABC and NBC to inform the nation of the tragedy, which claimed 77 lives and injured 270.

KAKE’s news reputation gave him the inside track to interview newsmakers and celebrities who would come to Wichita. He interviewed three future presidents – John Kennedy in 1960, Lyndon Johnson in 1959 and Ronald Reagan in 1963. Gamer also interviewed Eleanor Roosevelt in 1956 and Ted Kennedy in 1960. Election coverage was another early strength of KAKE news. Gamer was the first journalist in Wichita to poll voters to predict election outcomes (“with amazing accuracy,” he says).

In addition to news duties at KAKE, Greg would fill in doing weather and sports. He would occasionally substitute as host of live children’s and women’s shows. In 1966, he left KAKE to anchor evening newscasts at KARD-TV (which later became KSNW). At KARD/KSNW, he interviewed presidents Richard Nixon and Gerald Ford.

Greg spent 25 years at KARD/KSNW, retiring in 1991 – after 37 years and parts of five decades in Wichita news. He is a recipient of the Grover Cobb award from KU and was honored with a National Headliner award for a story on Special Education. Greg is active in his Rotary Club in Wichita.

2009 Kansas Broadcasting Hall of Fame

Jack Hartle



Jack attended grade schools in Hutchinson, Sapulpa, Oklahoma, and two country schools in Rice County, Kansas before graduating from Lyons High School and Kansas State University.

His broadcasting career began at K-State working at the student station KSDB-FM in Manhattan, and was the studio engineer at KSAC and the K-State Sports Network.

Following his college years, Jack took a full-time position at KRSA in Russell, followed by two year stints at KFOR in Lincoln, Nebraska, KJPW in Waynesville, Missouri, and a few months at KONE in Reno, Nevada. In 1964, he returned to Kansas and spent the next nine years at KVGB in Great Bend running the morning show.

In 1973, Jack became Program and Sports Director at KLOQ, Lyons. That station was sold in 1976 and he went into the restaurant business in Lyons. In 1983, he returned to radio and became assistant manager at KNGL in McPherson for three years and returned to KVGB in Great Bend. Jack joined Eagle Broadcasting at KAYS in Hays in 1990, and returned to KVGB when it was purchased by Eagle in 1995. He spent the next 14 years as News Director, and won numerous awards from KAB for newscasts, news stories, programs and his one and only editorial.

Jack was not a member of one or two civic organizations—he was a member of them all through his tireless and extensive news coverage and local involvement. Just prior to his 70th birthday, the Barton County Sheriff's Office presented Jack with a gold badge naming him a “special deputy.”

Jack retired December, 2008 and was humbled when the City of Great Bend declared December 11th, 2008 as Jack Hartle Day, and the Barton County Commission presented him with a gold clock reserved for retiring county department heads. The inscription on the clock stated “Words mean more than what is set down on paper. It takes the human voice to infuse them with deeper meaning.”

2009 Mike Oatman Award

Jim Allan



Jim was born in upstate New York and moved to Kansas City during his youth. After graduation from Kansas State University, his first professional media position was with Ed Klimek at KQLA radio in Junction City. After one year in sales (1988), Jim moved to Topeka where he became a sales account rep for Uno Broadcasting (V100-KTOP). Working for Phil Tysinger, Jim was promoted to Sales Manger in 1992.

In 1994, he moved to KTPK as General Sales Manager under owner Pat Powers. In 1999, Jim left to join Lewis Toyota as Finance Manager, a position he held until returning to KTPK in 2002 as General Manager. At the time of his return, KTPK was owned by Berl Brechner. When Brechner sold the station to JMJ Broadcasting, new owner Norman Feuer asked Jim to stay on in his role as General Manager, a position he has held since that 2004 transaction.

During his time in Topeka, Jim has been involved with The American Red Cross, Topeka Advertising Federation, Big Brothers/Big Sisters and Sales/Marketing Executives. He has also been a visiting lecturer in media at Washburn University the past two semesters.

“I am told by those who knew him that Mike Oatman strived every day to be a better person and a better radio professional,” said Allan. “What a great example of the phrase Carpe Diem.”

Jim and wife Aimee have three children: Riggs 9, Emma 6 and newborn Tessa.

2009 Sonny Slater Award

John Wright



John Wright is Sports Director and Assistant News Director for KFDI Radio where he has been employed since 1978 while attending Wichita State University. John has covered many memorable stories for KFDI over the years. One of his reports helped save several people in the path of a huge tornado. On March 13th, 1990, John spotted a tornado headed toward Hesston, Kansas and broadcasted the location and described what areas of the community it was hitting.

To this day, residents of Hesston say John saved their lives because they heard his advanced warning reports and took shelter. John was recognized for his work when the Radio-Television News Directors Association presented KFDI with an Edward R. Murrow award for spot news coverage by a radio station, the highest national award for radio news reporting. A portion of John's tornado description was used in the movie, Mr. and Mrs. Bridge starring Paul Newman and Joanne Woodward.

In 1992, John was featured on the NBC program "Eyewitness Video" after he helped warn citizens of the Andover tornado in 1991. John's reporting also led KFDI Radio to received another Edward R. Murrow Award in 2001 for coverage of the " Bombardier Crash " that claimed three lives.

John is heavily involved in the community having served as Chair of St. Mark United Methodist Church Council, Staff Parish Relations, Recreation and Youth Coordinator. Other community involvement includes "Real Men, Real Hero's" Partners Project with the City of Wichita, Salvation Army Biddy Basketball Advisory Board, Holy Savior Academy Assistant Boy's Basketball Coach, and the Wichita Chamber of Commerce Pro Sports Committee.

John was a founder of the Wichita Athletics' Youth Track & Field Club of which nine students have received collegiate athletic scholarships. John also speaks to elementary, middle and high school students in Wichita and surrounding areas about spring and summer severe weather season preparedness. John's wife Karen works for National American University in Wichita. They have three children, John III, 26 Aaron, 20, and Matthew, 16.