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Connecting - May 14, 2015

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Remembering Jim Gaines

AP video software architect among victims of derailment

By Mark Mittelstadt

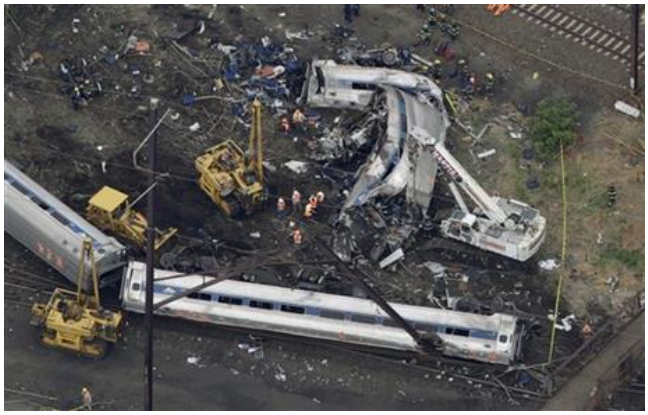
His smile lit up the room.

Even if you did not know **Jim Gaines**, you soon came to realize the bespectacled guy with a twinkle in his eye and the continuous grin was bright, creative, ready to take on the toughest of tasks. He loved what he did, and he hoped you were having a good day, too.

Gaines, 48, an Associated Press video software architect, was killed in an Amtrak train derailment Tuesday night in Philadelphia. Following meetings at AP's offices in Washington, the father of two was returning home to Plainsboro, New Jersey, where he lived with his wife, Jacqueline, son

Oliver, 16, and daughter, Anushka, 11. Doctors say he suffered massive chest trauma in the accident and died around midnight at Temple University Hospital, AP reported.

Gaines was one of seven fatalities when the Northeast Regional train appeared to have rounded a curve 12 miles out of Philadelphia at high speed, left the tracks and flipped on its side. Two hundred people were injured and more people were reported missing.



Emergency personnel at scene of Amtrak derailment near Philadelphia. (AP Photo/Patrick Semansky)

"I'm overwhelmed and grieved today at the loss of my friend and colleague Jim Gaines in last night's Amtrak crash," said **Paul Caluori**, the AP's global director of digital services. "He was an example of what I aspire to be: extremely kind and thoughtful and always putting others first. And incredibly smart. With a hug, a kind note, a lunch, a gift -- anything -- he'd always be trying to make your day better."

Gaines joined the AP in 1998 and was a key factor in nearly all of the news agency's video initiatives, including the successful rollout of high-definition video and the AP's Video Hub -- a service that provides live video to hundreds of clients around the world. He was based at the company's technology center in Cranbury, New Jersey, but frequently traveled to headquarters in New York as well as to Washington and other AP offices.

In 2006, Gaines' team won the Chairman's Prize for development of the agency's Online Video Network. The technology department named him "Geek of the Month" in May 2012 for his "tireless dedication and contagious passion" to technological innovation. "At AP, not a frame goes by in the word of video that escapes the passionate scrutiny of video architect Jim Gaines," the award said.

"Aside from being a great human being, he was very, very skilled at what he did and he won a lot of awards here and I think that comes from his patience and his ability to dig into a lot of details with a wide range of different types of people," said Caluori.

Paul Caluori recalls his friend, Jim Gaines

AP President and CEO **Gary Pruitt** told employees in an email that Gaines "leaves behind a legacy of professionalism and critical accomplishment, kindness and humor. He will be missed."

In a statement Wednesday afternoon, Gaines' family expressed thanks for the prayers and support it has received while also asking for privacy as they "absorb this incredible loss."

"Jim was more precious to us than we can adequately express," the statement read. "In due time, we will make a statement that will fully reflect the incredible person that Jim was."

In his email to AP staff, Pruitt said notes of condolence may be sent to Randi Burroughs, rburroughs@ap.org, in AP Corporate Communications for delivery to the family.

Amtrak trains between Washington and New York are frequented by members of the news media, given the large numbers of media workers in both cities. In Tuesday night's derailment, all seven cars plus the engine left the tracks, sending passengers, luggage and personal belongings flying.

Crime scene investigator looking inside a car of the derailed Amtrak train. (AP Photo/Joseph Kaczmarek)

Investigators said early indications were that the train was traveling at 106 miles per hour when it entered the sharp curve, which has a speed limit of 50 mph. The speed limit immediately ahead of the curve is 80 mph.

An AP manager, **Paul Cheung**, was on the train and said he was watching a video on his laptop when "the train started to decelerate, like someone had slammed the brake. Then suddenly you could see everything starting to shake," he said. "You could see people's stuff flying over me."

Cheung said another passenger urged him to escape from the back of his car, which he did. He said he saw passengers trying to get out through the windows of cars tipped on their sides. "The front of the train is really mangled," he said. "It's a complete wreck. The whole thing is like a pile of metal."

Cheung was not injured.

Also aboard were a producer for NBC News, **Janelle Richards**, and a New York Observer editor, J**illian Jorgensen**. "Not an expert," Jorgensen tweeted early Wednesday morning, "but it felt like the train hit a curve going too fast. We banked hard right, immediately obvious something was wrong."

The Washington Post reported that Gaines regularly traveled to Washington for work. **Micah Gelman**, who was executive producer of AP's U.S. video operations in Washington from 2005 to 2012 and is now director of video at the Post, said Gaines's responsibilities included making sure all of AP's videos could be immediately delivered to and broadcast on the many news outlets that subscribed to the AP feed.

Gelman recalled calling Gaines at home on Christmas Day in 2006 because AP's video feed wasn't showing up properly on different news outlets, and no one else knew how to fix it. "We were publishing breaking news, and no one could see it," Gelman told the Post. "He was the only person at that time who understood all of the technology, and he understood the urgency. He never got flustered when it was all going to hell. He was always just calm."

The news of Gaines' death left current and former colleagues stunned.

"It is hard to lose any AP colleague, but particularly grievous when it is someone like Jim Gaines, who was a delightful human being," said **Brad Kalbfeld**, former long-time managing editor of AP Broadcast and now chief operating officer and managing editor for EnergyGuardian. "I worked very closely with Jim on the launch of the Online Video Network 10 years ago. The project was a technological and editorial challenge; we had a lot of complicated problems to solve.

"Tackling such a big undertaking with Jim was fun. He was smart, creative and open to all sorts of new ideas. He was easy to be with and to work with: sharp, clever, funny (always), enthusiastic, warm and caring."

Jim Williams, former senior vice president of AP Global Broadcast and now chief executive officer of News Media Management, LLC, described Gaines as "one of AP's best technology employees when I was there. Always had a positive approach to his work."

"I am shocked and sad to hear this," said **Dave Tomlin**, who held a number of executive positions at AP headquarters before retiring from the corporate counsel's staff. "What a first-rate person Jim was, such a loss. The moment I remember best was his visit to my office on his victory rounds with gifts after returning home from India with his new daughter. He gave me a little hand-carved letter opener with an elephant on the handle. He was radiant with pride and happiness."

Brad Martin, senior manager of the operations control center at AP's Kansas City office, said Gaines was in a different group and they rarely worked together on projects. However, the video services were supported by the control center so there were times they were in communication. "I must say that he treated each of those contacts as though we were close friends," Martin said. "Conversations between us were as much personal as they were company business. He was that way with everyone though, so from that perspective I was no different than anyone else. I never saw him without that familiar grin, he was just such a happy person and he always greeted me with great emotion and a big bear hug on my frequent trips to Cranbury."

Gaines was also a dedicated family man.

A few weeks ago, he organized a bring your child to work day at the Cranbury office. Caluori recalled looking out the window and seeing Gaines, wearing a bright green shirt, blowing enormous bubbles with the children. "I couldn't tell whose face was happier, Jim's or the kids," Caluori said.

In Plainsboro, neighbor Barry Brown told the Star-Ledger that Gaines was the "glue that held it all together."

"He was the warmest, greatest person you could imagine," Brown said.

Caluori shared a story about Gaines' hiring. "Apparently, during his job interview, which took place over dinner with **Ron Jacob**, then head of the technology development, and also I think **Jim Gerberich**, Gaines was asked what his greatest accomplishment was at his current employer (systems manager at Macy's advertising department.) He managed to catch a piece of food in his throat at just that moment and was so overcome with coughing he had to leave the table for a while.

"When he returned, Jacob asked him if he could answer the question he was asked before he 'lost it.' Apparently he did a great job because he was hired the next day," Caluori said.

"There's shock, everybody's surprised, can't understand why such a good person would disappear. And there's just a great appreciation for who he was and what an example he set for how we should live... Probably the most poignant thing somebody said to me today was: 'Remember Jim, be kind today.'"

What memories do you have of Jim? Email them to Mark Mittelstadt at markmitt71@yahoo.com for inclusion in Friday's Connecting.

Latest from AP on the Amtrak crash:
- Amtrak train was speeding before wreck, but why?
- NTSB cautions about remarks that engineer was "reckless and irresponsible"

Connecting mailbox

Transgender issues will be next frontier

Cliff Schiappa - Thank you so much for including Elaine Hooker's NY Times piece about her transgender son, and I was heartened to see the positive responses from other Connecting readers.

As a gay man, I believe transgender issues will be the next frontier in the conversation about social issues, and I am still learning so much about the T portion of the LGBT

acronym myself.

I've become friends with a businessman who joined the board of the Mid America Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce to help give greater voice to the transgender community as his son, like Elaine's, is transgender. Surprisingly, I'm finding folks in Kansas City are quite open to learning about this issue, and as expected, when someone realizes they know someone who is transgender, it becomes a wonderfully enlightening experience.

The most recent concert performed by Heartland Men's Chorus (where I'm employed as Development Director) was called "Modern Families" and it featured stories of different folks to illustrate the idea that nobody defines what family is, other than those in that particular family. The concert was narrated by a transgender woman who is a C-level executive at a major law firm here in Kansas City and one of the families we sung about was headed by a lesbian couple and they had two internationally-adopted children, one who came out as transgender at the age of 16. One of his mothers confessed they are still struggling with the pronouns, but they embrace their son as he grows up to become the man he was meant to be.

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From a new Connecting member

New Connecting member **Eileen Lockwood** offers these comments:

I, too, used a typewriter for a long time, until I got my first computer in 1985, but the typewriter had an advantage over the computer in at least one way. Typists, as Mike Doan points out, had to push hard on the keys (even in more "modern" times). I took piano lessons for 17 years, and I found that the two instruments were perfect "companions." Each one strengthened my fingers so that I became more proficient in both. No such luck with my new iMac, though, but it sure does have a lot of great features that no old-time typist could never have imagined.

Re Woodrow Wilson's VP, Thomas Riley Marshall: Quite an interesting entry in my old, hard-copy World Book. He was the only vice president in 100 years to serve two terms with the same president. And, when Wilson became too ill to work, he refused to listen to to people who urged him to declare himself president. Betcha there were a few VPs after that who would have jumped at the chance.

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In search of phones with Joe Dill in Demo 1968 convention

Mark Thayer - The Democratic National Convention was headed to Chicago in the summer of 1968. Along about April the Communications Workers (telephone company employees) went on strike. There were no cell phones and darn few mobile phones in those days.

Joe Dill was ACOB and I was Broadcast Editor at the time. As June rolled around and no end to the strike in sight, Joe and I went searching for telephone access in the Back of The Yards section where the convention was to be held at the Stockyards. BTW, that was Chicago Mayor Richard Daley's home area.

There was ample evidence that demonstrators would try to disrupt the convention. Dill and I walked the neighborhood and came across a cafe with an outer door to the street and about four feet in there was another door to enter the coffee shop. Between the two doors we spied a pay phone.

Dill quickly struck a deal with the owner for exclusive AP use of the phone 24-hours a day and we walked away with keys to the outer door after slipping him $100. (Big money in 1968)

A waitress overheard what was happening. She lived nearby and offered access to her apartment 24-hours a day during the convention period. She told us how to buzz her or gain access if she was at work and walked away with another cash bonus.

The last stop was a flophouse on the second floor of a two-story walk up. There was one pay phone on the wall and at least 50 cuts lined up in rows of three or four. For another cash bonus, AP quickly had exclusive access to yet a third phone.

We then turned our attention to the Hilton Hotel downtown on Lake Michigan. There were plenty of pay phones visible in the area. But we sought those less obvious. We found one in a stairwell on a high floor (12 or 14?) and added the location to the list we passed to the reporters covering any potential riots.

This is the only one I know that an AP reporter tried to use. When he arrived, a Secret Service agent had commandeered the unit and refused to give it up.

Inside the convention hall, news media were allowed to set up as they had at previous conventions.

Midway through the convention the strike came to an end.

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Was it a K300?

Paul Webster - Spent a lot of time in photos with AP but am getting older by the minute (83 now). When I read Gene Herrick's remarks about wirephoto equipment and he mentioned a chest high machine producing 8/11 prints (name unknown), I recall it be a K300. Is my memory still working?

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An invitation to offer your manuscripts, book proposals

Tim Harper - In addition to listing the titles I've published as editor of the CUNY Journalism Press (in Wednesday's Connecting), I should have extended an invitation to all Connecting colleagues to submit their journalism-related manuscripts and/or proposals (proposals are preferred) to me at press@journalism.cuny.edu

Anything by, for or about journalists is fair game, but fair warning: we've gotten stacks of proposals for memoirs about how it was back in the day, and those are a hard sell unless you're a household name or, better yet, you can zero in on some particular area of coverage, the way we did with books about the Pentagon Papers and the Arab Spring. For example, I'd welcome a book about the African-American press, especially sports. A biography of Wendell Smith, anyone?

Modern slavery - telling their stories

AP national writer **Martha Mendoza** shared on Facebook: "I'd like to introduce you to some of the hundreds of men rescued after our Associated Press investigation uncovered modern-day slavery feeding the supply chains of major U.S. stores."

Click **here** for the their stories, which begin:

For years these men were trafficked under fake names, forced to work long hours on Thai-run fishing boats for little or no money and brutally beaten by their captains. Now, as they wait on an Indonesian island for the day when they can go home, they finally have their real names and identities back.

The men from Myanmar, Cambodia and Laos are migrants who were lured or forced into the Thai fishing industry and sent to a remote Indonesian island village called Benjina, an Associated Press investigation found. Their catch enters the supply chains of major American stores and supermarkets and can end up on our dinner plates. As soon as Indonesian officials arrived to investigate allegations of modern-day slavery, they started evacuations.

When word spread that a rescue was imminent, hundreds of men raced through the rain onto six giant fishing trawlers to be taken to safety on the island of Tual.

Nearly 600 people have been rescued or identified to be repatriated in Tual and Benjina. Hundreds of stranded Thai fishermen are also waiting to be processed.

The first step in the process is to photograph each man, one by one, holding a sign with his name, his nationality, his age and the ship that served as his floating prison. The International Organization for Migration is working alongside embassies to gather information for passports.

The men hope to be able to board flights within the next few weeks and return home to families they have not seen in years, even decades.

Profiles of new Connecting members

Robert Weller (**Email**) - I joined AP in Spokane in 1973 after working for UPI in Helena. I quickly was moved to Seattle.

I transferred to the General Desk in 1974, was named Anchorage COB in 1976, covering the opening of the trans-Alaska pipeline. I also went whaling with Eskimos in a seal-skin board. In 1979 was made a foreign correspondent in Johannesburg. Later I was assigned to the Nairobi bureau, where I was sent to help cover the Indira Gandhi assassination.

In 1985 I was named West Africa Correspondent, covering 23 countries but also being sent back to the other side of the continent to cover Madagascar and the independence of Namibia. During a visit to a primate center doing research on AIDS, I was knocked down by a lowland gorilla. Horst Faas agreed to pay the expenses for a $10 lens filter. This made the AP Log.

I returned to the U.S. in 1993, first being named Western Colorado correspondent in

Grand Junction. In 1997, I moved to Denver, where I was the lead reporter on the Columbine Massacre.

I retired early in 2008 and since then have written for the Huffington Post, Digital Journal, the Snowmass Sun and others.

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Ann Randolph (**Email**) - I started with AP in 1993 as Assistant Controller, became Senior Assistant Controller in 1996 and Controller and Assistant Treasurer in 1998 until 2004.

I managed corporate staff with responsibility for consolidated financial and management reporting, domestic and international accounting, billing and collections, payroll, fixed assets and cash management. Reported to the Director of Corporate Finance, (Dan Boruch)

After leaving the AP I was a Divisional Controller at Edison Schools Inc., which at that time was the nation's largest private operator of public schools, managing elementary and secondary public schools under contracts with school districts and charter school boards. I was with Edison for just a short time and then went to McCann Worldgroup (advertising) which is a subsidiary of Interpublic Group of Companies (IPG).
I have been with McCann since mid- 2005 as Director Financial Controls, Processes & Contract Compliance. At McCann I primarily deal with contract compliance and revenue recognition-related issues.

I love living in NYC and enjoy as many of the cultural events as I can.

Stories of interest

Facebook's Instant Articles are live: Either a shrewd mobile move by publishers - or feeding the Borg (Nieman)

I hesitate to roll one more boulder up Thinkpiece Mountain today, but the long-rumored publishing-natively-to-Facebook deal has finally arrived. Nine publishers - The New York Times, National Geographic, BuzzFeed, NBC News, The Atlantic, The Guardian, BBC News, Spiegel, and Bild - are involved, and top editors at many of them are in this Facebook promotional video for what it's calling Instant Articles.

If you want to see what an Instant Article looks like, head to the Facebook app on your iPhone - or check out this video of one from the Times' Alastair Coote:

Click **here** to read more.

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"I Am Not Backing Off Anything I Said" (Slate)

In a blockbuster 10,000-word story for the London Review of Books this week, longtime New Yorker investigative journalist Seymour Hersh called into question the official account of the American raid that killed Osama Bin Laden, and argued that what is arguably seen as the apex of Barack Obama's presidency is actually built on a lie.

Hersh's piece claims that Bin Laden was being held prisoner by the Pakistani military and intelligence service (the ISI), who were using him as a means to control Taliban and al-Qaida elements, and hoping to use him as leverage in their relationship with the United States. According to Hersh, who relied largely on an anonymous intelligence source, the Obama administration found out that Pakistan had Bin Laden, and eventually convinced Pakistani military leaders to allow a raid on the compound where Bin Laden was being held. The plan, Hersh writes, was to say publicly that Bin Laden was killed not in the raid but in a drone strike. The White House, however, supposedly broke this deal because of the political value of making the details of the raid public.

Hersh's story has been much debated over the past several days, with many calling it into question and (a comparable few) others applauding its willingness to undercut the official narrative. NBC News and the AFP have both backed up small elements of Hersh's story, although both outlets have also called other elements of his piece into question (and NBC later backed away from its original reporting). And no news source has supported Hersh's largest claim-that the president lied about the raid.

Click **here** to read more.

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Nine takeaways from the Verizon-AOL Deal (Capital New York)

It's easy to quickly label yesterday's Verizon purchase of AOL as one aging utility buying another. One superannuated phone company buying a web company that's gotten long in the tooth. Two companies of slowing revenue growth looking for updated identities and finding ways to compete with increasingly asymmetrical competition.

Those characterizations all contain truth, but provide just one view of this likely $4.4 billion transaction. Look into the kaleidoscope of the deal, and it breaks into an ever-changing array of colors. Scale, whether Verizon's or AOL's, both big players in their worlds, now only gets you so far, the deal tells us. In an age when audiences' habits and loyalty prove increasingly tenuous and advertisers' willingness to test new platforms grows, no business is stable. That shaky earth means follow-on mergers and deals are more likely to happen.

Let's look into the prism, picking out nine compelling, short-form views:

Click **here** to read more.

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White House marks Austin Tice's 1,000th day of captivity (McClatchy)

The White House is using the 1,000th day of journalist Austin Tice's captivity to renew calls on his captors to release him.

The Marine Corps veteran who went to cover the conflict in Syria for McClatchy and other news outlets, was abducted in August 2012 while reporting from a suburb of Damascus in Syria. In a statement, National Security Council Spokesperson Bernadette Meehan said the U.S. would continue to work "tirelessly" to bring Tice home to his family, including his parents, Debra and Marc.

"It is with a heavy heart that we mark American journalist Austin Tice's 1,000th day in captivity," Meehan said, noting the award-winning journalist and Marine Corps veteran, entered Syria in May 2012 "with a desire to report on the impact of the war on ordinary Syrians and an eagerness to help others -- values that were instilled in him by his loving family and close friends."

Click **here** to read more.

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McClatchy Reorganizes, Adding National Revenue and Video Teams, While Putting New Accent on Data Management (NetNewsCheck)

SACRAMENTO - This week, The McClatchy Co. began rolling out redesigns at three of its California newspapers, but there are even more tectonic changes underway in the company's corporate and sales structures, along with an aggressive new data strategy. All are aimed at pulling the company out of defensive mode and into a growth position rooted in digital.

The corporate changes, which will see a realignment in positions and reporting structures, officially take effect in June, but most of the important pieces - including a retooled audience development approach, a granular focus on data management, changes to its advertising departments and sales incentivization, the addition of national teams for digital revenue and video and changes to newsroom workflow and deadline structures - have been falling into place over recent months.

Click **here** to read more.

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One Year Later, 11 Questions for Dean Baquet (New York Times)

Talk about a tumultuous 12 months.

A year ago, Jill Abramson was still the executive editor of The Times. Her abrupt ouster on the afternoon of May 14 feels more remote than that, maybe because of the rapid rate of change and the extraordinarily eventful year that followed. (She landed on her feet, teaching at Harvard, beginning a new venture to fund long-form journalism and writing a book.)

Ms. Abramson was replaced by Dean Baquet, her managing editor, the No. 2 job in the newsroom. A former Times Washington bureau chief, he had also been executive editor of The Los Angeles Times. On Tuesday, I quizzed him for a few minutes, asking for quick answers to some questions about the year just past. (Some of his answers have been condensed for clarity.) Given the newsroom budget cutbacks, the new efforts to find revenue to replace falling print-ad dollars, and the closer-than-ever ties between the business and editorial sides of The Times, this seemed like a good time to ask Mr. Baquet to take stock.

Click **here** to read more.

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Dear media, when peacekeepers rape African kids, don't call it a "sex-for-food scandal" (Vox)

I have two modest proposals: 1) peacekeeping troops should not rape children, and 2) if peacekeepers do rape children, the media should go ahead and call that a "child rape scandal," not a "sex-for-food scandal."

Seems reasonable enough, right? After all, there are no "peacekeeper" or "food" exceptions to the moral and legal rule that children cannot consent. Adults having sex with children is rape. That is terrible enough under any circumstances, but it is particularly appalling to think of peacekeepers taking advantage of the desperate people they are supposed to be protecting.

And yet, as my friend Kate Cronin-Furman points out in a post on Wronging Rights, that turns out to be a tall order. An internal UN report that recently leaked has accused French soldiers in the Central African Republic of forcing "hungry, homeless young boys to perform sex acts on them in return for small amounts of food, water and sometimes some cash."

For some reason, much of the international media has apparently decided to report that

story as a "sex-for-food" scandal:

Click **here** to read more.

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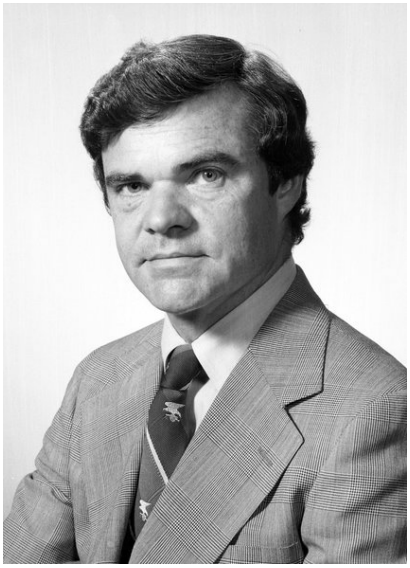
Ed Fouhy, TV Newsman and Promoter of Civic Journalism, Dies at 80 (New York Times)



Ed Fouhy, a television news executive who won five Emmy Awards, worked at all three major broadcast networks and produced two presidential debates during a 35-year career in Washington, died on Wednesday in Chatham, Mass. He was 80.

The cause was cancer, his daughter, Beth, said.

He joined the "CBS Morning News" in 1966 as a field producer covering the civil rights movement and later served as bureau chief on the West Coast and in Saigon during the Vietnam War. He was the Washington producer for the "CBS Evening News With Walter Cronkite" from 1969 to 1974, when President Richard M. Nixon stunned the nation with his historic visit to China, fended off congressional challenges after Watergate and finally resigned.

Mr. Fouhy (pronounced FOO-ee) later served as Washington bureau chief and vice president for news at CBS, as a producer and deputy Washington bureau chief at NBC News and as Washington bureau chief and vice president for news at ABC, before returning to NBC in 1985 to start the newsmagazine program "American Almanac."

Click **here** to read more.

Today in History - May 14, 2015

By The Associated Press

Today is Thursday, May 14, the 134th day of 2015. There are 231 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On May 14, 1955, representatives from eight Communist bloc countries, including the Soviet Union, signed the Warsaw Pact in Poland. (The Pact was dissolved in July 1991.)

On this date:

In 1643, Louis XIV became King of France at age four upon the death of his father, Louis XIII.

In 1796, English physician Edward Jenner inoculated 8-year-old James Phipps against smallpox by using cowpox matter.

In 1804, the Lewis and Clark expedition to explore the Louisiana Territory as well as the Pacific Northwest left camp near present-day Hartford, Illinois.

In 1900, the Olympic games opened in Paris as part of the 1900 World's Fair.

In 1913, the Rockefeller Foundation was founded in New York.

In 1925, the Virginia Woolf novel "Mrs Dalloway" was first published in England and the United States.

In 1940, the Netherlands surrendered to invading German forces during World War II.

In 1948, according to the current-era calendar, the independent state of Israel was proclaimed in Tel Aviv.

In 1961, Freedom Riders were attacked by violent mobs in Anniston and Birmingham, Alabama.

In 1973, the United States launched Skylab 1, its first manned space station. (Skylab 1 remained in orbit for six years before burning up during re-entry in 1979.) The National Right to Life Committee was incorporated.

In 1988, 27 people, mostly teens, were killed when their church bus collided with a pickup truck going the wrong direction on a highway near Carrollton, Kentucky. (Truck driver Larry Mahoney served 9 1/2 years in prison for manslaughter.)

In 1998, singer-actor Frank Sinatra died at a Los Angeles hospital at age 82. The hit sitcom "Seinfeld" aired its final episode after nine years on NBC.

Ten years ago: The U.S. military in Iraq wrapped up Operation Matador, a major offensive in a remote desert region near the Syrian border.

Five years ago: President Barack Obama heatedly condemned what he called a "ridiculous spectacle" of oil executives shifting blame for the BP oil spill in congressional hearings and denounced a "cozy relationship" between their companies and the federal government. Space shuttle Atlantis thundered away on what turned out to be its next-to-last voyage into orbit. NBC canceled the long-running police/courtroom drama "Law & Order" after 20 seasons on the air.

One year ago: A wildfire erupted in the north San Diego suburb of Carlsbad, destroying eight houses, two businesses and an apartment complex. Canadian-born U.S. Sen. Ted

Cruz officially renounced his birth country's citizenship amid speculation he could make a run at the White House in 2016.

Today's Birthdays: Opera singer Patrice Munsel is 90. Photo-realist artist Richard Estes is 83. Actress Sian Phillips (TV: "I, Claudius") is 82. Former Sen. Byron Dorgan, D-N.D., is 73. Movie producer George Lucas is 71. Actress Meg Foster is 67. Movie director Robert Zemeckis is 64. Rock singer David Byrne is 63. Actor Tim Roth is 54. Rock singer Ian Astbury (The Cult) is 53. Rock musician C.C. (aka Cecil) DeVille is 53. Actor Danny Huston is 53. Rock musician Mike Inez (Alice In Chains) is 49. Fabrice Morvan (ex-Milli Vanilli) is 49. Rhythm-and-blues singer Raphael Saadiq is 49. Actress Cate Blanchett is 46. Singer Danny Wood (New Kids on the Block) is 46. Movie writer-director Sofia Coppola (KOH'-pah-lah) is 44. Actor Gabriel Mann is 43. Singer Natalie Appleton (All Saints) is 42. Singer Shanice is 42. Actress Carla Jimenez is 41. Rock musician Henry Garza (Los Lonely Boys) is 37. Alt-country musician-singer Ketch Secor is 37. Rock singer-musician Dan Auerbach is 36. Rock musician Mike Retondo (Plain White T's) is 34. Actress Amber Tamblyn is 32. Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg is 31. Actress Miranda Cosgrove is 22.

Thought for Today: "The family you come from isn't as important as the family you're going to have." - Ring Lardner, American humorist (1885-1933).

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