

John Coughlin



Growing up in Ravenswood Manor and Evanston, all John Coughlin ever dreamed of becoming was a radio announcer. He would spend his spare time walking around the house, with a hand cupped to his ear, practicing station breaks. All that practicing would eventually pay off.

After only one quarter at Northwestern University, John was drafted into the Army. As a Private 1st Class, he served in Europe and the Phillipines. Returning to Northwestern to get his Bachelor of Science degree, he got his first part-time radio job at WEAW in Evanston. When the owner bought a station in Alton, Illinois, John was brought on board as Chief Announcer.

After a year in Alton, he headed back to Chicago. His overnight success came after two years of pounding on doors. A two-week summer replacement job at WBBM-AM lead to a job at WAAF. John then moved to WAIT where he met and worked with Franklin McCormick. That relationship got John "in the door" at WBBM-AM.

With 14 studios in the Wrigley Building, John had hit the "Big Time." He said he always felt that he had "died and gone to heaven" when he could stand in front of a microphone with a CBS flag and his voice was heard on the full CBS network.

When a booth announcer at WBKB-TV resigned, John got the job. There he worked with Frank Reynolds, Fahey Flynn and Lee Phillip.

During the 1950s, he was asked to do on camera work. Generations of children remember him as Bo'sun Bob, Buffalo Nickels and the voice of Mr. Pegasus (the talking table) and Caesar Penguin on *Susan's Show* from WBBM-TV on the CBS Network. He hosted *In The Bag*, *Orbit* and many other game and talk shows.

John would also anchor the news from time to time. During his news stint, the legendary P.J. Hoff got John interested in meteorology. When P.J. retired in 1970, John was asked to do the weather and the rest is history.

A few years later, when Channel 2 hired a replacement weathercaster, the public outcry was so overwhelming that the bosses admitted their mistake, rehired John and ran the unprecedented "He Beat the Bosses" campaign.

After a broadcast career of more than 40 years, he retired in 1989. With countless five-day forecasts, daily deadlines and keeping "Coogelman" in line, John now claims to enjoy "doing as little as possible."