



## **ELIZABETH BRACKETT**

Elizabeth Brackett currently serves as correspondent for WTTW11's flagship nightly public affairs program *Chicago Tonight*. During her tenure, she has covered presidential, mayoral and gubernatorial races, Chicago financial exchanges, the Chicago Bulls and genetic research, to name a few. She also co-hosted WTTW11's science program *Chicago Tomorrow*.

Since 1984, she has also served as local correspondent for the PBS program *The NewsHour with Jim Lehrer*. In that role she has covered national and international stories on an in-depth basis, and has been responsible for the reporting, writing, production and on air presentation of ten to fifteen minute tape pieces to air on the focus segments of the broadcast. Her areas of expertise include politics and urban issues -- stories she has covered include the Democratic and Republican presidential campaigns, the shuttle disaster, Chicago school reform, the Public Housing Crisis and many others.

Prior to joining WTTW, Elizabeth served as a general assignment reporter for WLS-TV (local ABC affiliate), WGN-TV and Radio and WBBM-TV (local CBS affiliate). She has also been a coordinator for the Adolescent Alternative Placement Program of the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services, a community organizer for the Uptown YMCA, served as Illinois Issues Coordinator for Jimmy Carter's presidential campaign and as fundraising director and advance director for William Singer's mayoral campaign.

Elizabeth has won two Midwest Emmy Awards, two Peter Lisagor Awards for Business Journalism and a National Peabody Award for her television reporting from the 1988 presidential campaign.

She holds a Masters Degree in social work from Our Lady of the Lake College in San Antonio, Texas, and a B.S. from the University of Indiana.



## **MARCIA DANITS**

As a single mother with two young sons, Marcia Danits launched her career as a graphic artist in the late '60s. During the Chicago Conspiracy Trial in 1969, Marcia's brother-in-law, Bill Robbins—who was a director at WBBM TV News—recommended that the station use her as a courtroom artist. That was the beginning of a 36-year career. She has covered most newsworthy Chicagoland trials during that time, working also for CBS Network News and occasionally for other Chicago stations. She has received three Emmy nominations for courtroom art and illustration.

Marcia has illustrated feature stories at WBBM, including “Cornhusks and Cowcatchers”, reported by Bob Wallace; a ride on the Amtrak Train to New York during an oil crisis in the 1980's, reported by John Callaway; and a Charles Dickens Christmas story, produced by David Finney.

She completed a Bachelor of Fine Arts Degree at the Chicago Art Institute and a Master of Liberal Arts Degree at the University of Chicago. She has taught figure drawing at the Suburban Fine Arts Center in Highland Park, Illinois.

Marcia has illustrated for newspapers, magazines, books and film documentaries. Her paintings have been exhibited in various galleries and juried art shows. One of her paintings won a bronze award in a juried show for the Wisconsin Women in the Arts. At present, along with painting in her studio, Marcia is back in school at the University of Chicago participating in a program of Asian Classical Literature.

Marcia says she considers her career as a special gift, allowing her to spend working days as if in a drawing class, constantly seeing and learning how our world works.



## **PAUL M. DAVIS**

Veteran broadcast journalist and news administrator Paul Davis began his career as a staff announcer at radio station WCRA in Effingham, Illinois, where his mother was a pioneering news director for 37 years. He was only 15. Paul earned a BA Degree in Communications from the University of Illinois and did graduate work in Educational Psychology.

By age 20, Paul was anchoring news in Texas. In 1960, he joined the news department of WCIA-TV in Champaign, Illinois, as anchor-reporter and was given the added duties of news director in 1967. During Paul's 20-year run at the station,

WCIA enjoyed one of the nation's highest audience shares for news programming.

Paul left WCIA to become news director at WGN Television and Radio in Chicago, a position he held for nearly 13 years. During his tenure, WGN-TV expanded its 9-pm news to an hour while dramatically increasing its ratings, created an hour-long Midday News and began Chicago's first weekend morning newscast. Paul implemented the city's first computerized television newsroom. He established a Washington Bureau for all Tribune stations (Tribnet) and was its first president.

Paul is one of only four journalists to have served as national president of two of the nation's largest journalism organizations, the Radio Television News Directors Association (RTNDA) and the Society of Professional Journalists (SPJ, SDX). Paul chaired the RTNDA's EEO Committee, served as a member of the RTNDA's Task Force on Diversity and chaired the Radio Television News Directors Foundation's (RTNDF) National Advisory Committee on Diversity. As a volunteer, Paul has spent countless years doing performance critiques for participants at minority journalist conventions.

Most recently, Paul served as Senior Vice President of the Foundation for American Communications in Pasadena, California, where he provided journalists around the world with educational training on complex subjects. He has three grown children and six grandchildren.

Paul served for more than ten years on the Board of Governors of the National Television Academy's Chicago chapter and he received the organization's Governor's Award in 1994. It's only fitting that he return to Chicago in 2009 to become part of the Academy's prestigious Silver Circle.



## **ARNE HARRIS**

Arne Harris started at WGN in 1956 along with director Bill Friedkin (*The French Connection*) and former network czar Fred Silverman, and Arne always delighted in saying that he had the best gig of the three. Not long after, he was hired away from WGN to travel the world as the public address announcer for the Harlem Globetrotters. His favorite story with the Trotters was going through an airport with the players: “Somebody said the little guy in the middle must be the dribbler, so that’s what they called me for about five years, ‘The Dribbler.’”

After a few years, WGN lured Arne back to his first loves – baseball and television. He spent time as the assistant director working with Vince Lloyd on the field before moving into the director’s chair, where he would bring thousands of Cub telecasts to Chicago and the nation over the next 40 years. He helped introduce innovations such as the center field camera and instant replay. But what made Arne unique was his commitment to showcasing the fans and Wrigley Field as part of each telecast.

Arne’s expertise wasn’t limited to baseball. He did a wide variety of shows and sports for WGN, including many years showcasing Bulls, Notre Dame, and DePaul basketball. He resisted network overtures for years, choosing instead to preside over Chicago’s longest-running soap opera: Cubs baseball each afternoon on WGN-TV.

He passed away October 6, 2001, just hours after directing a 13-2 Cubs win at Wrigley Field. By his side was his wife Arlene, and they were talking baseball with Cubs play-by-play man Chip Caray over dinner. Arne’s loss was a tragedy for WGN-TV, but he left behind a blueprint for over four decades of success: Take viewers to the game, show the action, and find fun at every turn.



## **ROBIN ROBINSON**

Robin Robinson is the co-anchor of “FOX Chicago News at 9:00 p.m.” A seasoned news professional, she has been with WFLD-TV for 22 years, joining the station in 1987. Robin has kept Chicago viewers informed and engaged while leading the station’s coverage of most major stories, from the sudden death of Mayor Harold Washington and the subsequent political turmoil, the underground disaster of the Loop flooding and the death of Joseph Cardinal Bernardin to uplifting events like the White Sox World Series run and the election night celebration in Grant Park.

Robin’s feature pieces tend to draw on subjects related to lifestyle improvement or social challenges. In her words: “As a reporter, I demand that we expose the urgent stories of the day with a thorough and accurate lens. As a Chicagoan, a mother, a neighbor, I am always looking for the news that gives you an edge in your everyday life.” To this end, Robin has covered stories such as helping parents understand the teenage brain, the impact that living in high violence neighborhoods has on young people or highlighting people and programs succeeding against the odds.

Prior to joining Fox Chicago News, Robin spent three years as a consumer reporter and weekend anchor for WBBM-TV and earlier reported for KMGH-TV in Denver, Colorado. A graduate of San Diego State University with a Bachelors Degree in Journalism, she started her broadcasting career while still a student, working as a secretary in the Public Affairs department at KGTV-TV in San Diego, California. While there, she won her first Emmy Award for writing a public service announcement and since then has received a half dozen Emmys, as well as recognition from the National Association of Black Journalists/Chicago Chapter, the Radio Television News Directors Association, and numerous awards from community organizations.

Robin currently resides with her family in Chicago.



## **JIM STRICKLIN**

After graduating from the Illinois Institute of Technology School of Design, Jim Stricklin began his cinematography career with the Canadian Broadcasting Company in Toronto. He filmed news, documentaries and features for Newsmagazine, allowing him to excel at his craft.

Jim was hired by NBC Chicago in 1967 on the recommendation of NBC Network Bureau Chief Les Crystal who eventually became president of NBC News. Jim's first assignment was to shoot silent 16 mm film, working with a light man (electrician). Jim was assigned to NBC's Northwest Indiana bureau where he provided extensive film coverage of the campaign and election of Richard Hatcher, the first black mayor of Gary, Indiana.

Jim eventually returned to NBC's Chicago office and his credits read like a history book. He covered the political campaigns of Richard Nixon, Robert Kennedy, George Wallace, Hubert Humphrey, Gerald Ford, Jimmy Carter, Ronald Reagan, Bill Clinton and of both George H.W. and George W. Bush. He found himself in the middle of riots and anti-war demonstrations in the '60s and '70s. Jim also traveled extensively throughout the South to cover the civil rights movement. On the international scene, Jim went to Germany to photograph the return of the hostages held by Iran, and he met Fidel Castro while filming a delegation visit to Cuba.

Jim was introduced to documentary producer Scott Craig and, to borrow a line from Casablanca, it turned out to be the beginning of a beautiful relationship. Working with Scott, Jim filmed six Emmy winning documentaries, being nominated for his own Emmy for five of those films and taking home two of the gold statuettes.

In sports, Jim was a "live" camera operator for NBA and NFL games as well as NBC golf. In the mid-'70s, he made the transition to minicam operator often handling live feeds of breaking news events. During his career, he frequently worked with David Brinkley, John Chancellor, Floyd Kalber, Dick Kay, Carol Marin and numerous other journalists. From film to tape, Jim Stricklin witnessed history and photographed it for the world.



## **JERRY TAFT**

Meteorologist Jerry Taft joined ABC 7 News as weather anchor in August of 1984. He serves as the weather anchor for ABC 7's #1 rated 5 p.m., 6 p.m. and 10 p.m. newscasts. Prior to joining ABC 7, Jerry was a weather anchor at WMAQ-TV for seven years. Before coming to Chicago, he was the weekend weatherman at KMOL-TV, the NBC affiliate in San Antonio, Texas, from 1976-1977.

Jerry served for 15 years in the United States Air Force as a pilot and forecaster before he began his career in broadcasting. He served as a classroom teacher for aviation and flight planning and as an instructor pilot in the T-38 aircraft.

When a member of the Air Force Thunderbirds came to the studio for a taping, he credited Jerry with teaching him to fly. It's that expertise that has made Jerry the perfect host of ABC 7's annual broadcast of the Air and Water show.

Jerry has been a committed supporter of the National MS Society, Greater Illinois Chapter. For several years, he has kicked off the annual MS Walk on Chicago's lakefront, one of the Society's biggest fundraisers. Jerry was instrumental in establishing the March of Dimes Chicago Chapter's popular "Sunshine Rally." He emceed the event for more than two decades, bringing together Chicago's TV meteorologists to raise awareness for the March of Dimes largest national fundraiser, "March for Babies." Through the years, he has served as the public face of countless public service announcements helping Chicago area charities.

Jerry keeps himself on the cutting edge of computer technology and knows how that technology impacts the forecasting and graphic presentation of weather. Still he never lets computer tricks get in the way of brief and straightforward presentations of what people really want to know, "What's the weather going to be like tomorrow?"

Jerry is a certified meteorologist with the AMS Seal of Approval from the American Meteorological Society and he holds a Bachelor of Science Degree in Meteorology from the University of Wisconsin. Jerry lives in the western suburbs with his wife and children.