CAROL COOLING-KOPP

Carol Cooling-Kopp credited her parents and family with teaching her to always do her best and to believe in the virtue of unselfish giving. She perfected these life lessons in a 30-year broadcast career. She rose from a community affairs producer to Executive Producer of Local Programs, from Program Manager to Director of Programming. Her creativity, hard work and commitment to excellence earned Carol twenty Chicago/Midwest Emmy® Awards and countless other industry accolades.

She joined NBC 5 in 1985 from the Pace Institute/SAFER Foundation — a job training and education program for people with criminal records — where she served as Director of Public Relations and Volunteers from their offices located at Cook County Jail.

In the Community Relations Department, Carol worked on station projects and public service campaigns. She also spent her own time working on station outreach programs, volunteering as a literacy tutor, on the Homework Hotline and for Junior Achievement at Sojourner Truth School in Cabrini-Green.

In 1989, Carol moved to the Program Department where she produced the medical series, Your Vital Signs, and specials including: When Mom & Dad Get Older, Portraits of Parenting, and The Jefferson Awards. She led the station’s production team when NBC 5 became the official partner for the Chicago Bears pre-season games and Chicago Bears Weekly. Carol spearheaded the station’s Summer Music Fest, holiday specials, and community events like NBC 5 Health & Fitness Expo at Navy Pier where thousands of Chicagoans received free health screenings. She worked on many specials, including Chicago Millennium 2000 and Target Chicago, focusing on Chicago’s drug issues.

In 2002, Carol was named Director of Special Events serving as the driving force behind the station’s Marathon coverage and the station’s ongoing 15-year partnership with the Chicago Auto Show, which won ten Emmy® Awards for NBC 5 and three for sister-station Telemundo44.

Carol battled health issues with courage and strength and passed away last October. Her work ethic and devotion to the community, the station and her colleagues earned her respect and great appreciation throughout her career as she became the heart and soul of Channel 5.

RICH KING

Rich King embodies the full meaning of the WGN-TV slogan, “Chicago’s Very Own.” Born on the south side at Holy Cross Hospital, he grew up in the Pilsen neighborhood, and graduated from De La Salle High School and the University of Illinois at Chicago.

He began his broadcast career at WGN-TV and Radio as an intern in 1968 and was hired as a news and sports writer while still attending UIC. He wrote for Hall of Fame Sportscaster Jack Brickhouse. In 1970, Rich moved to all-news radio WBHM-AM as a news writer and part time sports assistant to Brent Musburger and Brad Palmer. He advanced to News Producer, then Assistant News Director/Managing Editor, and also served as a weekend sports anchor. “I’m deeply pleased those early tapes no longer exist,” Rich says.

In 1977, Rich left his management post for a full time job at WBBM as sports reporter/anchor and executive producer of the Bears games. Three years later, Rich realized a childhood dream by becoming part of the WBBM White Sox radio team that included Harry Caray, Jimmy Piersall and Joe McConnell. Rich became Sports Director and also host of a weekend morning talk show, Sportsline. While still working in radio, Rich began his TV career as a freelance anchor at Sportsvision and later worked part time at WBBM-TV. In 1986, he left radio when Johnny Morris offered him a full time job at Channel 2.

In 1991, Rich joined WGN-TV, where he has worked with Sports Director Dan Roan for the past 23 years. Rich has won a Chicago/Midwest Emmy® for Chicago Bulls coverage. His approach to his job has remained steadfast: “Some of the best journalists in the business drilled into me early that the best approach is to present the news honestly, without frills and sensationalism.”

In 2007, Rich authored the book, My Maggie, detailing the courageous life of his first wife, a registered nurse and social worker, who battled progressive blindness, deafness and three different cancers. She died in 2002. Rich re-married in 2009 to April. Says Rich: “She brought me back to life and ended my endless babbling about retiring.” The couple lives in downtown Chicago with their rascal bishon-poodle, Parker.