

OUTLINE OF TOASTMASTER COMMENTS
DON DeGROOT: 45th ANNIVERSARY
IN BROADCASTING

(May 1976)

Theme for tonight's program is supposed to be light, happy and maybe a little irrelevant and even irreverent.

Anyway, I'm glad to be here as one of Don's friends ---it's a minority group. Actually, Don, you are fantastic --- you have told me many times!

Really, I was delighted when Pete Kizer invited me to be toastmaster (or was it Roastmaster) for Don's 45th anniversary in broadcasting ---particularly for me because I was a friendly competitor of Don's in one form or another for 30 of those years. Don was always a stand-up guy ---particularly at a group business or public service luncheon. Yep, Don would stand right up---just before the check arrived, he would stand right up and go to the men's room. But, as a friendly competitor, I wouldn't let him in!

Don has always been kind of a loner - but not by choice. However, with retirement just around the corner, no one can say that Don is not outgoing.

Some people have mentioned that Don is unique--he is really one of a kind. Many say "They threw away the mold when they made Don DeGroot!" But, even with only one, the supply exceeds the demand.

Well, one thing I did when I accepted this assignment --I asked for background data on Don's career--I stressed some of his many contributions. Well, I received a list. He did make some significant contributions---let's see now --well, he contributed his fair share to the United Foundation; he contributed to the March of Dimes; he also contributed to the office World Series pool and the football championship-pool.

As is customary in these circumstances, I also asked for some little tid-bits about Don's life --I decided on a chronological approach - starting at birth - then

highschool and college and then the business world.

Well, through an old source I heard Don wasn't a pretty baby. He's a big success today and quite presentable - but at birth, when the Doctor first saw him, he slapped him right in the face! Then, when his mother first saw him, she slapped the Doctor in the face. However, these early events had a profound social ramification - because I was told it was a picture of Don as a baby that initiated the movement toward planned parenthood.

In high school, Don had some of the usual problems - only unusual occurrence - was that at the early age of 17 he was punched in the nose by Dale Carnegie. Also in high school, Don had his first brush with sex - like so many of us at the awkward age, he clumsily suggested sex and his date promptly gave him the brush. However, he was told that he could get any girl he pleased - trouble was he wasn't pleasing any.

In college, Don was a four letter man, but when he dated Lola, she made him clean up his language. Also, the college counselor told him he could be anyone he wanted to be ---why he chose Don DeGroot is still a puzzle!

I also asked about some of his favorite movies and plays --among them was "The Naked and the Dead"---Lola said he could now play both parts simultaneously.

Don does have an independence of values --a unique philosophy of life. I mentioned years ago "Be nice to people on the way up because you meet the same people on the way down." But Don said you don't meet the same people and to hell with them!

As you know, this is an era of scientific research and experimentation. WWJ, in keeping with its progressive policies, decided to get an experimental reaction of a mouse to video sight and sound. They subjected a white mouse to 5 minutes of a WWJ editorial with Don DeGroot! The mouse ran through a maize of electrical corridors and impulses, built his own little electric chair and then pulled the switch!

Well, regardless, Don has been a big success. But, he hasn't had all the luck. Look - he lost most of his hair but he still has all of his dandruff.

But, the overall important thing is that Don is a real friend. I know in an emergency Don will be right there when he needs me.

Now, we have a special presentation from our mutual friend, Carl Lee, President of Fetzer Broadcasting. Carl, some years ago, founded the prestigious MAB past presidents club. No one can ever take that away from Don - he is for life a past president -- the group that right today still decides who runs for the Board and who will be designated as the next president. It was Carl who originated the acronym "PP" for past president - and it is a matter of MAB history that when Don DeGroot graduated from the presidency - the Board rose and saluted "Here is the biggest PP of them all!"

Incidentally, it's always a tough assignment toastmastering for a group of old professional broadcasters or old entertainers - so I don't look for laughs from this veteran audience, merely loud breathing!

Well, enough for the sermon stuff, now here comes the entertaining part.

We have some telegrams, etc.

Now, as a perpetual reminder of the respect and admiration your associates have for you, here is (a large mike converted into a lamp).

Other presentations ---books, pictures, etc.

Close

I like to come back to Detroit and particularly for such a significant milestone as 45 years of broadcasting for a respected competitor and dear friend.

As a Commissioner that came from broadcasting, I want to be proud of our industry ---of good programming, high business practices and dedicated public service. Don DeGroot and the WWJ stations do exemplify these qualities. WWJ was always a most worthy and honorable competitor. I am proud to call Don a real good friend (and to be able to get away with what I said today).

So, to Don, congratulations and best wishes, health and happiness.

To WWJ, congratulations on highest standards of business practices and on being a credit to the broadcast profession -- and best wishes for continued achievement in the "Peter Clark - Don DeGroot manner" in the challenging years ahead.