

MICHIGAN ASSOCIATION OF BROADCASTERS
50TH ANNIVERSARY DINNER
Friday, September 10, 1999
Grand Hotel Mackinac Island

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It is always a heart-warming homecoming for me to see old and new friends at MAB conventions. It is great to visit with so many longtime friends, rekindle fond memories of great friends no longer with us and greet new friends. I'm very pleased to be the honorary chairman of the 50th MAB anniversary – I am one of the few active survivors for all 50 with more entertaining anecdotes than you have time to hear. The 50 year split: 27 years in broadcasting - 23-½ years at the FCC.

As most of you know, but new members may not, the MAB launched my FCC career. The MAB in late 1973 sent a strong resolution to the entire Michigan congressional delegation endorsing my appointment as an FCC commissioner. The response was amazingly favorable.

It was fortunate that Michigan, at that time, had very influential senators and congressman on the important communications committee along with Jerry Ford, then the Republican leader in the house. The senators and congressmen were personal friends of mine or of MAB board members.

The intriguing contentious story of initiating my FCC career and the subsequent trials and tribulations of my career are too lengthy for any speech. You can read all about it in my upcoming book titled "profile of a Brokaw Generation Survivor." Needless to say, the FCC was the most intriguing, significant and rewarding work of my lifetime.

Some time after I was confirmed, a White House legal aid informed me that Republican House Leader Jerry Ford had to pound on President Nixon's desk to get my nomination out.

Nixon apparently said, "We don't need a controversial industry appointment now with Watergate."

Another memorable highlight was my oft-quoted warning from an influential Democratic leader, our own John Dingell. John railed, "Jim, why do you want the damn job. You will be beat up by Congress and overruled by the courts." Of course, Big John could make "getting beat up by Congress" a self-fulfilling prophecy. I called Big John my "Congressional Godfather" and now, that I'm no longer a commissioner subject to congressional oversight, I considered him my best friend in Congress. What a great friend! What a formidable, get yourself out of town enemy! I have many fascinating stories about Chairman or ranking communications committee member Big John, but you will have to read it in my book. Incidentally, after being on the FCC job a few years, I told John that being a regulatory "kissee" rather than "kissor" wasn't all bad. I'll always remember, Big John was always there when I needed him. I didn't even have to call.

I want to mention too, that Michigan is fortunate in having another respected, knowledgeable lawmaker on the key communications committee, my fellow Upper, Bart Stupack. He is destined to become a real leader in congress. MAB and Michigan are fortunate in having such a decent, wise, effective representative in Congress. He will make a great ally to Chairman John in 2001.

In my speeches on congressional relations, I passed along a helpful advisory to new commissioners, "Remember to add your oversight Senators and Congressmen to the Fourth Commandment. You will find that it is a good idea to honor them."

My FCC career was launched by the MAB and three subsequent reappointments strongly supported by the NAB and MAB. Fortunately, I had bi-partisan senate support for all four of my confirmation hearings.

My longtime FCC career was the catalyst for the establishment of the James H. and Mary B. Quello Center for Telecommunications Management and Law. Again, the MAB and NAB who supported all my FCC appointments are responsible for major encouragement and support for the Communications Center. Mary and I consider it the ultimate honor that our names are destined to be associated with our beloved alma mater in perpetuity. For me, it is the paramount capstone of a long and varied career that originated with the Michigan State News and WKAR, the 5000 watt college radio station.

Naturally, I salute Michigan State for such a gratifying climax to my varied communications career. I owe a special thanks to Dean Jim Spaniolo and his assistant, Communications School Development Director Patricia O'Hearn, for their dedicated fund raising efforts. I'm also thankful to the generous contributors, many in this audience, for supporting this memorable, gratifying and most enduring of my positive lifetime experiences. Needless to say, the center will have a responsible free enterprise outlook.

A major accomplishment of Dean Spaniolo was inducing Dr. Steven Wildman to head the Quello Communications Center - Dr. Wildman is a distinguished author and nationally recognized educator. It is comforting to know that the Center will be in such accomplished free enterprise oriented hands. I'm proud and pleased to have his name associated with mine at the Center.

I owe so much to so many, it would take a very lengthy speech, even the full chapter in my book, to list all the names and specific contributions. But, I can't let this evening pass without a very special salute to NAB president Eddie Fritts who I consider the most effective, dedicated leader in NAB history. The NAB under Eddie played a major role in all four of my FCC appointments. More important, from a broadcast industry viewpoint, his honesty, expertise

and open, no BS approach, received respectful consideration from both the Congress and the FCC. Again, one of Eddie's masterpiece and humorous performances will be detailed in my book. No time here.

What Eddie accomplished nationally was matched locally by the excellent organizational ability of Karole White. Under Karole's leadership the MAB has grown in stature, influence and solvency. I remember years ago whenever we needed money, we had to ask stations for an emergency two or three hundred dollar assessment from stations. So congratulations again, Karole for organizing this splendid 50th anniversary meeting and for your superb leadership over the years.

I read an article last month that could be encouraging to 40 or 50 year olds, but didn't do much for me. The article advised that if you take their advertised herbal pills, eat your veggies and exercise regularly, you could live to the ripe old age of 85! So here I am already over-ripe! Why didn't the SOB say 95! I didn't need another reminder that I really am a fugitive from the actuarial tables.

I'm lucky that my physiology hasn't yet caught up with my chronology.

At the recent NAB convention and also today, I was pleasantly greeted by dozens using the standard phrase that I associate with the last phase of life. You know – youth, age and finally, **“You look great!”**

Well, I feel OK but I no longer buy three year magazine subscriptions or store green bananas. My perennial partner, Dick Wiley, knows that I now resort to psychology to beef up my declining tennis game – When missing a tough shot I yell “Hell, when I was only 79 I would have killed that shot.” Also, as far back as 16 years ago, I either regaled or shocked the Communications Bar with “Now with the involuntary celibacy of the golden years, I read

Playboy magazine for the same reason I read National Geographic, to see fascinating places I don't get to visit."

A bright female lawyer and a positive personality, professionally and personally, said you not only **look great** but you have the spirit of a 25 year old! I replied, thanks, but I wish I had some of the other attributes of a 25 year old.

Actually, getting old isn't all bad. With greatly advanced seniority ("greatly advanced" is socially correct for "old you know what") you are considered venerable. With venerability you get credit for virtues you never possessed – that explains how I became the oldest and most awarded SOB that ever graduated from the FCC.

As you may recall, I also referred to my awards as pre-posthumous after I reached the age of 75. When a broadcast association presented me with an engineering award I confessed the award went from pre-posthumous to preposterous. I'm an old line manual idiot. But I nevertheless appreciated the sentiment.

A few months before my retirement, Tom Murphy, ABC Chief Executive, personally presented me with an IRTS lifetime achievement award at the annual luncheon in New York. For some of you who may not have heard it before, Murphy told the audience "if Commissioner Jim Quello had kept his capital city stock, he would now have 23-½ million dollars. So every year he served on the FCC cost him over a million dollars!"

That represented a big stake for me, an ordinary working stiff manager and VP. But no one could ever foresee that a broadcast stock would split 2 for 1, twice, and then 10 for one. I replied "Murph, the Lord did not ordain me to be a wealthy man, he wanted me to be a beleaguered, besieged SOB and that's what I have been at the FCC." Nice guy Murph said – "But look at all the good you are doing."

However, in my own unique way, I have been very successful – very successful – at eluding wealth whenever it came too close to me.

But monetary wealth or no wealth, I have been truly blessed.

Personally, I'm cheerfully confronting the dismal prospect that I have lived 5/6 of my life. I have no regrets and I'm grateful for whatever generic vigor that remains. I'm a happy camper from a career standpoint.

I really had a pretty good run in life with three exciting careers – army, broadcasting and the FCC.

Looking back, I had more crucial, life threatening responsibility as infantry combat battalion commander 55 years ago than any time since. The toughening war experience helped in enduring and overcoming the FCC and governmental mere verbal shots. It also qualified me as a survivor in Brokaw's "Greatest Generation" -- even if a not-so-great survivor. My late in life (age 59 to 83½) FCC career was the most important, exciting and gratifying. I'm honored that Mary and my name are destined to be associated with our great university in perpetuity.

And a final message as you face the tribulations, disappointments and triumphs of life – I have found that in the final stages of life what really counts along with some sense of accomplishment, are good health, reasonable economic sufficiency and the affection and respect of family and friends. I am blessed and fulfilled by your presence today and your friendship – that's all the wealth I ever aspired to.

So, thanks to the MAB and the many longtime friends who are here tonight. Thanks for giving me some of the most cherished memories of my life.