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TOP OF THE WEEK

SOL TAISHOFF: 1904-1982

“... the best friend the industry ever had.”

On Monday, July 26, Sol Taishoff, editor-in-chief of BROADCASTING magazine, lunched in his Washington office with former FCC Chairman Richard E. Wiley, now managing partner of Kirkland & Ellis, and—with one of his editors—talked about editorials for that week's issue. The next day, he entered Georgetown Hospital for treatment of the cancer that had been draining his strength, but he continued to work, checking on the editorial progress at the magazine. On Thursday night, as final editorial decisions were being made, he called the newsroom to inquire about the major stories and how they were being played. Asked the prognosis of his own condition, he said, “It's touch and go.” Seventeen days later, on Aug. 15, at 2:35 a.m., Sol Taishoff died, at the age of 77.

Thus, as those who knew him remarked, he had lived almost to the last as he had most of his life—working with energy and zest. It was the kind of energy and zest that had fueled the drive that made BROADCASTING the pre-eminent journal of what Taishoff called the “Fifth Estate”—the electronic mass media—and himself a major force in the radio and television industry.

Taishoff, who had been born in Minsk, in Czarist Russia, on Oct. 8, 1904, had been an adviser to presidents and a confidant to generations of FCC commissioners and broadcasters. And although he was loaded down with awards—among others, he received the National Association of Broadcasters Distinguished Service Award in 1966, the University of Missouri's Award for Distinguished Journalism (he was the first business publication journalist to be so honored), the Peabody and, earlier this year, an honorary doctorate of communications from the University of Ohio—and was accustomed to being treated with deference by people in high places, he never tired of the honors or the attention. Said one who was close to him, “He loved it.” He loved even more being a reporter. The glamour and romance he saw in the calling never paled for him. “Basically, I am just a reporter,” he once said on a formal occasion. “To me, there is no more honorable estate than that of a reporter, whether ink-stained from out of the Fourth Estate, or

those electronically activated who populate what we've labeled the Fifth Estate.” And Taishoff, who cultivated and maintained sources throughout his career, was responsible for a fair number of the magazine's beats.

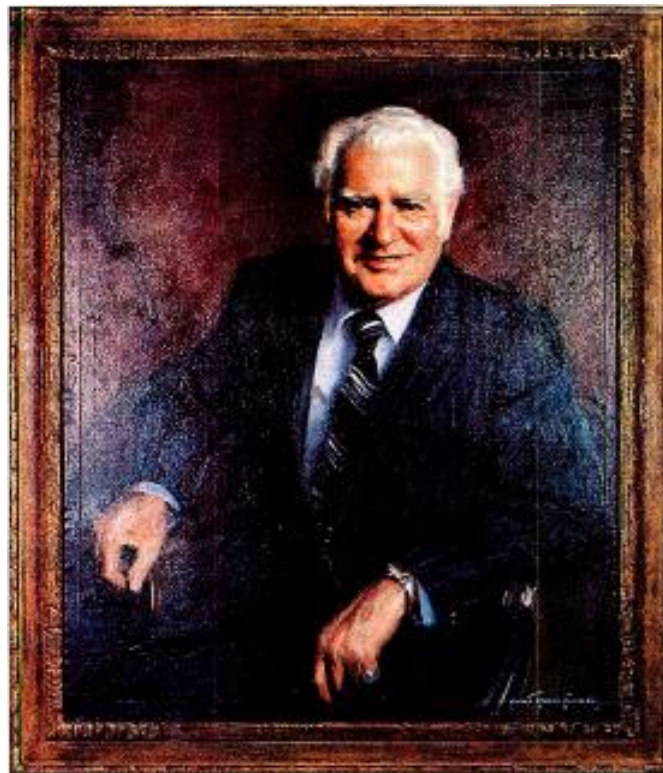
A stunning one he scored was the disclosure, several months before the fact, that controversial Newton N. Minow, President Kennedy's first appointee as FCC chairman, would resign in June 1963, after serving only two years of his seven-year term. More recently, he was the first to print the news that Edward O. Fritts was considering a run for the presidency of the National

Association of Broadcasters (“Closed Circuit,” May 31)—an item denied repeatedly before turning true dramatically two weeks ago (BROADCASTING, Aug. 16).

Taishoff, according to his friends, was a charmer, a “people's person,” as someone once described him, and a man who relished the father's role in dealing with friends and acquaintances seeking advice. He even helped others—friends among the reporters he had known in the days when BROADCASTING's offices were in the National Press Building—establish publications of their own. He provided the late Roland Davies with the seed money to start *Telecommunications Reports* in 1934 (Taishoff owned 13% of the stock until the newsletter was sold last year), and helped the late Wallace Werble Sr. found FDC Reports Inc. (A year before Werble died, five years ago, Taishoff turned back the 10% of the company he owned to the Werble family. Until then, he had been sending his proceeds

from his investment—about \$1,000 a year—to Washington's Children's Hospital Medical Center.)

And Taishoff was celebrated as a raconteur, with a vast storehouse of stories that he could bring to life with a reporter's eye for telling detail. (Asked, in an interview in connection with the magazine's 50th anniversary [Oct. 15, 1981], who were the leaders of the broadcasting industry when BROADCASTING was founded, he began: “There was Alfred J. McKosker of WOR in New York. They called him ‘Hollywood Al’ because of his fancy dress. He always wore cuffs on his clothes, you know. His



Sol Taishoff by Everett Raymond Kinstler, 1982

A portrait commissioned by the Broadcast Pioneers honoring the 50th anniversary of BROADCASTING magazine



Rabbi Joshua O. Haberman presiding over last Tuesday's services in the Washington Hebrew Congregation temple.

best friend was Mayor Jimmy Walker of New York ...")

But Taishoff was not all gentleness and good stories. He was a tough, exacting and, above all, intensely competitive editor. He hated to be beaten on a story, and he gloried in the magazine's scoops. Reporters and editors were acutely aware of Taishoff's determination to be first, as well as right, with a story. Taishoff's distinctive green mark around an item in a competitive publication served as chilling notice that the editor-in-chief had spotted a story BROADCASTING had missed.

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Taishoff had co-founded the magazine (with the late Martin Codel) in 1931, and over the 50 years that he served as its principal editor it emerged as a vigorous voice for the independence of broadcasting. To him, broadcasting, even in its infancy, when entertainment was its only staple, was a journalistic medium, and was entitled to First Amendment rights. From the first issue, the magazine fought against undue government regulation, and there was little regulation Taishoff did not regard as undue.

But he did not allow the magazine to serve as a mouthpiece for the industry. When he thought industry spokesmen were wrong or National Association of Broadcasters' decisions wrongheaded, the magazine said so. And no one doubted where the magazine stood, editorially, on an issue. As Frank Stanton, former CBS president, said in one of the eulogies delivered at the funeral last Tuesday (Aug. 17), "His was the absolutist approach ..."

Jack Harris, president of KPRC-TV Houston, made the same point in remarks at the black-tie dinner celebrating the magazine's 50th anniversary that attracted 1,200 persons to the Washington Hilton hotel (BROADCASTING, Oct. 19, 1981): "When others have wavered, Sol Taishoff and BROADCASTING have been steadfast. When others have been tempted to trim their sails, or temper their arguments, or be discreet in asserting the rights of the electronic media to first-class citizenship, they have been unyielding, and demanding, and loud. The result has been a fearless and unambiguous editorial voice that has been the industry's standard for half a century."

In Frank Stanton's view, as expressed in his eulogy, the anniversary celebration was a special occasion not only for Taishoff but for those who attended. They realized, he said, "that Sol Taishoff was the best friend the [broadcasting] industry ever had."

As was the anniversary dinner, Taishoff's funeral was

testimony to that realization. It was attended by many present and former leaders of the Fifth Estate. And besides Stanton, Taishoff was eulogized by Vincent T. Wasilewski, president of the National Association of Broadcasters; William Sims, senior partner of Dow, Lohnes & Albertson, a leading communications law firm; Richard E. Wiley, and J. Leonard Reinsch, former chairman of the Cox Broadcasting Corp.

Among the tributes that flowed in (see page 29) was one from President Reagan (who as "Dutch" Reagan was reported by BROADCASTING in 1937 to have left his sportscasting job at WHO[AM] Des Moines, Iowa, for a crack at a movie career with Warner Bros.). He referred to Taishoff as "a giant in the publishing industry" who "was an excellent journalist," who "never forgot the importance of fairness and accuracy and [whose] deep belief in freedom of the press won him the admiration of all who knew him."

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Taishoff, besides being principal editor of the magazine, was chairman of the board of Broadcasting Publications Inc., which publishes BROADCASTING and other publications, including the BROADCASTING □ CABLECASTING YEARBOOK and ACROSS THE DIAL. He had come a long way since his family took him from Minsk to Frankfurt, Germany, when he was six weeks old, then to Minz, Germany, and thence to Washington, when he was 2.

The lure of journalism attracted him at the age of 16, when he was still attending a business high school in Washington. He became a copy boy on the 8 p.m. to 4 a.m. shift of the Washington bureau of the Associated Press, and he was hooked on the business for the rest of his life.

He had become a reporter for the AP by 1926, when he was hired for the original staff of the *United States Daily*, the late David Lawrence's first version of what was to become *U.S. News & World Report*. Initially, Taishoff was on rewrite, but soon was assigned to work with one of the senior reporters—the late Drew Pearson—to cover the State, War and Navy Departments and the White House.

And it was while in Lawrence's employ that Taishoff first took professional notice of the new medium of mass communications, radio. Using the house byline Robert Mack, Taishoff wrote a column on radio for Lawrence's newspaper syndicate, Consolidated

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Wasilewski



Sims



Wiley



Stanton



Reinsch

Farewells from five who knew him well

■ Vincent T. Wasilewski, president, National Association of Broadcasters:

There are certain people that one meets for the first time, who are so distinctive and so commanding in presence, that you can remember vividly the exact time, the exact place and the circumstances under which you met them.

Sol Taishoff, I think we would agree, was one of those people. I first met him in the fall of 1949. At that time, Sol was already an industry oracle, a man of great stature in broadcasting—knowing more people therein, and giving more counsel and advice perhaps than any other human. And he remained that industry leader and adviser throughout his rich lifetime.

My relationship with Sol spans my entire professional life. I first came to Washington in 1949 as a novice attorney at the National Association of Broadcasters, and I met him shortly thereafter.

Throughout the many years, his advice, counsel and true friendship have been greatly appreciated. Fortunately, I had a marvelous opportunity last winter, as did we all, to recall and celebrate over 30 years of a close and wonderful relationship that I had with Sol, and many of you I'm sure, remember that evening, when truly the cream of the entire broadcasting media assembled at the Washington Hilton to honor this man who means so much to us.

And what a joy it was obviously, for him to have had such a tribute. His awards and accomplishments were many. Among them, being president of the Sigma Delta Chi, the Society of Professional Journalists, [receiving] the Distinguished Service Award in journalism from the University of Missouri, the Paul White Award from the Radio-Television News Directors Association, and just recently, the honorary doctorate of communications from Ohio University. And, of course, he also received the National Association of Broadcasters' Distinguished Service Award.

And he still holds the record—so he told me not too long ago—for the most martinis drunk in one sitting at the National Press Club. But that was even before I knew him.

He was a man of great zest and vitality, words which I think capture the man. He never envisioned retirement—how could he? To retire would have meant divorcing himself from the magazine and the industry he so ably

chronicled since broadcasting's infancy. Retirement would have divorced Sol from the life he loved. That never happened. And active he was until quite, quite recently. In fact, last June he was covering a National Association of Broadcasters board of directors meeting, and printing leaks that, much to my chagrin, proved invariably accurate.

Besides work in our profession, which he gave so much to, I remember the pride he had in his family. And Larry, my deepest sympathies are with you and the family. Our golf outings, gin rummy—but mostly I remember Sol Taishoff, the reporter. It was the title he used to describe himself—and truly, it is what he was and what he remains to me and those who knew and loved him.

We should be thankful. So many friends leave us and we never have expressed our true feelings. We had the honor of giving that great testimonial dinner for Sol, and we were able to tell him how much we respected him.

Sol loved it—and we loved it. We are fortunate in having known him, as friends, workers and social buddies. He has enriched our life. And I thank you, Sol.

■ Bill Sims, partner, Dow, Lohnes & Albertson:

Sol Taishoff, publishing giant, talented editor and reporter, acclaimed by Presidents and recipient of great public acclaim and numerous awards. Those are the public recognitions that we will hear over and over. We know those judgments to be true—but I would feel totally incapable of adding to that public record.

But along with the others sharing this platform today, I can pay respects to a great and good friend, and someone who enriched us by his character, his spirit and his example. I know that all of us will have many favorite memories of our association with Sol. Mine include such things as the December morning a few years ago when he showed up at dawn on our doorstep, and celebrated our Christmas and sat around the Christmas tree with our family, opening up presents.

He earned the respect and love of my family and my children almost as a caring father and grandfather. I will remember him as a lousy golfer, but as someone that I would rather play with than almost anyone else I can think of.

And perhaps most of all, I will remember his wit, his spirit, his good humor—even in times of

great family and personal tragedy—and even within the last few weeks when I believed that he knew that this event was drawing near.

Many of you and many who could not be with us today could equally attest to this man's great warmth and humility. I think hundreds and even thousands of broadcasters and other communicators, public officials, employees, professionals and friends would probably say and claim Sol Taishoff was my special friend.

And the truth is that his friendship was so broad and so great, that he could embrace us all—and he could truly be a special friend to and of the host of us. He was great, he was good, he was special, he was unique. And we will sorely miss him.

But his life was so full and so fulfilling, I hope you will share this conclusion with me—his life was so full and so fulfilling, and he so enriched all of us, that I think he made it easier for us today and—rather than mourning—we can celebrate what he did, what he was, and what he meant to all of us.

■ Richard E. Wiley, former chairman of the FCC:

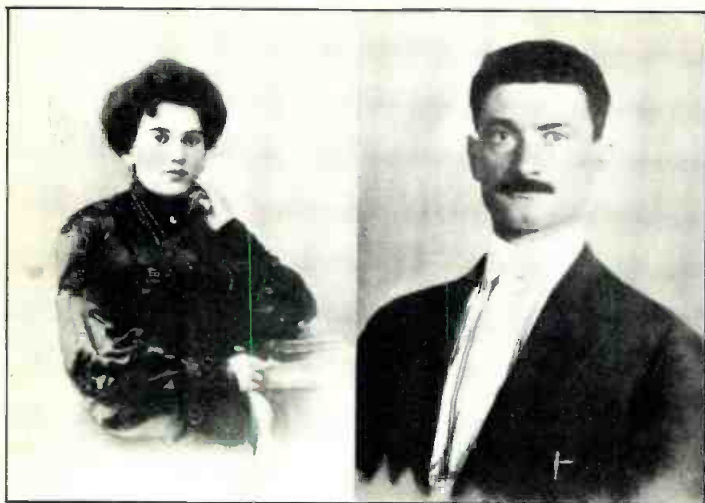
Sol Taishoff was a man of many talents, insights and experiences. There was, for example, the Sol Taishoff that all of us knew and admired so much, the founder, editor and publisher of BROADCASTING magazine, the bible of radio and television. The Sol Taishoff whose professional career encompassed almost the entirety of the history of this great industry—the man we all liked to call Mr. Broadcasting.

And then there was the Sol Taishoff who was the reporter, the man who always carried that little pad and pencil, always probing for the story and the lead that would inform and educate the readers of his famed publication.

How many of us were privileged to sit in that corner booth at the old Paul Young's restaurant, or near the window overlooking DeSales Street at Chez Camille, and be subjected to the Taishoff treatment—to be so gently but persistently subjected to his probing. And I must confess that when it was my turn to do so, all too often the Chief got the story he wanted. When it came to him, I was always a soft touch.

And when the day came that what I said and thought about broadcasting was no longer news, the luncheon introductions and invitations did not cease and the pad and pencil were still brought out for whatever tidbits I still had in me.

And that leads me, my friends, to the Sol



The earliest days. Sol Taishoff's mother was Rose Orderu Taishoff, who married his father, Joseph H. Taishoff, in Russia. The family home was in Minsk, Belorussia, where Sol was born in 1904, but they left six weeks after his birth for Frankfurt and Minz, Germany, to spend two more years before emigrating to the United States. Joseph Taishoff was a salesman with a wholesale grocery, and also was affiliated with the Metropolitan Life Insurance Co. According to his son, Jack, "he was known to the entire Jewish community as a helping hand to Russian immigrants seeking to establish themselves in small business enterprises." Joseph Taishoff died at 39 in 1916. **At right.** Sol Taishoff in a highchair, probably in a professional photographer's studio, accompanied by his two older brothers—Jack (center) and Jerry.



Taishoff that I will perhaps remember best—the friend, companion, adviser, confidant of government officials in the communications field.

And so it was for me, to my very great fortune.

I remember, it was the spring of 1971 when I had been general counsel of the FCC only about six months, and I asked Sol over lunch about a tempting overture that I had received from the White House to join the President's staff.

Well, Sol's advice was quick and concise: "Don't do it," he said. "Don't leave the FCC because you're going to be a commissioner and then chairman."

Well, frankly, I was considerably taken back by this assertion, and I asked him earnestly, "But, Sol, does Dean Burch or the President know about this?" To which Sol responded, characteristically, "No, but they will!"

And as the record would show, I guess, they did come to know. In any case, suffice it to say that was enough for me. I turned down the White House, and I stayed at the FCC.

And this was far from the only advice I received from Sol Taishoff. Perhaps many of the good ideas that I may have had during my tenure at the commission were originated or at least improved over a good lunch with the master. A better friend and adviser no public official could ever have had.

Sol Taishoff, pioneer, editor, publisher, reporter, consultant, confidant—and also leader of his beloved Fifth Estate. Staunch defender of the First Amendment, good family man, and Jewish father to Larry, but also perhaps to a young man from Illinois. Sol Taishoff was all of these, and much, much more. And that is why you and I will never

forget him.

And so, rest in peace, Mr. Broadcasting. Rest in peace.

■ *Frank Stanton, former president, CBS Inc.*

We are here today to honor the remarkable life of a remarkable man. The man remarkable in his qualities of character, achievements and intellect. His life remarkable in that he was the chronicler of an industry that emerged during his tenure from the crystal set and headphones to satellites and teletext.

Sol Taishoff was, in character, steadily courageous; in achievements, most striking; in intellect, ever inquiring.

Courage was the mark of his professional career. From his initial editorial in the fledgling trade paper of which he was co-founder, to the day he went into Georgetown hospital, his steadfast belief in a free press, broadcast as well as print, was a beacon for an industry that had to find its way in the 20th century, and had to take its bearing at critical times along the way.

The unique distinction he earned in his special field of endeavor was due in large measure to his dedicated forthrightness, whether dealing with broadcasters, the government or his advertisers.

Among the causes Sol held holy, foremost was the First Amendment. He believed that the broadcast media deserved equality with print, and he never flinched or blinked in his crusade to bring radio and television to parity. For Sol, radio, and later television, were more than entertainment and commerce.

But Sol's approach was his own. While he was supportive of the efforts of many here today, and he could appreciate the logic of the

legal mind, he did not choose that way to make his case. His was, as one close to him put it, "the right or wrong approach." There were no shadings as far as he was concerned. His was the absolutist approach for all of us who knew and loved him. There was never any doubt of where the right lay.

In achievements, Sol's legacy is the journal to which he devoted his career. It stands as the paper of record in an industry of cross currents and diversity.

For over 50 years, BROADCASTING magazine has held its position as *the* professional trade paper. There have been competitors, there have been derivatives. But today, as the industry is entering its most expansive period in history, Sol's magazine of the Fifth Estate stands at the very top.

The Taishoff legend was enhanced over the years by the recognition of his peers. His leadership was acknowledged when he was elected president of Sigma Delta Chi—no mean accolade for the editor of a trade journal, especially at a time when broadcast reporters were less than welcome at many press tables.

Later, in 1966, the industry about which Sol reported went outside its universe to give him its most prestigious honor.

For Sol, perhaps none of his many awards matched that night a year ago when over a thousand of the leaders from broadcasting and government joined to honor him and BROADCASTING on its 50th birthday.

In making that observation, I do so not to diminish in any way his other achievements. The reason I believe that night in the Hilton meant so much to the man we knew and respected is because he was with his friends—friends, many of whom had turned to Sol for counsel over the years—men and women who



The brothers Taishoff. This is one of the few existing pictures showing Sol Taishoff with his three brothers. From left to right, and in ascending order of age: Leon, Sol, Jack and Jerry. Only Jack survives. **At right.** This picture of Betty Tash Taishoff and the three children of her marriage to Sol Taishoff has been in ST's office for as many years as the present staff remembers. The youngest child was Robert, nicknamed Chuckie, who died in a tragic bicycle accident in 1949. The older son is Lawrence B. Taishoff, now the president and publisher of Broadcasting Publications Inc. The oldest child, Joanne (Josie), died in 1977, just a month after her mother. They both succumbed to cancer, as did Sol Taishoff last week. The surviving family includes six grandchildren (Larry's three sons and Joanne's two sons and a daughter) and two great-grandchildren, as well as scores of cousins, nieces and nephews.



realized that Sol Taishoff was the best friend the industry ever had.

Through the years, Sol was BROADCASTING'S editor, its publisher, its principal owner. He was an entrepreneur in other endeavors, as those of us who know DeSales Street can testify.

But during all his years, from the days with David Lawrence to my final conversation with him a few weeks ago, he was a reporter. His was an inquiring mind, always on the alert for a story, always challenging and always fair. A journalist in the full sense of the word.

All of us who knew him and worked with him have been enriched by his presence.

■ *Leonard Reinsch, former chairman, Cox Broadcasting Corp.*

As a long-time friend—in fact, 48 years—of Sol Taishoff and the Taishoff family, I've been given the privilege to express a few thoughts that many of you would also express if you were up here.

To tell about all the good things and the fine deeds and the greatness of Sol would take a long, long time.

A few months ago, I was in Washington visiting with Sol a short time after he had learned that the X-rays showed a tiny, tiny spot on his remaining lung, and the diagnosis was malignant cancer. After Sol mentioned that to me, he said, "You know, I beat the odds before. I really beat the odds, Leonardo!"

And you could tell that there was a determination to beat the odds again. He was thinking back to that day in 1968, when he had to have a lung removed. And the strenuous years and the worrisome years that followed that period.

Yes, Sol had beaten the odds—he beat them

nine times in his life. For he had that iron determination to do the right thing. You sometimes didn't recognize that because it was covered over by compassion, by a friendliness, by consideration, by an ability to listen to your problems and counsel with your problems, by the lovingness for his family and his friends.

Would that I had the words that Sol could use, as Sol was a great wordsmith. He was a great reporter, as has been mentioned. What Dick Wiley didn't mention was that when he pulled out that little white card and asked those questions, he sooner or later got the story. But you had one defense, and I noticed it used several times. "Now, Sol, I'm going to give you the whole story, but please don't print it until I give you the word."

At that point, Sol was trapped. He was a man of honor—and sometimes he saw a story appear elsewhere that he knew about long before the publication. But he kept his word.

I never knew a man who had as much fun playing golf, and, as Bill mentioned, who you could enjoy playing golf with. He had a handicap that he bragged about that a lot of us wouldn't have said too much about. But he used it to advantage, as some of us found out on the 18th green.

And then afterwards, when he smiled and told stories in the club house and played gin, we found out after all that smiling and story telling, that he was in better shape with points than we were.

His reputation as a story teller was nationwide. In fact, all of us have heard stories repeated with a disclaimer that "this is a story I got from Sol, but I can't tell it as good as Sol did"—and then proceed to hear the story.

Most of us have forgotten that we almost lost

Sol in the broadcasting business in 1944. He and Martin [Code] had been partners up to that date, and there was a difference of opinion about editorials.

Sol was about ready to pack his bag and go into other fields but, fortunately, he was persuaded to buy out his partner. A few days later, I had lunch with him at the National Press Club and Sol was shaking his head over the deal that Smitty Davis and Horace Lohnes had put together with the Cleveland Bank.

He said, "Well, you realize that I'm even in hock with my insurance? I don't know what my family is going to do if this doesn't work out." Well, I said, "Sol, BROADCASTING is too important in this industry for it not to work out, and if you have any concern, let me assure you there will be a number of us that can add some extra advertising to make sure that BROADCASTING gets over that hump."

But Sol was a good businessman, and he never had to call on us. And the strength of BROADCASTING was in the fact that it had a solid business base, and from there, Sol could operate.

The other strong factor was his intellectual integrity. Friend and foe recognized it, and while they didn't always like what he wrote, they had to agree it was written honestly and in the strong beliefs that he held.

We're not going to feel the loss of Sol immediately. A couple of weeks from now, we'll probably have a problem, and think about calling Sol. But we won't be able to do it.

May God rest your soul, Sol. And as you join your wife and son and daughter, may you enjoy the eternal peace you so well deserve. We will treasure the way you have enriched our lives, and your memory will live with us forever. So now we say, goodbye, dear friend, goodbye.

Text continues from page 28.

Press. Within four years, he was convinced radio had a bright future. And as Taishoff recalled in the interview published in BROADCASTING's 50th anniversary edition, the idea for the magazine germinated (the original name was to have been "The Fifth Estate") in talks he had with his predecessor as "Robert Mack," Martin Codel. There was then no business publication of significance to serve the infant industry.

Of course, the reason might have been the economic conditions in the Depression-bound country. Indeed, Lawrence had urged Taishoff not to gamble on a new publication at a time when new ones were expiring quickly and existing ones, including his own *United States Daily*, were facing an uncertain future. Taishoff and Codel persisted, establishing BROADCASTING as a semi-monthly. But Taishoff also assured himself a salary by continuing to write the Robert Mack column for three years, by which time the new magazine was firmly established.

Actually, if times had been better, the ownership of the magazine might be different today. BROADCASTING had been started with a financial commitment from Harry Shaw, who then owned half of WMT(AM) Cedar Rapids, Iowa, and half of a newspaper in Waterloo. He had put up \$5,200 as a down payment on \$52,000 for 52% of the stock. Taishoff and Codel each had 24%. But on March 4, 1932, the bank holding Shaw's money, the First National Bank of Waterloo, became the first in the country to close—it didn't wait for the bank holiday declared by President Roosevelt. As Taishoff recalled the crisis, in the interview published in BROADCASTING, "He [Shaw] told us that his assets were frozen and that we would have to forge for ourselves, and that he would regard his \$5,200 as a loss."

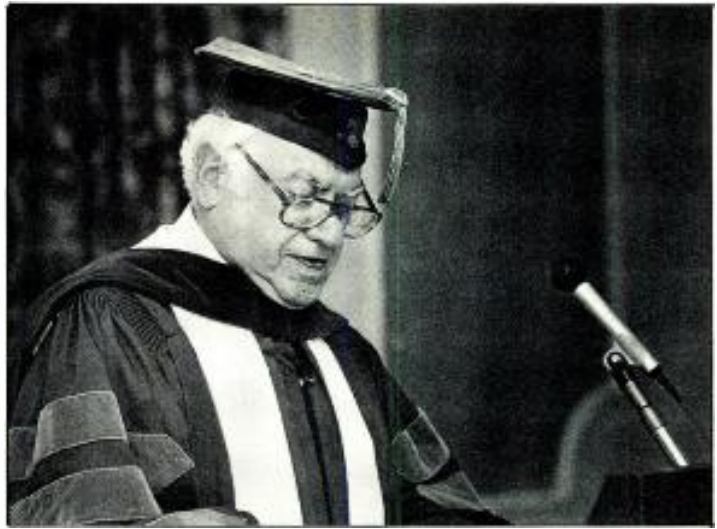
Taishoff and Codel went to several key accounts to determine whether they thought radio needed a trade journal. The accounts—station representatives, the three networks, manufacturers—agreed that it did. So BROADCASTING gave them a 15% discount on their advertising under a one-year contract. "We raised another \$6,000, and that is all the money that originally went into the magazine," Taishoff told his interviewers. "And that was the way things went until I bought out Codel in 1944."

By that time, the magazine had been a weekly for three years. It had grown and prospered as radio had grown and prospered as a major entertainment medium. But the magazine had not grown sufficiently, apparently, to accommodate two strong-willed men. Other than that Taishoff and Codel frequently battled, there are conflicting reports as to the reason for the split. Some say it was a difference of opinion on editorial policy. Others say, nonsense; Taishoff controlled that. They contend it stemmed from Codel's service with the Red Cross; not that Taishoff objected to the service but, rather, to the fact that Codel drew his salary—each partner drew \$100 a week—during the year he was traveling.

Taishoff was prepared to sell out his share of the company to Codel. But he was urged by his brother-in-law, Hy Tash, who was and still is BROADCASTING's outside certified public accountant—to stay with the magazine ("I told him, 'You love it, what else can you do?'" Tash recalled last week), and to buy out Codel—which he did, for \$750,000. Codel later was to found *Television Digest*, a weekly newsletter.

The magazine which began its existence as a chronicler of the radio industry has evolved in its coverage as technology has dictated. When television appeared, it became part of the magazine's beat. In the 1960's, it was cable television.

Now, low-power television, satellite distribution and all of the associated technologies in electronic communication are covered by the magazine, which frequently contains over 100 pages and has 37,000 subscribers throughout the country and abroad. (State Department representatives a year ago found that Cuban officials had been well informed on America's AM allocations plans from accounts they read in BROADCASTING.) In this issue the magazine is introducing still another new department—"Information Age"—to signal the further expansion of the electronic communications universe and BROADCASTING's determination to



Receiving the honorary doctor of communications from Ohio University on May 10, 1982

embrace it all in its weekly coverage.

But there have been rough patches in the development of Broadcasting Publications Inc. In 1960, Taishoff bought *Television* magazine, a monthly publication dealing with people and events in the burgeoning television industry that he hoped to nurture into a worthy companion to BROADCASTING. But although the magazine was produced with loving care—it contained lively writing and attractive makeup—it continued to lose money, even after painful cost-cutting. After several years, Taishoff's son, Lawrence, by then an executive with the company, was prepared to fold *Television*—but not Sol. "I won't be associated with a failure," he would say. But the son was convinced *Television* was serving as a drag on BROADCASTING's growth. And, when the elder Taishoff, in an initial bout with cancer, entered the hospital for the removal of a lung, in the summer of 1968, Larry moved. *Television* was merged into BROADCASTING, and disappeared as a separate magazine. Years later, the elder Taishoff acknowledged that his son, who was prepared to accept a short-term failure in the interest of what he thought would be a long-term gain, had done the right thing.

Certainly the loss of *Television* did not hurt the company's fortunes. Over the following years, issues of BROADCASTING grew fatter, not only with news of the expanding Fifth Estate but with ads. And what could be called the Taishoff legend continued to grow.

Even just before his death, by which time the broadcasting business had grown vastly in size and complexity from the days when BROADCASTING began publication, Taishoff remained so closely identified with the magazine that old-time broadcasters continued to talk of placing ads in "Sol's magazine." After all, broadcasters passing through Washington often made it a point to drop in on Taishoff to talk about old times or to seek advice. NAB's Wasilewski, in his remarks at the 50th anniversary dinner, said that "nearly every broadcaster" had called on Taishoff "for advice, references, recommendations."

Then, too, there were the stories of Taishoff's knack for charming FCC members, specifically including chairmen, and then working them for story leads. Former commissioner and chairman Robert E. Lee described the technique in his remarks at the 50th anniversary dinner. Taishoff would take commissioners to lunch at the old Colony Restaurant, Lee said, sit them down in what came to be called the "confessional," and learned a bit from one, a bit more from another, and soon had pieced together the story. Over the years, as restaurant fortunes changed, the scene shifted, but not the technique.

There were also some who called Taishoff the eighth commissioner, a reference to his presumed influence on FCC policy. The course of FCC policy over most of BROADCASTING's first 51 years

would indicate the magazine's influence—in calling for a hands-off regulatory policy—was not absolute. (It wasn't until the last several years that regulators finally got into step with Taishoff and began deregulating.) And clearly the record contains the names of commissioners and chairmen who resisted the Taishoff charm. But former Chairman Wiley, in his eulogy, testified to the influence Taishoff had exercised on him and—presumably—other FCC members: "Perhaps many of the good ideas that I may have had during my tenure at the commission were originated, or at least improved, over a good lunch with The Master. A better friend and adviser, no public official could ever have had."

Wiley also recounted a revealing anecdote about Taishoff as adviser-confessor. Wiley had joined the commission as general counsel in 1970, and at a lunch with Taishoff the following spring disclosed he had received a "tempting" offer from the White House to join the President's staff. "'Don't do it,'" Wiley said Taishoff advised. "'Don't leave the FCC because you're going to be a commissioner and then chairman.'" Wiley said he asked if then-Chairman Dean Burch or President Nixon knew of that scenario. "'No,'" he said Taishoff replied, "'but they will.'" And so they did.

As the editor of the leading broadcasting trade journal, and located in Washington, Taishoff had close ties with the White House during most administrations of the last 50 years. According to one account, he and NBC's legendary lobbyist, Frank (Scoop) Russell, lobbied the Truman White House in 1948 to name Frieda Hennock to a seven-year term instead of the two-year term for which she was being considered. That effort in behalf of the first woman appointed to the commission proved successful. But, in view of the policies she later urged—moving all television to the UHF band, for instance, and her championing of what was then called educational broadcasting—Taishoff and Russell were said to have regretted their success.

But of all the Presidents he knew, Taishoff was closest to Lyndon B. Johnson. His fortune—or, more accurately, his wife's—was built on the broadcasting properties of the Texas Broadcasting Corp. Taishoff met Johnson shortly after he arrived in Washington, in December 1931, as the top aide to a congressman, Representative Richard Kleberg (D-Tex.), whose family owned the King Ranch. Johnson wanted to learn about radio, and called Taishoff. Later, after Johnson had been elected to the House, Taishoff advised him to invest the \$50,000 his wife had inherited in the purchase of an Austin radio station, KTBC(AM). Johnson had protested that the station was not making money. "But," Taishoff said, "it will." In time, the Texas Broadcasting Co. owned, at least in part, nine radio and television stations, as well as interests in cable television systems.

Those holdings caused Johnson—after he became President—

to exercise care to avoid the appearance of a conflict of interest between his responsibilities as President and as one with a large financial interest in an industry heavily regulated by the government. So it was not unusual for him to consult with Taishoff, with whom he had become a close friend, on broadcasting matters. Johnson's decision to have his wife place her holdings in a trust was based on Taishoff's advice. And the President's decision in 1966 to reach outside of his own party to name Rosel Hyde, a sitting commissioner, as chairman was also the result of a talk with Taishoff. That decision helped protect Johnson from the kind of conflict-of-interest talk that might have been generated had the President made a conventional political choice. Indeed, many observers had expected Johnson to name Commissioner Robert T. Bartley, who not only was a Democrat but the nephew of the late House Speaker Sam Rayburn (D-Tex.), who had been Johnson's closest political ally.

Taishoff, in the interview published in the 50th anniversary issue, said he told Johnson, "Look, there's nothing wrong with naming a Republican chairman of the commission," and then noted that the commission contained a Republican, Hyde, who had already served one tour as chairman (in the 1950's) and who was not "very active in politics." Name him, Taishoff said he advised Johnson, "and they can't point a finger at you." As it happened, Hyde, a staunch conservative, was one of Taishoff's favorite commissioners.

Johnson also furnished Taishoff with a beat on the decision to renominate Commissioner Robert E. Lee to a third term (on his way to a record-breaking 28 years) on the commission. Lee, after waiting for reappointment and not receiving it, had informed the White House, as his second term was drawing to a close, in June 1967, that he did not want another term. A couple of weeks later, Lee was summoned to the White House for what turned out to be a meeting with the President. In the colorful language for which he was celebrated, the President informed Lee he was *not* leaving the commission and that he was to be renominated. He also instructed Lee to pass the word to Taishoff for his "Closed Circuit" page. By the time Lee dutifully made the call, Taishoff had already heard from the President—and the editors of the magazine led the July 17, 1967, issue of BROADCASTING with a story headed, "Lee Surrenders at the White House."

For a man who appeared to own the world, or at least his part of it, Taishoff led a life checkered with tragedy. His youngest son, Robert (Chuckie), was killed in 1949 at the age of 8, when the bicycle he was riding ran into a car. Later, he lost two of his three brothers, Jerry and Leon. (The third brother, Jack, survives.) In November 1977, eight months after Sol and his wife, Betty, celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary, she died, a victim of cancer. A month later, their daughter, Joanne (Josie), fell to the same disease. Those who knew Taishoff say he never complained of an unfair fate. He was, as someone said last week, a man of "quiet courage."

But, as someone else said, he had "lived a full life." And Taishoff had been reminded of how full in the 50 weeks of special articles on BROADCASTING's first 50 years that appeared in the magazine between October 1980 and October 1981. The pieces are being collected in a book, "The First 50 Years of Broadcasting," that will be issued in the fall. One of Taishoff's last acts in the hospital was to approve the page proofs of his introduction to the book.

Besides Larry, who is president of Broadcasting Publications Inc. and publisher of BROADCASTING magazine, Taishoff is survived by his brother, Jack, by six grandchildren (Rob, Randy and Brad Taishoff, Richard and Jim Cowan and Claudia Cowan Klein) and two great-grandchildren (Aaron and Joanna Cowan, children of Jim Cowan).

The Taishoff family has suggested that those desiring to make contributions in Sol Taishoff's name do so to the American Cancer Society or a charity of personal choice. Consideration is being given to establishment of a memorial fund, with a professional journalism or broadcasting society the probable beneficiary. □



With his son, Larry Taishoff, at BROADCASTING'S 50th anniversary dinner, Oct. 15, 1981

Testimonials to ST: Only the beginning

Space does not permit running all the letters that began pouring into BROADCASTING's headquarters last week following the death of Sol Taishoff. A sampling appears on this page. Others will appear in succeeding issues, until the story is told.

EDITOR: Sol Taishoff was a giant in the publishing industry. But more than that, he was an excellent journalist. He never forgot the importance of fairness and accuracy and his deep belief in freedom of the press won him the admiration of all who knew him.

As an avid reader of BROADCASTING magazine, I, like so many others across the country, came to appreciate and look forward to Sol's insight and wisdom. His was a true success story and he will be deeply missed.—*Ronald Reagan, The White House, Washington.*

EDITOR: He was a great friend of mine as well as that of the industry and a great pioneer. I know we will all miss him.—*Leonard Goldenson, chairman, ABC Inc., New York.*

EDITOR: Sol Taishoff is going to be missed by all of us who had the opportunity to know him over the years. His leadership of BROADCASTING guided it from the days of radio through the early days of television and into the world of new technologies. Sol was more than a reporter, chronicling our industry; he was a true broadcast pioneer whose thoughtful ideas had a profound impact on broadcasters and the audience they serve.—*Gene Jankowski, president, CBS/Broadcast Group, New York.*

EDITOR: Sol Taishoff was a pioneer who ably chronicled the growth of the broadcast industry. The consistent and definitive excellence of BROADCASTING magazine provides ample testimony that he did it better than anyone else. He was a rare combination of creative talent and journalistic integrity. All of us in broadcasting will miss him.—*Grant Tinker, chairman and chief executive officer, NBC, New York.*

EDITOR: Sol Taishoff and I had been closely associated since we had offices in the National Press Building in the early 1930's. There is no one who has held or now holds a license to broadcast or is connected in any way with the use of the airways who is not indebted to the genius of this man. He dedicated his entire life to the upbuilding of the great American system of free broadcasting. His leadership will be missed by every broadcaster [although] those who enjoyed his warm friendship will miss him most.—*Walter J. Brown, president, Spartan Radiocasting Co., Spartanburg, S.C.*

EDITOR: I share your loss as I share with you the sense of pride you must feel in his long and honorable career of service to his fellow beings. No one I know leaves so many good friends behind or can look forward to a reunion now with so many more. Broadcasters are fortunate that we were his chosen field, and it has been a privilege to walk with him as he endured the pains and enjoyed the triumphs of broadcasting's tremendous growth, which he did so much to foster.—*Julian Goodman, retired chairman of the board, NBC, Quogue, N.Y.*

EDITOR: Most of us involved in broadcasting have Sol Taishoff stories—instances where Sol's advice was sought and even followed. We remember the calls from Sol when he smelled a story, but more important to me, and I'm sure to most of us, Sol was part of our families. We

shared happy occasions as well as sad moments with him. He was more than a relative, more than "Uncle Sol." Relatives are born, friends are made. Sol made thousands of friends. We will all miss him.—*Edward M. Cramer, president, Broadcast Music Inc., New York.*

EDITOR: No one has contributed more to the industry that he loved and so productively helped to develop. He will be missed even more because he was such a marvelous human being—and friend.—*Joe L. Allbritton, Allbritton Communications, Washington.*

EDITOR: For all of us in communications, there is a sense of loss with the passing of Sol Taishoff. No individual better represented the enthusiasm, professional dedication and pioneering spirit so important to this industry's rapid growth.—*James O. Heyworth, president, Home Box Office, New York.*

EDITOR: I am so sorry to hear of Sol's death. We knew each other such a long time. He was a great institution in the industry and in the city. I shall miss him.—*Eric Sevareid, Washington.*

EDITOR: Our heartfelt condolences at the loss of Sol Taishoff, a man of vision, great strength and a strong sense of purpose. His journalistic excellence was the foundation for the most significant telecommunications publication in the history of the business.—*Pluria W. Marshall, chairman, National Black Media Coalition, Washington.*

EDITOR: For my dough, Sol's unique talent and guts set the standards of excellence for the entire trade press industry. We at Eastman will be eternally indebted to him for being the matchmaker between Carter Publications, WBAP and Eastman back in 1971. That probably is the least of our debts to him.—*Frank Boyle, chairman of the board, Eastman Radio Inc., New York.*

EDITOR: For me, and for the ever so many who called him friend, this was one of the gloomiest Mondays of my life.

Sol was a synonym for sunshine. He gave meaning to friendship. He proved time and again that no one ever broke an arm casting bread upon the waters.

The field of broadcasting, obviously, will miss him. We, who placed a high premium on his friendship, will miss him, never forget him.

We mourn with his family and those who grieve for the noble soul who enriched those who were fortunate to have crossed his path.—*Ray Bell, Foreign Claims Settlement Commission of the United States, Washington.*

EDITOR: I knew Sol for 40 years. During that time he was my friend, adviser and confidant.

When Marcus [Cohn] and I formed our law firm in 1946, it was because of the encouragement that we received from the "Dean of Broadcasting." Thereafter, he was always available to us for advice and encouragement, and we were always appreciative when he praised us to clients.

I will always remember that Sol was a reporter to the end. You may know that I called him whenever I had any news for the front of the

book. More recently, I remember that he said with a chuckle, "Of course, I may not get it by Larry, but I'll try."—*Leonard H. Marks, Cohn & Marks, Washington.*

EDITOR: I wanted to let you and the others know how sorry I was to read of Sol's death. While he and I had our differences through the years, I always respected Sol and what he stood for. More importantly, he published a magazine that reflected both his boundless energy and underlying decency. Always the reporter, he used to end our sometimes rambling luncheon conversations with several pointed questions. I'll miss his presence, but I know you all will carry on in the tradition he began.—*Harry M. Shooshan, Shooshan & Jackson Inc., Washington.*

EDITOR: It was with great sorrow that I learned of the passing of my dear good friend, an outstanding citizen of the U.S., and friend to all in the broadcasting industry. Please accept my deepest sympathy and love for a great human being.—*Mitchell Wolfson, Wometco Enterprises Inc., Miami.*

EDITOR: Someone should compile a list of all the reporters trained by Sol. I am one of them. He brought me to Washington in 1955—with my only experience as a sports stringer for United Press. I shall be forever grateful for the training and the opportunity for rapid advancement I received at BROADCASTING, and most particularly from Sol himself.—*Dawson (Tack) Nail, executive editor, Television Digest Inc., Washington.*

EDITOR: Rich and I are so sad to learn of Sol's death. He has been such a good friend and confidant. He gave us as much time and consideration with our concerns in running our radio stations as I am sure he gave the powerhouse operations.

I admired him for his business keenness. Rich, who served with him on the board of the Washington Journalism Center, admired him for his dedication to the First Amendment.—*Helen Sloane Dudman, president and general manager, WDEA-AM-FM Ellsworth, Me.*

EDITOR: Sol Taishoff wasn't a big man physically, but that didn't indicate the size of his heart. He was a giant but he didn't take advantage of his power. His circle of friends extended from the small broadcaster to the top circles of government. He had a special love affair for an industry. He had seen a seed planted, sprout, grow and develop into the world's finest communications system. He was a man who understood and knew pain and suffering and what it could do to a man's body and mind. He had walked that lonely road, met the demon head-on and had conquered him for awhile. There are many people who walk through life and never leave a footprint. Sol Taishoff left footprints that are going to be hard to fill. He had a sensitivity for our industry that will be missed, but his footprints will be around for a long time to come.—*Eugene H. Bohi, president and general manager, WGHP-TV High Point, N.C.*