Atlanta broadcaster buys baseball’s Braves

Turner Communications Corp., an Atlanta-based group broadcaster and outdoor advertising firm, has purchased the Atlanta Braves baseball team for a price reportedly in the neighborhood of $10-12 million. Neither Turner Communications (R.E. [Ted] Turner, 85%) nor the selling Atlanta/LaSalle Corp. would disclose the price, but they did say that it would be paid out on an installment basis.

Under the agreement, Mr. Turner, a 37-year-old communications executive and renowned yachtsman, will become president and chief operating officer of the new Braves Communications Inc. Turner currently serves as chairman and president of Turner Communications, a sister firm, and will continue to hold the position with the Braves.

The purchase, subject to National League approval, marks Turner’s entry into regional baseball TV networks and the outdoor advertising field. The purchase of the Braves and other interests in wholesale sporting goods distribution and small business investment.

This coming baseball season would have meant the fourth year of a five-year contract giving WTCG television rights to the Braves. Turner Communications claims to have set up the country’s largest regional baseball TV network with 29 affiliates.

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FCC to take closer look at WRC-TV EEO efforts

The FCC is going to take another look at employment practices at NBC-owned WRC-TV Washington. Last spring, the commission denied conditionally a petition to deny the station’s renewal filed by the National Organization for Women and alleging sexual discrimination in hiring and promotion. The FCC deferred action on that petition until similar charges before the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission were resolved. NOW took that action to court. Since then, the EEOC has notified the commission that talks with WRC-TV were at an impasse, and the commission has now asked the court to remand the case. The FCC says that new employment information supplied by WRC-TV is not conclusive and that further investigation by the Broadcast Bureau is necessary.

The Office of Communication of the United Church of Christ reported last week that the hiring of blacks and other minorities by TV stations in 1975 fell off from previous years although workforces increased generally.

The fourth annual report issued by the church group said commercial TV stations added 730 new full-time jobs between 1974 and 1975, a 2% increase, but the proportion of minority employees crept up from 12.4% to 12.7%.

Women employment rose better than the minorities, according to the report. They have risen from 22% of the television station workforce in 1971 to 25% in 1975. Women employment rose by 1% in 1975 over 1974.

The study is titled “Television Station Employment Practices, 1975: the Status of Minorities and Women” and is based on the official annual employment reports filed with the FCC by 639 commercial and 145 noncommercial TV stations.

The report said these stations had 42,320 employees in 1975, a jump of 9% since 1971 and of 2% in the past year. It pointed out that most new jobs are upper-level positions—officials and managers, professionals, technicians and sales workers. In contrast, jobs for clerical and service employees have declined.

Dr. Ralph M. Jennings, associate director, and Veronica M. Jefferson, field director of the Office of Communication, who conducted the study, said that minority and women employees may be receiving paper promotion at some stations to make employment practices seem better than they are when annual reports are made to the FCC.

“Minority persons made substantial gains in 1972 and 1973, rising from 8.3% of the commercial television workforce in 1971 to 11.5% in 1973,” the study stated. “The gain between 1972 and 1973 was two percentage points, from 10% to 12% of the workforce. A falloff began in 1974 when the gain was nine-tenths of one percentage point, and accelerated in 1975.”