

News Director Recalls His Early Broadcast Days

By Mike White, FOLKS Chairman of the Board

A young copyboy at Philadelphia's all-news station, KYW, calls the station's police reporter at home to alert her to an invitation to go to a city police commissioner's news conference. After working late, she would pick up after several rings. The reporter was Andrea Mitchell, who later became the NBC TV journalist in Washington, D.C. (and marry Alan Greenspan, Federal Reserve Board Chairman). The copyboy was Dick Mangrum, who is the News Director at Golden Corner's Radio Station WGOG 101.7.



Early days photo of Dick Mangrum at the controls of the radio station

In a career that started in 1968, Dick has worked at five radio stations in four states. Most of his time has been spent at WGOG, Walhalla (nearly 37 years). The station went on air in 1959 and today is owned by Georgia-Carolina Radiocasting in Toccoa, Georgia.

After graduating high school, Dick saw a small ad in *Sports Illustrated* for a broadcast trade school that included the catch phrase he still remembers: "How would you like to become a sportscaster?" Dick had always loved sports, so he persuaded his parents to let him move to Washington, D.C. and enroll in a four-month broadcasting course. Once in the nation's capital, his dream of sportscasting was pushed to the side as he became enthralled with local and national news reporting. The four-month course also included voice training. "To this day, I still get compliments on the sound of my voice and my delivery," says Dick in a great voice.

When Dick landed at WSNW in Seneca (today known as The Lake), the then owner J-A Gallimore taught him country journalism. Country journalism means going out to Walhalla High School to interview students about their water testing program or talking with a Friends of Lake Keowee board member about putting up bluebird houses in Lake Keowee's watershed. Those are the rounds made by a reporter in a small town.

Country journalism is a far cry from late night calls to Andrea Mitchell and meeting David Brinkley and Soupy Sales.

Dick has done all of those things. But he has no regrets. Dick says, "I fell fast for small town radio news, and I think there should always be a place for a local radio reporter to tell the news of his community. Neighbors should be able to tune in for the latest information and stories that are happening around them. Fifty years back, you would not need to drive more than 30 miles down the roads of rural America to find a station that made local news and community involvement staples of their programming. Sadly, many small stations now shirk those responsibilities. The immediacy of radio remains an adrenalin boost, even all these years later." ♦



Present day photo of Dick Mangrum in front of the WGOG

ABOUT 101.7 WGOG FM

WGOG 101.7 FM is a regional but locally-focused FM radio station that focuses on the Golden Corner of South Carolina-Oconee County and the Clemson-Pendleton areas of Anderson and Pickens Counties.

Known as "The Golden Corner's Radio Station," 101.7 WGOG provides primary signal service to 181,966 persons in South Carolina, North Carolina, and Georgia. WGOG is the only full power community FM radio station in Oconee County.

101.7 WGOG's format is first and foremost focused on the local area. The music is Country with a traditional slant. From 6 a.m. until 10 a.m., WGOG airs the Golden Corner's Morning Show which has been a listening tradition in the area since WGOG began operations with an AM signal in 1959. The program is the "community voice" for this prosperous area of South Carolina.