

WTJU 50th Anniversary Speech, June 2nd, 2007
Garden VIII, University of Virginia
By Chuck Taylor

Program Notes

Before I begin...a few program notes: There will be a second event this evening at the Satellite Ballroom on the Corner that will feature a "social hour" with food and beverages beginning at 7:30pm followed by a club show featuring several bands that include current or former WTJU staff members as performers including The Janks, Bombpop and the return of Noman. This event is open to the general public and there is an admission charge.

Also, many of the Alums here today are reprising their on-air shows this weekend. They began yesterday and will continue through Sunday night with one more at 2pm, Monday. Be sure to listen in. The schedule is on our website at wtju.net & it's in your information packet at the entry table if you haven't picked it up already.

Introduction

WTJU Alums, current volunteers, staff and special guests Patricia Lampkin, Vice President for Student Affairs, Assistant Vice President for Student Affairs, Christina Morell; Wayne Cozart, Director of Alumni Affairs, & Richard Kast, Associate General Counsel...I welcome you all as we celebrate the 50th Anniversary of WTJU.

Thank you for taking time to come here to honor a Radio Station. That's right...a RADIO STATION! Some of you live here in Charlottesville and others have come from all over the country for this weekend celebration. How could that possibly be?

Each one of us likely has different reasons why WTJU still means something to us. But I believe all of them flow from the uniqueness of the Founders' purpose...it was created to give **VOICE**. I will not get too Jeffersonian, but surely he was in the minds of the Founders of this station.

History

George P. Wilson, professor of Speech and Drama was the original faculty sponsor of WTJU...but the first glimmer occurred much earlier. According to the **Lee Breakiron** history (...and more about Lee in a few minutes) there were those within the University as early as **1927** that wanted U.Va. to have an educational FM radio station. That's what WTJU's classification IS; "NCE", or non-commercial **EDUCATIONAL** Radio. And yes, we drag that designation out anytime a listener calls to say an announcer talks too much!

Launching a "**second**" radio station took a person with real vision to continue pushing the **idea** of WTJU forward through barrier after barrier. I say "second because WUVA...now KISS-FM...and also started by Professor Wilson...preceded WTJU by ten years. As Lee

Breakiron and others have made clear, Professor Wilson's passion for broadcasting gave the University two distinct broadcast entities both still making an impact today.

Professor Wilson first presented a feasibility study proposing an educational radio station to the University in 1949. But it was not until 1955 that the Alumni Fund pledged \$500 towards the construction of studios and the purchase of a transmitter for the station Wilson imagined. Others that helped launch and finance the station included the Kappa Delta Pi service fraternity, the University's Engineering Experiment Station, U.Va. Buildings and Grounds, Sperry Piedmont, WUVA, WCHV, WINA, the Music Center, and the University Book Store.

That financial assistance enabled the purchase of the basic equipment needed to start a radio station. At this point I planned to introduce you to a person critical to the early engineering history of WTJU, Rowland Johnson. He was the chief engineer of the Radio & TV Recording Center, a University organization in 1955 that was the original home of WTJU. Mr. Johnson was here this weekend but had to leave early, so I recorded an interview with him yesterday so that he could still give you his personal account of the events of 1955 that led to WTJU's existence:

Roland Johnson Speech (Insert audio file)

Six other WTJU historians have documented the continuing story. Karen Sacks wrote for the 20th anniversary, Julie Inness Caruccio for the 30th, Patrick O'Rourke & Liza Douglass in 1997, and I have done **quite a lot** of archiving throughout my tenure.

But in the Fall of 2006 I heard from a WTJU alum who said he had a little "history" of WTJU and would I like to see it? Into my hands came 80 hand-written pages of an astoundingly detailed and often colorful complete history of WTJU from 1929 to 1970.

The author of this document for which we are so very grateful is **Lee Breakiron** and he is here today. Lee, please give a wave to the group! At some point, but unfortunately not by this weekend, we will have a comprehensive timeline and history on our website built upon information from Lee and the other recorders...and at the advice of my editor and for the sake of brevity the overview I had planned to give has been removed from this speech.

How WTJU Works

The introduction of new and different genres of music has continued over the years. But our growth and change is always guided by a basic philosophy of:

1. Know what went before;
2. Analyze what does and does not work;
3. Listen to other's opinions;
4. Incorporate the changes into the Big Picture; and

5. Move on.
6. But the most important element is a philosophy of honoring the musical passion and knowledge of each announcer and his or her desire to share it with the public!

Today's Challenges

Today, the station has an **on-air** broadcast radius of 60 miles in addition to a worldwide presence via web-streaming. As we move forward into the 21st Century, diverse factors (many of which couldn't have been imagined in 1957) go into making the station work:

1. Listener opinion and listener and business financial support;
2. Volunteer management availability (as none of this can happen without volunteers as is true of any organization of this type);
3. Service to the **Public**;
4. Service to the **University**;
5. Outreach **FROM** the University to the community;
6. The influence of our peers at similar radio stations who now share what they do through the internet and email;
7. The guidance of the National Federation of Community Broadcasters, the Intercollegiate Broadcast System, the Virginia Association of Broadcasters, the Corporation For Public Broadcasting and other radio organizations that exist to support our survival;
8. New FCC demands un-imagined in days gone by; **and**
9. Changing technologies and ways of communicating with our audience...from the Internet to podcasting and beyond.
10. And it's important to state that we do this while maintaining a diversity of programming choices and direct contact with listeners...at the same time that the **commercial trend** has been to **reduce** the options available to listeners. Former classical music director, Steven Quinn, used to paraphrase a comment about music he once read...that to me, defines what we do: **"WTJU plays what you don't yet know you like"**.

It is my hope that future volunteer and paid staff continue to see the **BIG Picture** of what we are and how we got here...and then **imagine** where we can go in the next 50 years.

The Volunteers

I've asked many WTJU volunteers **why it is** they contribute so much time and energy to WTJU...and most of them have difficulty explaining just why. Current volunteer managers Tim Snider, David Eisenman, George Dayton, Mare Hunter and others have been in their positions for many years. There are also those, like Brandy Savarese, who were managers when they were students and then returned as alums to hold manager positions. In addition to the music directors there are a substantial number of behind-the-scenes volunteers who support elements of our Mission including Pete Yadlowsky, our webmaster and his predecessors and Ralph Dieckmann, who has assisted me with FCC and legal documents

since 1999. There are also PSA editors, Production and Live Performance Producers, music librarians and more and more.

What we do...cannot happen without them as well as the many volunteer **djs**. Some come and serve for a short time and move on. And we're grateful to them. But I've been lucky to have quite a few who've served for **many** years, helping to create the continuity that our station needs. They have experienced something of great value in WTJU that has kept them serving year after year.

And speaking of being here for a long period of time there is someone I'd like to embarrass now. By all rights he should be here as one of the returning alums who hosted a show way back in 1973...which he did. But guess what? Week after week, 34 years later he's **still here** doing that show!! That would be Dave Rogers, a-k-a Professor BeBop. Dave, step out and take a bow! It is he, and all of the dedicated volunteers past and present that makes me realize what an important part of this University WTJU was, is, and will be. So I thank every one of you for the part you've contributed to what we are today and what we can become in the future.

Thank You

Today I also thank George P. Wilson, our Founder. I thank Rowland S. Johnson, who took Professor Wilson's dream and turned it into a technical reality and I thank all of the engineers who've maintained the station for 50 years including Alan Williams, our current contracted engineer. I thank all of the student and community volunteers who've hosted music shows or that have created news or public affairs programs.

And I **particularly thank** all of the University mentors and enablers who've created a supportive environment for us to grow including: Former Associate Dean of Students, Ron Stump and former Dean of Students, Bob Canevari. I thank John Garland, former Associate General Counsel at the University and the current Associate General Counsel, Richard Kast, who have helped with legal issues and other support of our station; I thank former Vice President of Student Affairs, William Harmon, current Vice President and Student Affairs Officer Patricia Lampkin, and Christina Morell, Assistant Vice President for Student Affairs. And I thank Leonard Sandridge, Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer and President John Casteen both of whom have given significant support to our Mission.

I also thank my paid staff members over the years including Roma Marling, Mare Hunter, Jennifer Meyer, Jane McDonald, Gayle Poirier, and Rob Nowicki. I thank the Committee for WTJU, our Advisory Group, and its many members, some of whom are here today... and I thank Bernard Mayes for directing WTJU toward a larger vision.

There are likely other influential people who've helped WTJU that I've missed, particularly in the days before my time. I, and all of the people here and not here who have, or had once

found a home where we could flourish and express ourselves...we thank all who brought us to this place. **Thank you.**

I'd now like to ask you to please quickly gather in the Lower Garden for a Group Picture to be taken by Dan Grogan, professional photographer and member of the WTJU Advisory Committee.

At this point Chuck Taylor was presented with several signed cards, gifts and a quilt made from WTJU T-shirts (by Sandy Goodson).