

Indiana Broadcast Hall of Fame

1981 marked the establishment of the Indiana Broadcast Hall of Fame which recognizes those individuals who have been directly or indirectly associated with broadcasting in the state of Indiana, and who have made a significant contribution to the industry.

Thanks to the generous contribution from the Richard M. Fairbanks Foundation, the Indiana Broadcast Hall of Fame and the broadcast exhibit in the Indiana State Museum was refurbished and updated in 2006. In recognition of this gift, the Indiana Broadcast Hall of Fame is now The Richard M. Fairbanks Indiana Broadcast Hall of Fame.

In addition to the innumerable individual accomplishments of the Pioneers, the Pioneers Foundation has collectively been successful in having established a permanent exhibit in the Indiana State Museum entitled, "Indiana Radio 1920-1950." The principle feature of the broadcast exhibition is the video interactive kiosk where Hall of Fame inductees are profiled. Each inductee's customized window allows for up to 150 words of bio information and any combination of pictures, audio or video up to four entries. The database is searchable by museum visitors and includes an eight minute narrated video of Indiana broadcast history. The Broadcast Pioneers update the individual entries each year as new honorees are added to the database. Eventually this data will be incorporated into the Museum's web site as an independent web page.

The Indiana broadcast display encompasses approximately 500 square feet of the "Global Indiana" component in the Museum's chronological exhibition "The Indiana Story." The full "Indiana Story" narrative travels from the Birth of Earth several billion years ago to the present and even into future projections. The entire permanent storyline is played out in approximately 40,000 square feet.

Forty historical artifacts are currently on exhibit in the broadcast history area including Indiana's first TV camera (used by WFBM-TV Indianapolis to broadcast the Indy "500" for the first time in 1948), the second model of color TV ever manufactured (by RCA in Bloomington in 1955) and personal memorabilia of Indiana Broadcast Pioneers Wally Nehrling, Jim Mathis, Ann Wagner-Harper, Gilbert Forbes, Jim Shelton and Marthabelle Geisler. Museum staff anticipate that the number of artifacts utilized will continue to grow as appropriate and as the overall exhibition continues to develop.

One final Indiana broadcast component, new to the presentation, is the presence of three over-sized period radio mock-ups that allow museum visitors to dial-up nearly an hour of radio clips from 1930 to 1960. Along with national radio personalities such as Jack Benny, Franklin Roosevelt, Louella Parsons and Walter Winchell; Indiana figures/shows like Hoosier Hop, Singin' Sam the Barbasol Man, Evangelist Billy Sunday, The Little Red Barn, clips from several "Indy 500" broadcasts featuring many Indiana Broadcast Pioneers, and a host of other Hoosier legends are featured.