

Bob Hyland

I've been in business 35 years and along the way met some real characters, one of them was [Robert Hyland](#), Senior Regional VP of CBS Radio and General Manager of [KMOX](#), St. Louis. An icon of broadcasting nationally, Hyland catapulted KMOX into one of America's premier radio stations in ratings, billing and community service. I'll speak to how in a moment.

He grew up in the city on Lindell Blvd., attended private Catholic boys' schools, St. Louis University, and died in 1992 after changing the vision of what radio could mean to a community. The stories are legends. He went into the office every day at 2:30 am and he stayed until six pm. I learned I could call him on his private number about anytime after 3:00 a.m. He was across the street at the old cathedral for mass from 6 to 7 each day, so I didn't call then. He had "secret listeners" who reported any mistake or off-color remark by any announcer. He answered his phone himself gruffly: "yes?" All calls were short. In contract negotiations, he always said he agreed with me, but it was those damn CBS lawyers who were making him do this bad stuff. He was fastidious; had a very modern, Steuben-glass decorated, office that was directly across the street from the Arch and he belonged to every "high-class" private club in town.



How'd he build KMOX into such a powerhouse? He captured exclusivities; he won --or bought-- franchises. KMOX had the Cardinals, it had Mizzou, it had the Blues, it had the top talent in town. Stories abound how Hyland would hire away promising talent from his competition and then warehouse them in some menial announcer job. Priddy likely would have been there if he'd but told Hyland that KSD was also courting him. He had the Missourinet -- but didn't use it much. That way he kept it out of the hands of his rivals. He put Post Dispatch columnists on "his air", insuring good press and keeping them from the bad guys. And, he did cool things that some would call corny: The National Anthem every day at 4:57 am; The Lord's Prayer in music every day at 5:56, and the morning march every morning at 6:55. Always.

KMOX hasn't been the same since Hyland died. The franchises have gone elsewhere. Billing has sagged. The community no longer hangs on every word uttered by "the Voice of Mid America". To those of us who love radio, it is sad indeed. However, Bob Hyland's memory lingers and he taught me much.

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