

## Iowa Hawkeyes

We'd established a beachhead in Iowa. We had grown Brownfield to some 40 Iowa affiliates by the mid-80s. We had the radio rights to Iowa State, and who couldn't win with Gardner and Brown leading that charge. We had plans to start Radio Iowa in '87, so it seemed to make sense to handle the Iowa Hawkeye Radio Network.

Thing was: Iowa didn't have an exclusive radio networker. Anyone who wanted to, and who could pay the paltry "booth fee" could hook up a broadcast. It was a "Laissez Faire" attitude the athletic department there embraced. Their media coordinator was a nice fellow named George Wine, who persisted on telling me how it was best for Iowans to have many outlets for their broadcasts and further, that the panoply of broadcast outlets served up a variety of play-by-play guys from WHO's Jim Zabel, and Bob Brooks to Frosty Mitchell and Ron Gonder, every Saturday.

Basketball was another thing with many fewer originators. I kept telling Wine the school would be better offering out for an exclusive arrangement for play-by-play, but I didn't get anywhere. So, we joined the crowd inking an arrangement with Cedar Rapids' KHAK to take their guy, Bob Brooks, and to build a statewide radio network. The manager of the stations was a smart and classy lady named Mary Quass. Brooks had a good following and called an outstanding game. And besides, he was and is a true gentleman.

In 1996, Bob Bowsby, who five years previously had taken over for Bump Elliott as Athletic Director, made the decision to offer the radio rights exclusively and ultimately chose us to handle the broadcasts. Our selection as the exclusive radio operator was not a foregone conclusion, to say the least. In fact, it was sort of assumed by many in the media that WHO would prevail, primarily because of its heritage and dominant clear channel signal. After we were selected we quickly put together the network, with WHO signing up as our most significant affiliate (and that continues today).

The rights picture changed again in 2005 when the University offered its "bundled" or multi-media rights to the marketplace. Though our position was stronger, it was a battle to prevail, nevertheless. Gary Barta is now the AD at Iowa and we work with Bowsby at Stanford.

*February 18, 2009*