

William R. McAndrew, 53, Dies; Directed N.B.C. News Since 1951

Executive Teamed Brinkley and Huntley and Expanded Convention Coverage



William R. McAndrew

William R. McAndrew, president of N.B.C. News and a major force in expanding network television news to the point where it now makes up more than 25 percent of all programming, died yesterday at Lawrenceville, Ga., 53 years old.

Mr. McAndrew's innovations included the teaming of Chet Huntley with Mike Brinkley and the expansion of their news coverage on the network. He also broadened the network's convention coverage and expanded its political reporting.

Mr. McAndrew directed the network's news program during the 1960 campaign, a work day and night attention. Broadcasters had previously as the network's chief news officer.

In 1961, Mr. McAndrew was named by the press as the most competent of a group of candidates as the network's chief news officer.

Under his leadership, a constant vigilance must be fully exercised, he says, and does so. He once observed that honesty and integrity and exposes with equal clarity any sham of pretense.

Mr. McAndrew received a George Foster Peabody special award in 1964. The citation said:

"William R. McAndrew as executive vice president of N.B.C. News has provided the vision and leadership which have resulted in range, depth and significance in news programming. His is indeed the news network—a global web of news communication, which reflects the inquisitive intelligence, erudition and communicating skills of his key personnel the world over."

Flexible, but Determined

Colleagues recalled him yesterday as "an exceptionally flexible man" who was flexible enough to serve under different network presidents, but sufficiently determined to substantially expand the news staff, budgets and programming.

He used to puzzle people who didn't know him, said Reivan F. Ryan, executive vice president of N.B.C. News. They didn't know what he was doing. Then they were against him, and they knew it.

Mr. McAndrew's news career began when he worked as a part-time reporter for The Washington Herald shortly before graduating from Catholic University in Washington with an A.B. degree in 1935.

His first full-time news job was as a \$10-a-week copy boy with The United Press. He was soon promoted to reporter and covered Washington stories varying from kidnappings and murders to Senate hearings.

Mr. McAndrew remained with The United Press for two years and then moved to N.B.C. News in Washington as news editor and managing editor of the "Esso Reporter" radio news program.

He left in 1942 to become head of the information program of the Board of Economic Warfare, stayed on the job for six months, and then returned to broadcasting, joining the American Broadcasting Company in Washington as editor for the late news.

Returned to N.B.C.

He returned to N.B.C. News 18 months later as director of its Washington news bureau, and was subsequently promoted to station manager for the N.B.C. stations in Washington, WRC-TV and WRC. He was promoted to manager of network news in 1951, named director of news in 1954, vice president, N.B.C. News, in 1958, executive vice president, N.B.C. News, in 1961 and president of N.B.C. News in 1965.

Mr. McAndrew's latest award, an honorary degree from Holy Cross College, was presented to him Wednesday in absentia. Other awards include a Catholic University Achievement Award, a Distinguished Achievement Award from the University of Southern California and an honorary Doctor of Journalism degree from Providence College.

He was injured last week when he fell in his home.

He leaves his wife, the former Irene Byrne; a son, William R. Jr.; two daughters, Mary McAndrew and Mrs. John J. Prendergast, and three grandchildren.

Funeral arrangements were incomplete last night.