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

Executive Teamed Brinkley and Huntley and Expanded Convention Coverage

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 per cent of all programming, died yesterday at Lawrence Hospital, Bronxville, N.Y. He was 53 years old.

Mr. McAndrew's innovations included the teaming of Chet Huntley with David Brinkley and the expansion of their nightly news program on the network of the National Broadcasting Company from 15 to 30 minutes. He also conceived the N.B.C. White Papers and the expanded coverage of national political conventions.

Mr. McAndrew had directed the network's news since 1951. During his tenure news programming increased tenfold, network executives said yesterday, and placed N.B.C. in contention with the Columbia Broadcasting System, which had previously been regarded as the leading news network.

In political coverage, Mr. McAndrew was impressed by the power of the television camera to expose the character of a political candidate, as well as his platform.

"Under the objective lens of a camera, a candidate must be fully accountable for what he says and does," Mr. McAndrew once observed. "Television thus makes visible a candidate's honesty and sincerity, and exposes with equal clarity any sham of pretense."

Mr. McAndrew remained with the network—a global web of news communication, which reflects the inquisitive intelligence, erudition and communicating skills of his key personnel—until the end of the world.

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.

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.