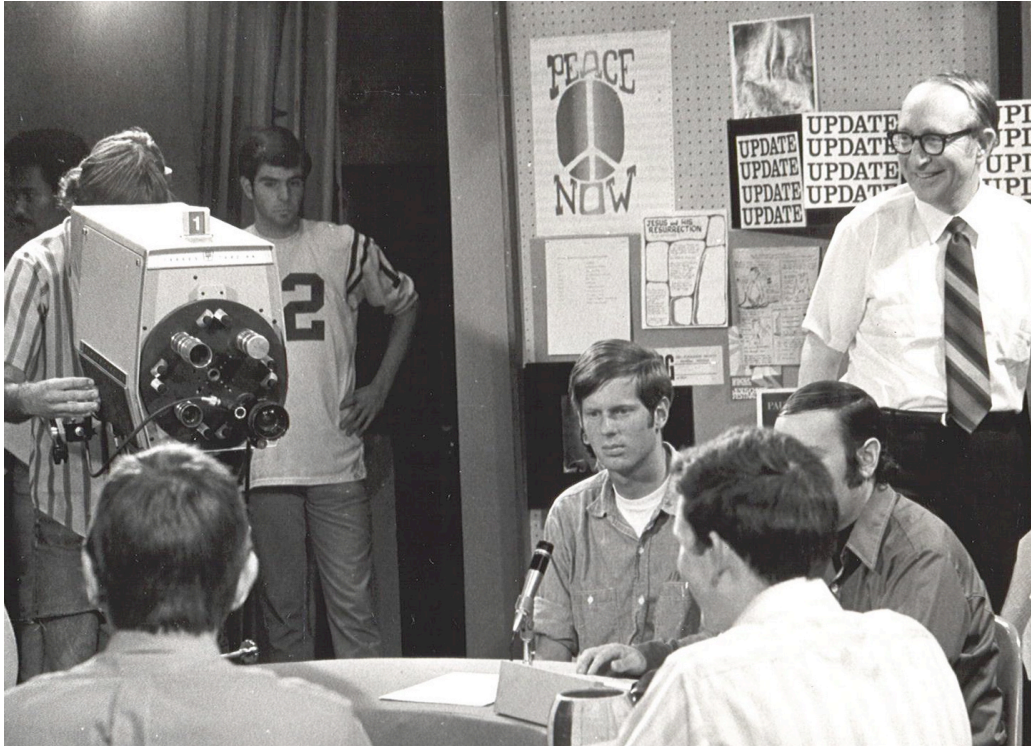


# Professor Greb to Celebrate the Golden Anniversary of SJS Broadcast Journalism

(1957 – 2007)



## 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Reunites Many SJS Graduates Who Fulfilled Professor's Prediction They Could Win

*When I'm sitting in a rocking chair, old and gray, I expect to see you when I turn on the TV set. Somebody's got to replace Cronkite, Jennings, or Brinkley.*

**---What Professor Greb told his kids**

Walter Cronkite didn't shiver in his chair. Nor did David Brinkley and Peter Jennings. But they didn't know San Jose State Professor Gordon Greb expected his graduates to try to take their jobs when they graduated from his program during the last half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Now in 2007 they're coming for a reunion April 26 at The Summit in downtown San Jose to tell their old professor what they did:

Valerie Morris, of CNN in New York City,  
Mike Johnson of The AP in Moscow and Paris,  
Bill Knowles of ABC-TV, Washington D.C.  
Jerry Nachman, author of radio and TV books  
Ron Miller, nationally syndicated TV columnist,  
Lolyd LaCuesta, KTVU (Ch2)SF Bay Area TV newsman  
Terry Phillips, European foreign correspondent

And the list goes on and on.

"Why did I expect big things from our state college



From the Radio and TV News Center at San Jose State College, Larry Galvin reporting....

students?" Dr. Greb explains. "Why not? I knew we had the talent coming to the School of Journalism which could be taught professionally and all they needed was a Knute Rockne pep talk from me, 'Go out there and win one for Greb' to see them do it."

The happiest man to see them return to SJSU will be Professor Emeritus Gordon Greb. He persuaded journalism head Dr.

Dwight Bentel to let him create California's first college level broadcast journalism program on the West Coast at San Jose State in 1957.

Since 2007 marks the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the program,

Director Bill Briggs of the School of Journalism and Mass Communications wants the big reunion to meet the needs of alumni. Also he wants to make sure it fits nicely into what San Jose State is doing for its own 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary – the university's Sesquicentennial.

Dr. Greb, whose research proved Silicon Valley should be known as the birthplace of broadcasting as well as for computers, was awarded an honorary doctorate by a British research institute in London in 1972. He was



named a "distinguished broadcast educator" by the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communications in 1996.

While most of Greb's successful grads come from the radio and television industry, some are professors themselves, such as Dr. Briggs, the current director; Kenneth Blasé, former director; and Darla Belshe, who took over from Greb as RTVJ program head.

Other protégés from SJS include Dr. Rik Whitaker of the State University of New York; Professor Bill Knowles from the University of Montana; and Professor Mark Hall of Northern California's Butte College.

"Wait till all of our radio and television media professionals return from everywhere in the world having reported some of the great news stories of the 20th Century," says Prof. Greb

Active for more than 60 years in broadcasting, Greb was a 12-year old boy when he entered radio in 1934. He is today one of the oldest radio and television pioneers among Northern California's Broadcast Legends.

His career took him from the San Francisco Bay Area to



Hollywood, Washington, D.C., London, and Beijing. Greb completed his B.A. at the University of California at Berkeley, M.A. at the University of Minnesota, and Ph.D. candidacy at Stanford University.

Before becoming a university professor, Greb worked in nearly every phase of broadcasting as an actor, writer, reporter, editor, producer, narrator, news director, news anchor, TV and radio documentary producer, and station manager.

As an authority on the history and development of broadcasting, Professor Greb taught at universities in China, England, Australia, New Zealand, Fiji, and Thailand as well as those at Stanford, Oregon, Minnesota, and Wisconsin. He has been interviewed by the BBC on broadcasting's future and over PBS on its past.

During Professor Greb's career in radio and television,

he has served as a judge for the Emmy Awards of the Academy of Television Arts and Sciences as well the statewide chairman of radio and television awards committee of The Associated Press.



**CBS NEWSMAN** Doug Edwards (right) with Prof Greb (left) and Dr. Dwight Bentel (right) at San Jose State College, 1961.

In Hollywood he was a newsman for CBS, NBC and ABC which may have influenced him when he joined San Jose State College in 1956. He began calling himself a "starmaker" since he was preparing talented and

able young students for their own careers in broadcasting. He predicated that one day his graduates would be seen and heard worldwide, which indeed they are, from Europe and the Middle East to Washington, D.C. and Sacramento.



In 1934 Greb's love for radio led to a role on an afternoon adventure serial, "Rusty, the Boy Aviator," heard weekdays over KTAB (now KSFO). It was listed in the San Francisco press as "Boy Aviator" and aired Monday through Friday at 5 p.m. The sponsor was Dr. Corley's So Kleen Toothpaste.

The show's producers spotted the youngster's voice when he won a contest on KTAB and was heard with schoolmate



Jack Corbett (later a motion picture producer) on a Saturday matinee show they originated called "The Adventures of Gordon and Jack."

While at KTAB in 1934 young Greb met Charles "Doc" Herrold, lately of KQW, San Jose/San Francisco (now KCBS). Years later as an academic Greb's research would prove that Herrold was America's true radio pioneer — the first man to broadcast radio programs regularly into everyone's homes. The station he began in 1909 in San Jose is today's KCBS.

Lee de Forest, another great radio pioneer whom Greb interviewed, recognized Herrold's accomplishment, having known Herrold from 1912 to 1915. Greb told the whole story in a book he co-authored with Mike Adams, which is titled, "Charles Herrold: Inventor of Radio Broadcasting" (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2003).

Working with so many radio pioneers, it's no wonder that Greb, too, contributed to its beginnings. In 1942 he began what many consider to have been the Bay Area's first all-local radio news program on Oakland's KROW in collaboration with Dave Houser, who later became a well-known TV newspaper columnist.

KROW'S Russ Coughlan cut Greb's first audition disc and Scott Weakley worked the controls in the Oakland studio for the program, "Observing the News," which won the BILLBOARD magazine award for best local radio news. By 1943 both newscasters were in World War II as Army privates but returned to newscasting at KROW after the

war.

Over the years Greb helped put three new radio stations on the air --KRCC, (Richmond), KTIM (San Rafael) and KSJS (San Jose State). He supervised news programs for KUOM at the University of Minnesota, 1948-49, a closed-circuit campus station at San Bernardino Valley College, 1949-50, and the KOAC newsroom at the University of Oregon, 1950-51.

His marriage to Darlene Alcock of Van Nuys took him to Columbia Square, Hollywood, in 1951, where he served as CBS news writer, editor and field reporter for the West Coast News Headquarters of the network at KNX. But his tenure at CBS was short-lived during the McCarthy era.

News Director Jack Beck wanted to keep Greb, saying, "I've had writers for 'The New Yorker' magazine on the desk here not as good as you and I wish you'd stay." But Greb's offer to substitute the same Oath of Allegiance required for a member to be seated in Congress -- "to fight all enemies, both foreign and domestic, in support of the U.S. Constitution" -- was rejected by CBS as a substitute for its loyalty oath. So Greb left for Stanford University to study political science and constitutional law.

## Stanfordite helped shape film decision

A thesis written by Gordon B. Greb, Stanford University graduate student, played a prominent part in the supreme court's decision yesterday that movies are entitled to constitutional guarantees of free speech and free press.

Counsel for the distributor of "The Miracle," a Roberto Rosellini film banned in New York as "sacrilegious" used Greb's thesis in arguing against movie censorship.

Palo Alto (Calif.)  
Times, May 27,  
1952, p. 5, col. 2

Not long afterward the U.S. Supreme Court confirmed Greb's understanding of the Constitution. Seeing that Hollywood was tired of being censored and its freedom threatened by government, Greb took steps to overturn movie censorship after researching and writing a thesis on the subject.

In 1952 he submitted his brief to lawyers fighting a censorship case on appeal from New York. Greb's

argument for film freedom included not only theory and law but also affidavits of support from major Hollywood writers, producers and directors, including Screen Actors Guild President Ronald Reagan, and it became an influential factor in the case after the nine justices heard it in the oral argument.

The result was that the U.S. Supreme Court in a unanimous decision in 1952 struck down film censorship in *Burstyn v. Wilson, et al.* in a precedent-setting case.

"We had 90 cities and eight states with film censorship boards and more were coming at that time," said Greb. "I felt that we were certainly going to lose freedom of radio and television unless we prevented government from censoring Hollywood. This was a victory for every form of mass communications in the United States."



San Jose State College became interested in Greb after he became News Director of KSJO in San Jose in 1954. Offered a part-time position at San Jose State in 1956, Greb joined the faculty full-time the next academic year and made the station's newsroom a college laboratory for his students until one could be set up on campus.

Greb was an award-winning newsman, praised by the United Press Bureau for his investigative reporting in a 1956 story. He uncovered corrupt practices in the state capitol, exclusive to KSJO and the UP, which finally resulted in the resignation of State Treasurer Gus Johnson.

He also urged that KSJO hire Harry Geise when he dropped by the station in 1956. It was the first time anyone thought of putting a weatherman on a radio station's news staff -- Geise's first Bay Area radio job. He later



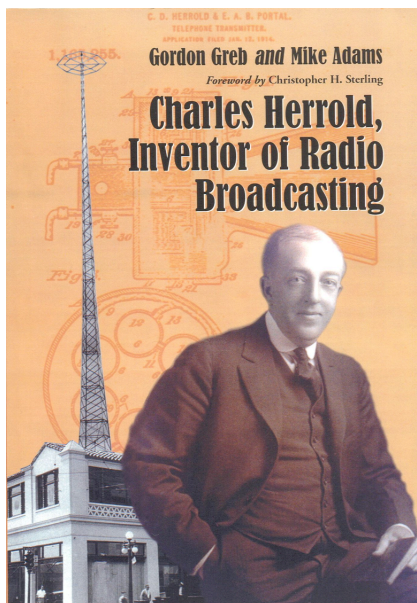
Geise became nationally well known as a weatherman serving stations like KGO-TV, KCBS radio and KCBS-TV Hollywood.

At San Jose State, Greb founded the Radio-Television News Center and produced on-the-air news from there for twenty years. His RTNC students did daily five-minute radio news programs for KXRX, KEEN, and KSJS and his TV staff aired "SJS Reports" and "Update" programs over KNTV and KTEH-TV.

During the protest years of the Viet Nam war era Greb anchored TV documentaries for PBS stations in San Mateo (KCSM) and San Francisco (KQED) from SJS campus studios under the supervision of chief engineer Glen Pensinger and control room director Bob Reynolds.

When Greb began teaching at SJS in 1956, he needed a Radio-TV News Style Guide. None existed. So he wrote and mimeographed one for his own courses. When Bill Knowles entered the service he showed it to the U.S. Army Information School in New York. The result was they asked permission to publish it and made it the official broadcast news manual for the Armed Forces Radio and Television Service worldwide.

In 1959 Greb published research in the *Journal of Broadcasting* proving that KCBS was the world's first broadcasting station, founded in 1909 by Charles Herrold. This brought CBS President Arthur Hull Hayes to San Jose State along with top stars from the network to help celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of broadcasting.



The Golden Anniversary of Broadcasting was saluted worldwide on the CBS network and involved all the stations in the San Francisco Bay Area. Years later Mike Adams joined the SJS faculty and suggested to Greb that they team up to produce

a PBS TV documentary and book ([www.charlesherrold.org](http://www.charlesherrold.org)).

During the 1950s, Greb made certain his San Jose State students were up-to-date, regularly taking them to KPIX and KRON to see how their 15-minute Shell News programs were produced by a three-man staff: one writer, one cameraman-writer, and one anchorman. (It was done with one Bell & Howell 70DR 16 mm silent film camera and Greb made sure his campus staff had the same equipment.)

From the 1950s into the 1970s, Greb invited colleagues from San Francisco to give guest lectures – Tom Franklin, Roger Grimsby, Russ Coughlan, Al Tomlinson, being among them – and others from the San Francisco Chapter of the Radio-Television News Directors Association of which Greb was a member.

Greb co-anchored the evening news at KNTV (Ch 11) in San Jose with Jim Dunne for a brief period in 1962. San Jose State's Fred LaCrosse was floor manager. Dozens of men and women who worked at KNTV were Greb's former students, including Darla Belshe, who left KNTV in the 1970s to take over his broadcast journalism program when Greb became graduate studies coordinator. Earlier Rik Whitaker had been hired from KNTV to fill a valuable role teaching television news.

San Jose State College believed television could be used for education, thanks to the pioneering work of Dr. Richard Lewis and his assistant Terry Martin. Using their Instructional Television Center (ITV) facilities in the 1960s, Professor Greb taught campus students in Northern California over San Jose's KNTV in "The Press and Democracy" and "Contemporary Issues in American Society."

In 1969 Greb recommended Valerie Dickerson for a job in San Francisco to Chet Casselman, news director of KSFO. It was the beginning of her brilliant career in radio and television. Today, known as Valerie Morris, she is seen on CNN from New York, after serving on news staffs at KRON, KGO-TV, and the CBS' flagship stations north and south.



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In the 1980s Peter Jennings of ABC News agreed to help Greb in his effort to give students an

international perspective. He was one of the speakers in a "British Mass Media" course Greb taught for several years in the United Kingdom for young Americans. Their two-week studies abroad took them to The Times, BBC TV and Radio, ITV News, United Press and ABC-TV in London as well as counterparts in Wales and Scotland.

With more than a half-century in broadcasting -- both as a practitioner and as an educator -- Greb once said to his students, "When I'm sitting in a rocking chair, old and gray, I expect to see you when I turn on the TV set. Somebody's got to replace Cronkite, Jennings, or Brinkley."

It's happened. Tuning on the TV news during the Gulf War he saw his former student Patrick Emory doing the news from the anchor desk at CNN. Others were calling in reports on American networks from around the world, some of them from war zones in the Africa, the Middle East and Central America.

"It will be interesting to learn where they've been and what they've done when these kids show up for the reunion," says Greb, now 85. "Yes, they're still 'my kids'-- even though some of them are now old enough to join me in retirement."

#### WHAT THEY SAY

**Valerie Dickerson Coleman-Morris of CNN:** "If I were to name one individual who stands out most in my mind, it would be Gordon Greb...He gave us the impetus to do and the belief in ourselves that we could do it."

**Professor Bill Knowles, former ABC News Bureau Chief:** "He founded the school's Radio-TV Journalism Center, part of one of the earliest accredited broadcast journalism programs....He has been a mentor and coach to hundreds of former students now working in the industry. He has led by example, best known for



anchoring while involving them in television coverage of 1960s anti-war protests on KNTV San Jose.”

**Ron Miller, former syndicated TV columnist:** “... I clearly remember how opposed to censorship you always were... You’re open to new ideas and new experiences—in my view an essential for an educator.”

**Jerry Nachman, writing in Newsweek :** “At a recent college reunion, the life of the party was a former professor, now 82, who struck me as much funnier and more hip than I remember him... charmingly self-deprecating and seemed, well, one of us—or rather we were now one of him...”

**Mike Johnson, Moscow and Paris correspondent for the Associated Press:** “Greb sort of closes the loop for me... All these years I have wanted to show him the real gratitude for believing in me. It feels real good to see him surface as the good writer he is.”

**David G. McLean, News Director, KGO-TV :** “During our recent search for campus correspondents from the various Bay Area colleges and universities, it quickly became apparent that San Jose State was turning out the most talented television journalists.”

**Emeritus Professor Kenneth W. Blasé, former Radio News and School Director:** “His dedication to high ethical standards in broadcast journalism and his lifelong dedication to and promotion of higher education as necessary to well rounded, liberally educated news women and men, has inspired many, myself included, to attempt to follow in his path.”

**Bill Pedigo, Milbrae law offices of Galligan & Biscay, remembering:** “He is such a positive person—I learned much from him about radio and television and working with people. Many times I wish I had more of his abilities in these areas.”

**Mary Coverdale, formerly with the San Francisco Chronicle, now Sacramento:** “You were a great inspiration to me, not only in class, but I loved to listen to your radio program... You and Dwight Bentel and others had such high standards for journalism, which I still hold... Well, I want you to know there is at least one person out here in the wilderness who has vivid memories of your classes. You were quite inspirational...”

**Bill Moyers of PBS, responding to correspondence from Greb:** “My own daughter, by the way, is teaching the fourth grade in New Jersey. She – and other educators like you –are the real heroes of our society.”

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Gabriel, Michelle. "Most Likely to Succeed," *South Bay Accent Magazine* (February/March 1984).

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### **Films & Videos**

TV documentary by Mike Adams. *Broadcasting's Forgotten Father: The Charles Herrold Story*. San Jose: KTEH-TV, 1994. (60 min. video tape and/or DVD, SJS School of Television, Radio, Film and Drama library).

TV recording of Valerie Coleman Morris, *Commencement Address*, San Jose State University, June 1996 (15-min. video tape, University's IRC reel # TM 0526A and Greb Radio-TV Collection).

TV interview by Mark Hall. “The Gordon Greb Story” Cable TV program produced and telecast from Butte College, Chico, CA (April 25, 2006). ( 29-min video tape, Butte College TV Center).

Educational film by Gordon Greb, John Ashworth and Clarence Flick. *KQW: The World’s First Broadcasting Station*. San Jose: Speech and Drama Department, San Jose State University, 1979. 23 min ( SJSCU A/C Center or SJS Department of Television, Radio, Film and Theatre).

### **Movies, 1957-2007**

**“Good Night, and Good Luck (2005) \*\*\*\*\*** Salutes broadcast newsman Edward R. Murrow for principled fight in the 1950s against McCarthyism amidst climate of fear and dread of losing sponsors by CBS executives. Script by actor George Clooney and producer Grant Heslov.

**“Network” (1976) \*\*\*\*\*** Hollywood drama shows network TV CEOs sacrificing responsible news in order to improve viewer ratings and internal struggle of newsmen against it. Paddy Chayefsky’s satirical view seems more real today than ever.

**“Radio Days” (1987) \*\*\*** Woody Allen, never as befuddled as he pretends to be, comes close to showing why broadcasting was America’s No. 1 entertainment medium in the 1940s when radio – not Larry -- was king.

### **Internet Web Sites**

*Alumni online :* [www.thecolumnists.com](http://www.thecolumnists.com)

*Journalism School:* [www.jmcweb.sjsu.edu/index.html](http://www.jmcweb.sjsu.edu/index.html)

*Story of broadcasting:* [www.charlesherrold.org](http://www.charlesherrold.org)

*Reunion plans:* <http://grebreport.blogspot.com>

*When radio was fun:* [www.broadcastlegends.com](http://www.broadcastlegends.com)

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