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by Larry A. Quinn



**RETIRED NAFB BROADCASTERS ARE ACTIVE SENIORS** – **Jim Ross Lightfoot** (NAFB Emeritus Member, White Oak, TX) asks and answers his own question, “What do old farm broadcasters do when they’ve read their last market report and filed their last story? Reminisce! Yes, we oldtimers do a lot of that.” Jim says he was very fortunate to have started his career in farm broadcasting with an excellent broadcaster by the name of **Jack Gowing**. “Jack was a great mentor, and he taught me many things that I still use today. In those days the major livestock yards were operating in places like Omaha and Chicago. Between the American Royal Stock Show in Kansas City, Denver Stock Show, Chicago Stock Show and others, we had plenty to do. Of course, covering these events was in addition to our regular broadcasting where we did our best to provide producers information of interest and relevance to their operation.” From 1970 until 1976, Jim took a hiatus from KMA (Shenandoah, IA) to manage a manufacturing operation for the old Farmmaster Gate Company. They were opening a new operation in the community of Corsicana, TX. It was Jim’s job to open the factory from scratch and then continue to expand its sales. “Things were going very, very well until the parent company was sold to the Wickes Corporation out of California. They were losing so much money in the modular home business that they started picking all the profits out of the Farmmaster plants they had acquired. By 1976 it was all over.” Jim and his family returned to Iowa. “Fortunately, I was able to return to KMA radio and its first class farm department. **Creighton Knau** was the farm director. Creighton was one-of-a-kind, and we hit it off from the start. We were covering events all over the country.” In 1983,



President Ronald Reagan had proposed a trip to the Philippines and South Korea to enhance trade with the United States. One Sunday afternoon, we were sitting at home when the telephone rang. "My wife, Nancy, answered. After a few moments, she came into the living room where I was sitting and said, "The phone call is for you." "Who is it? I asked. It's the White House," she said. "I did not believe her. However, after much coaxing, she convinced me that it was the White House. On the phone was **Billy Dale**, who was in charge of all transportation for the White House. He extended an invitation for me to accompany the President on his trip to Southeast Asia. Billy explained that everyone that made the trip would share alike in the cost. His estimate was that my share would be \$6,000. "I told him I would have to get approval from my

management. He gave me a private phone number to call him back with an answer either yes or no. Fortunately, I was able to sell the idea to our station management." As Jim and his wife discussed the upcoming trip, it was unclear to him why he had been invited. "It turns out my wife, Nancy, wrote a letter to President Reagan's wife Nancy explaining to her that since this was going to be an agricultural trade trip **Sam Donaldson** didn't know an ear of corn from a soybean. My Nancy suggested it might make sense to put someone on the trip that knew about agriculture. Apparently, Nancy Reagan read her mail, and she put into motion the process to issue me an invitation. Wow, this was pretty heady stuff for an old farm boy from southwest Iowa!" One of the highlights for Jim was when he was picked to be one of the pool reporters that went to the DMZ. "We were there on a Sunday morning. You could see the North Koreans across the cleared fields between the two countries. Heavy army equipment sat with engines idling and drivers at the wheel. 50 caliber machine guns were locked and loaded. To say the air was tense would be a huge understatement. President Reagan arrived and joined our group standing in the middle of the heavy weapons carriers. The Chaplain spoke first." Jim recalls his words as if it were just yesterday. "Gentlemen, this morning we stand on the edge of freedom." He then continued his sermon and talked about the good news from Jesus. "To say it was moving would be a gross understatement," Jim said. "I told this story on the air when we got home. At the time, we had many preachers, pastors and priests who were devoting their sermons to political diatribe regarding the situation in Central America. A sidebar suggestion was made that perhaps we would all be better served if the sermons in America were similar to one that had been preached at the DMZ." Jim exclaimed, "Whoopee, talk about a way to stir up hate mail from a bunch of angry preachers! At least, I knew they were listening." On September 27, Jim observed that he's seen this old Globe circle the sun 80 times. "God has given me very much. As someone who was born in the Florence Crittenden Home for Unwed Mothers in Sioux City, IA, adopted by a wonderful farm family from southwestern Iowa, served in the U.S. Army, served 12 years as a U.S. Congressman, spent 13 years making the world a safer place through a company named



Forensic Technology and some 19 years in commercial broadcasting. Life has been good.” He added, “I’ve reached that age where I don’t even buy green bananas. I don’t get around as good as I once did, and I shake my head at the changes I have seen in our world. I mark my experiences as a farm broadcaster at the top of the list of good things that have happened. Today, time is spent reading a good book, writing an occasional op-ed, fixing up an old chandelier for my wife to sell in her antique business or just sitting and scratching the dog. And that my friends, is pretty much what an old farm broadcaster does. “



and washing them separately. It’s not uncommon to have more than 300 crystals on one fixture. “Each one is painstakingly cleaned by hand and then reassembled. At times, I have to find replacement crystals for those that have been lost or broken. Although it is time-consuming work, there is much pleasure in seeing an old antique chandelier come back to life.”

**Here are two of Jim’s recent chandelier restoration projects.**

Jim’s wife Nancy deals in antique elegant glassware and crystal. “I’m not elegant but, I do qualify as antique.” In attending various sales, it became apparent that some of these old houses had some very beautiful chandeliers. So, a unique hobby evolved. “We have to take the chandeliers down and then they go to my shop. The first thing I do is check the wiring as these fixtures are very old and many of them have unsafe wiring. Once the wiring is made safe the cleaning process starts. For the most part, these fixtures have hung for many years without anyone paying attention to them. To say they are dirty is an understatement.” In many cases it means removing all the crystals from the fixture



**BIG IRON SHOW IS KEY FOCUS FOR RRFN** – The Red River Farm Network organizes a series of forums each year for the Big Iron Farm Show in West Fargo, ND. The topics addressed this year included the market outlook, land values, weather and farm succession planning.



“We were proud to have USDA Under Secretary **Bill Northey** on our stage,” said **Don Wick**, president, Red River Farm Network. “We discussed the Market Facilitation Program, farm bill implementation, trade and more.” This was the tenth year for the RRFN forums at this trade show and attendance was the best ever. “I think farmers are looking for answers right now, especially with the current trade and market environment. Our audience was very engaged in the forums.” In addition to the seminar schedule, RRFN broadcast all its programs from the Big Iron Farm Show.





**NAFB LED KIM MILLER TO NEBRASKA** – Kim Miller (KZEN, Columbus, NE) grew up in west-central Missouri and attended the University of Central Missouri in Warrensburg. After graduating college in 2015, she took a job at a local radio station. “My dream was to become an on-air personality. One thing led to another, and soon I found myself as the Farm Director at that station.” After being there for a few years, Kim and her husband were looking for better opportunities and thinking about leaving the small town where they both had grown up. “One day I decided to look at the job opportunities on the NAFB website. I saw a posting for a farm director position in Columbus, NE. I had never heard of Columbus before and started doing some research. After much consideration, we decided to take the leap and move to Nebraska.” She moved in December 2016, and her husband followed in January 2017 after obtaining a local job. “Without NAFB, I would never have heard of this position. Moving to Nebraska has been a wonderful experience. It has been wonderful moving to a new

state and learning about the differences in a community that is just five hours from my hometown. In my previous position near my hometown, I was able to rely on lifelong contacts in the agriculture industry. Here in Columbus, I have had to learn how to make new contacts and get out of my comfort zone. I never thought I would end up being a Nebraskan, but we have made Columbus our home and plan on staying a while,” she concluded.

**USING VOCAL TALENTS WHEN NOT ON THE AIR** – What does a farm broadcaster do when not on the air or working on a story? Some have hobbies, travel, spend time on the farm or maybe they have another job. **Dave Schumacher** (KTRS, St. Louis, MO) is one who has the other job. “In my days before radio some 40 years ago while working as a commission man at the National Stockyard, I was fascinated with the auctioneer selling the cattle. I had to learn how to do that. As the song goes I would sit behind the barn and imitate the auctioneer.” Dave worked at it until he earned a spot as back-up cattle auctioneer. “Well, my fame did not grow out shore to shore, but I soon began selling sales and in 1983, I attended auction school and, as they say, the rest is history. The Schumacher Auctions Inc. has grown over the years selling real estate, farms, and antiques at their auction facility located in Belleville, IL. The auction company has been commissioned to handle the Muehlman Classic car collection on October 26, which includes award-winning cars from 1928 Packards, 1930 and up LaSalles and others with 25 in all. “This will be probably be, at this point, one of the most exciting auctions we will handle. The auction

company has received inquiries from all over the country. We are excited to conduct this auction." You can find out more at [www.schumacherauctions.com](http://www.schumacherauctions.com).

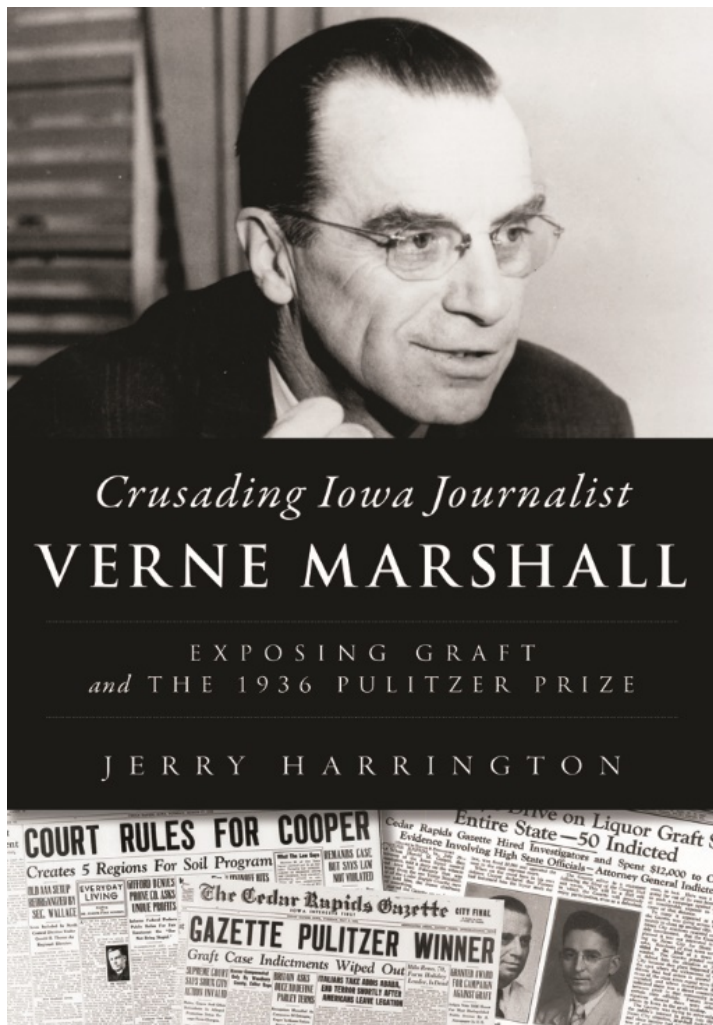






**FROM PR PRO TO HISTORIAN** – NAFB members who know **Jerry Harrington** (Honorary Member, Iowa City, IA) as the former marketing public relations professional from DuPont Pioneer have enjoyed his help in pulling from the rich source of agronomic and research experts in Pioneer to offer interviews to farm broadcasters. Since retiring from Pioneer in 2014, Harrington has turned to his first love and become a full-time historian – specializing in Iowa political history. He has written several articles for *Iowa History Journal*, winning awards from the State Historical Society of Iowa for his series on influential Iowa governors and the early history of the Iowa presidential caucuses. Also, he has written a book on *Cedar Rapids Gazette* editor **Verne Marshall**, who won the 1936 Pulitzer Prize for exposing corruption in Iowa. In addition, Harrington has published an academic article on Iowa **Governor Harold Hughes** and his push for liquor-by-the-drink in Iowa in the early 1960s. Both of the latter works also have won

awards from the state historical society. “I’ve always been fascinated by American history,” says Harrington, who has his MA in history from the University of Iowa and later worked toward his PhD in history there. Incidentally, he left the PhD program when he was offered a job as vice president in the public relations division of Bader Rutter in Milwaukee. “A real career called,” says Harrington. “It’s fun for me to rummage through old documents with the purpose of bringing stories to light of significance about the past. I’ve selected my own little world of Iowa political history as my specialty.” His research on *Cedar Rapids Gazette*’s Verne Marshall began when he was contacted by *The History Press of Arcadia Publishing* to write a book of his choice. The company contacted him because he’d written extensive articles on Iowa history. “I came across a few paragraphs about Marshall in an Iowa history book and found that his papers were at the Herbert Hoover Presidential Library in nearby West Branch, IA,” recalls Harrington, who now lives in Iowa City. “Combining that source with old copies of the *Cedar Rapids Gazette* and other research materials gave me enough to write a small book on this colorful episode in Iowa history.” In addition to exposing illegal gambling, state graft and unlawful liquor operations, Marshall’s reporting resulted in a highly publicized corruption trial of Iowa’s elected attorney general. Harrington is now researching a book on Harold Hughes, governor of Iowa from 1963 to 1969 and Iowa’s U.S. senator from 1969 to 1974. “Hughes was an amazing, charismatic figure – a recovering alcoholic and truck driver with little formal education – who was a magnetic leader with a significant impact on the state and national level,” says Harrington. “As governor, he initiated major statewide reforms and brought Iowa into modern times. As senator, he led the national effort to treat alcoholism and drug-addiction as diseases. In addition, he was a staunch opponent of the Vietnam War. At the end of his senate term, he surprised the political world by



retiring from politics and going into the ministry. He's fascinating to research." Harrington has also been teaching courses on the history of American comic books at Kirkwood Community College in Cedar Rapids. A collector all his life, he has about 25,000 comic books in his basement, dating back to the 1960s. "With the avalanche of movies based on comic book characters, it's now OK to be a comic geek – which I am," says Harrington. The former PR pro also gives talks around the state on Iowa and comic book history. This October, he's teaching a course at the University of Iowa Senior College, "Political Titans of the Hawkeye State: Iowa Political History as Biography." "I'm a little anxious about this," Harrington says. "Many of the students will be retired university faculty members. I'll have to brush up on my PR presentation skills." Harrington urges you to contact him at [jharrington3233@gmail.com](mailto:jharrington3233@gmail.com).

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